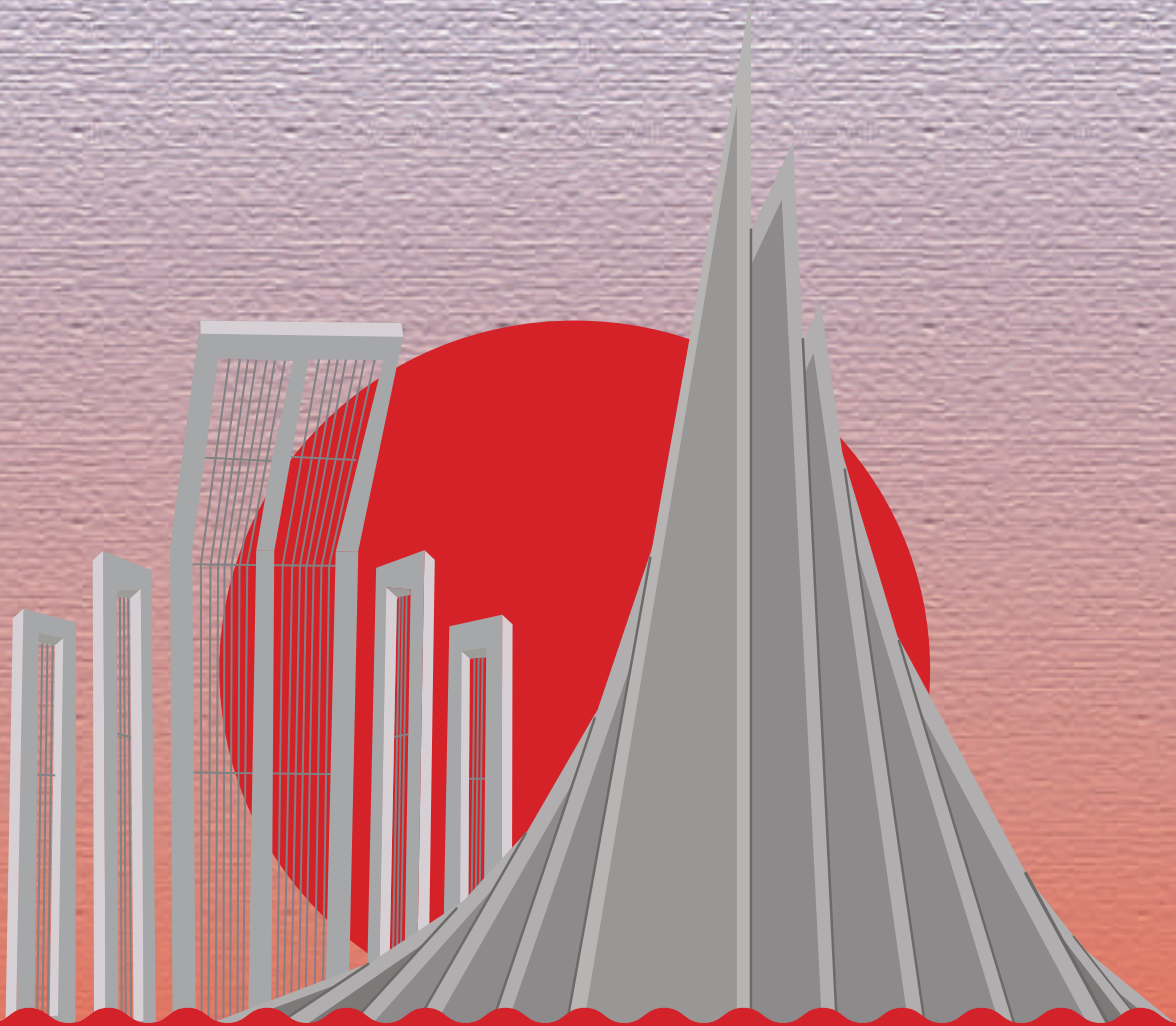


Bangladesh

January-March 2026

Quarterly

*The Language Movement-based Play
'Kabor': Politicism and State-Vision*



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Bangladesh

QUARTERLY

Vol. 46, No. 3, January-March 2026, Magh-Chaitra 1432



Tarique Rahman signed the oath book after taking oath as the 11th Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban in Dhaka on 17 February 2026



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Editorial

The 13th Parliamentary Election was held in a peaceful environment following a vibrant campaign from the political parties on February 12, 2026. The country has got its new Prime Minister and Cabinet afresh. This election has further strengthened the continuity of democracy and history. The history, which our main driving force and is enriched with our united struggle from language movement to liberation war, paves and determines our present and future.

The new government introduces smartly in a prompt way the 'Family Card' as per one of their election promises. Family card has been introduced keeping in mind those families which cannot afford their livelihoods especially families, basically of women centred. This card will give financial assistance to the card holders on a monthly basis so that their livelihood can be easier than before and they can change their miserable conditions gradually.

In 2026, after a long path of historical phenomenon, it's a matter of rethinking, how much women have progressed in every phase of life. It's to think whether empowerment of women be it political or economic, can really change the conditions of women in every sphere of life? In our Bangladeshi context, though politically and economically our women are empowered and typical patriarchal language has been changed, but the real change has not been happened yet. Till now, women are somehow stuck in a 'system' which has been built with male narratives. So, time to go so far so that a real progress of women can be possible.

Bangladesh is a land enriched with its own culture and scenic beauty. For this it's equally attractive to the people and living creatures.

Articles on the above mentioned aspects have been incorporated in this Issue along with other excellent articles regarding Bangladeshi contexts and our regular news events. Hope this issue will be well received by the readers.

Contents



The Language Movement-based Play
'Kabor': Politicism and State-Vision

Page - 4

Professor Mohammad Azam

POEM

Verses of Ekushey 12

Hasan Hafiz

Liberation War : 1971 13

Ayub Syed

Career planning and development 14

Khaleda Begum

Family Cards: Hope and Beyond 19

Parikshit Chowdhury

Empowerment or Illusion? Rethinking 25

Women's Progress in Bangladesh

Nadia Fairuz

Current State of Pottery Manufacturing in Bangladesh 37

Md. Mosharraf Hossain

Monpura - an island-based tourist destination 42

Md. Ziaul Haque Howlader

Visited Durham, a unique city in the UK 48

Dr. Syed Anwarul Haque

Wings Over the Sundarbans: My Journey with Birds of Prey 50

Professor Dr. A N M Aminoor Rahman

Major National Events 59



The Language Movement-based Play ‘Kabor’: Politicism and State-Vision

Professor Mohammad Azam

On the other hand, the whole process happens inside the repository of language, which is the principal mode of expression in the lived life of a linguistic group. The language of literature is closely related to its overall shape or form. It is very difficult to generate the intimate nature of lived life of structurally incorporated individuals and groups in this repository of form in history and most areas of social science. The allusions or interpretations of language are natural. Based on this, it is possible to shed light on the intimate corners of human lives. On the other hand, the indications of future and the map of aspiration can be drawn on the foldings of present-time.

We shall now explore some intimate pictures of politicization and state-vision during the Language Movement depicted in the play ‘Kabor’ (1953) of Munier Choudhury based on the above-mentioned theoretical framework. The play has been widely read and analysed because of its obvious merits. The popularity and credibility of this text have special importance in the context of the nationalistic narrative active behind the emergence of Bangladesh state. The popularity of this play proves that the language movement presented here carries much of the mainstream narrative. However, a nationalistic narrative usually moves at an upper level and gathers

Politicization and State-Vision: A proof of the profound impact of Language Movement as a component of nationalism was the stir it generated in the domain of art. Essays on the subject were written even earlier. Following the occurrence of Ekushey February, its shadow started to fall in diverse ways on plays, poems, songs, and films. The 21-point programme during the 1954-election bore testimony to its huge influence in national politics. It was evident that many points in that manifesto emanated directly or indirectly from the Language Movement, as a result of which it became part of the national ethos overnight. It was therefore no surprise that it would find multidimensional reflection in literature.

Literary manifestation of any event, history, or political activity usually touches some additional aspects. Intimate revelation of persons and groups takes place in literature in the context of structural reality.



Students preparing for procession in front of old Arts Faculty Building on February 21, 1952

its convenient ingredients from the comparatively visible layers. The popular nationalistic narrative usually does not seek to reach the subtle layers of lived life, where literary language and vision become active.

The play ‘Kabor’ was written in 1953, just one year after the Language Movement of 1952. At that time, the heat of the immediate aftermath of that incident and tendencies cum propensity of collective psyche were still fresh. The incidents of the decade of 1960s that consolidated the nationalistic movement, struggle and stance were unimaginable at the start of 1950s. In this situation, drawing of this mold cum trend regarding the immediate-past experiences of language movement in the play ‘Kabor’ did not evolve from the weight of any nationalistic movement. In that respect, the testimony of this text is most likely to be more reliable even compared to data and available information in some cases.

There is limited scope in the play ‘Kabor’ to display the political activities that we are ordinarily acquainted with. However, the whole episode of Ekushey February has been expertly presented in brief by the playwright between the scenes staged at the graveyard. Therefore, although indirectly, the political programme, its implementation and the actions of the state against it could be gathered fully. The state was portrayed here as a monster having expertise in perpetrating repression. When Hafiz says, “Not many corpses, I could bury all of those alone by clearing the place” – the fang and claw of a terribly repressive state-structure get exposed. This design of the state comes to the fore repeatedly through direct utterances of the leader and the attitude cum pronouncements of Hafiz.

The programmes of the agitators were stated indirectly, and the incidents of Twenty-first February were presented in diverse dimensions. However, the repeated pronouncements of an activity of repressed people through mainly the

dialogues of the leader raised it to the level of symbolic prestige. It was called 'procession'. On hearing about commotion from the mouth of Hafiz, the leader was instantly reminded about procession. Procession was the only language of protests and resistance that caught his imagination quickly and easily. He asked Hafiz: "Commotion? Have the corpses of the graveyard learned to bring out procession as well?" Therefore, the chief objective for carrying out repression on his part became halting of procession. In his hallucination, he prescribes the same medication for Murda Fakir, who appears as a conscientious character: "Bury him. Ten-fifteen, twenty-twenty-five yards – as deep as you can.... So that he cannot bring out procession and raise slogan, so that he forgets to shout."

In this way, the play 'Kabor' makes procession an effective symbol of programmes. During the subsequent period of the Pakistani era, processions became the principal indicator of political activities. 'Onkar' (1975) written by Ahmed Sofa, or the novel 'Chilekothar Sepai' (1986) by Akhteruzzaman Elias, or the unforgettable organization of processions during the mass upsurge of 1969 in Shamsur Rahman's poems remind us about that.

However, if we leave the manifestation level of programmes and activities and enter the comparative-theory level of politicism, then we can observe various dimensions of ideological stance and conflict. In fact, state-vision can be arrived at from an ideological review – where the state, at least in the text under discussion, was a pointer to the future.

When the leader says, "Fear could never enter my mind during the past four-five years", then it becomes clear that the post-1947 state-structure of Pakistan was governed undemocratically by executives isolated from the people, who remained beyond people's representation. This state-structure becomes evident even more clearly when the leader is heard to say, "They are my trusted people. That kind of people could not be obtained even after searching your whole office". It could be understood that the state was being run based on 'patron-client' relationship of 'trusted' people, not based on structural stability, or well-regulated bureaucracy and police administration. In whatever way the meaning of the word 'modern' may be interpreted, this kind of structure can never be placed inside any of its compartments. Naturally, the state-system portrayed in the play 'Kabor' did not possess the slightest of ingredients that find place in the modern state-structure based on well-regulated separation of state-organs. Only in this kind of state-framework is it possible for a leader to utter, "Don't worry about money. Please spend more than what is needed. I shall obtain approval from the government." This kind of pronouncement not only demonstrates an indisciplined state-system that is devoid of morality or ethics, it also speaks about a regressive state, a state-structure that cannot differentiate between party politics and legal executive power.

Jinnah was widely mirrored in the framing of the leader-character. "I could not have become the leader of such a large institution if I was neverous about doing these tasks" – this dialogue of the leader clearly points to the leadership position of the ruling party. This has been more openly spelled out at another place. While subjugating the reckless youth that emerged from the grave, the leader said: "See



Mass people's participation in the procession arranged for upholding the honour of Bengali Language as State Language on 21 February, 1952.

boy, my age has advanced. Even your elders obey me. I have built and given shape to this country's politics over many years. You can say, I am the sole proprietor of the largest political institution of this nation! Millions of people rise and sit at my command –.” In the backdrop of the reality prevailing in the then Pakistan – despite the mimicry and satirical inclination of these words – they could be uttered by Jinnah alone. However, Jinnah had expired long before the happenings of Ekushey February. In this backdrop, this dialogue could only refer to the state of Pakistan.

Whatever Jinnah might have been in the context of history, the leader built in his image in the play ‘Kabor’ is undoubtedly a deceptive character. And the state itself also symbolised visible injustices. Here, the leader, the administration and the state worked together unlawfully. This identity of the Pakistani state has been constructed or depicted many times in the history and literature of Bangladesh.

The 'Kabor is probably its oldest sample. A converse state-form was articulated in this play mainly through the pronouncements of Murda Fakir and the martyrs. Those certainly referred to a democratic, tolerant, and welfare-seeking country.

The playwright has presented the most effective ideological discourse of this play through Murda Fakir. The aspirational truth of politicism was established by changing the prevalent meaning of the two words 'living' and 'dead'. The leader also considered Hafiz as a dead person who created disturbance by living unjustly and through capturing the higher seats of power-relations. On the other hand, Murda Fakir said that the dead people who went to the grave by embracing the smell of fresh gun-powder would not remain there at any cost. However secretly and to whatever depth they might have been trafficked to, they would come out by piercing the soil and establish a new dawn and a new state.

In other words, the ideological strength and disseminative excellence of the demands that were aligned with the masses and emanated from the deep sense of human justice were irresistible. Therefore, its success in the state-system of the future was also most desirable. In this way, the play 'Kabor' depicted the modern, democratic and bourgeois ideals prevailing during the decades of 1940s and 1950s of Twentieth Century. Murda Fakir said, those who died were in fact alive. It only reflected the desire for a bourgeois state against that of a worn-out one prevailing at that juncture.

A politically sensitive area in the play 'Kabor' was religion. That was not only because the Pakistani state was established on the basis of religion, but also because the state was gradually striving to establish religion as the sole 'ideological state-apparatus'. In this situation, it was almost impossible to frame a meaningful critique about the Pakistani state without challenging this pseudo-ideological narrative. On the other hand, stringent attention had to be paid so that religiosity in public life and genuine ideological narrative of religion were not harmed by it.

The humour and satire applied in the play very much touched the leading-actors of state-power. Clearly, drinking was a key art and technique of the drama. It implied that collective hallucination could materialise for two persons only through drinking incredible quantities of wine. But as a bonus, continuous drinking also gave rise to other dimensions. The drunk state of the leader of a country who used or misused Islam as an ideological weapon for governance undoubtedly created a comic atmosphere on the stage. As a police-administrator, Hafiz was also not outside it.

However, the playwright did not hesitate a bit to bring to the fore the hypocrisy inherent in the professed state-ideology of the Pakistani state. He did this first through the grave-diggers, who were uneducated but well-conversant in religious knowledge. They raised question about the right of the dead in performing religious ritual. Clearly, the state-system did not agree to grant that right. In addition, there was no sign that indicated they considered the matter to be very serious, but could not move in that direction because of prevailing circumstances. The proposal of Inspector Hafiz – "Dump all the corpses together after digging a big hole and then fill it up with soil" – and the enthusiastic support extended to it by the leader brings

to the fore their irreligious and immoral stances. It may be mentioned that those involved in the funeral of the dead were also a decisive class in the play 'Raktakto Prantor' of Munier Choudhury. However, similar to that drama, this class took refuge here in universal human rights by abandoning the uniform of religion. It can be said that secularisation of religiosity took place in this way; and it was possible to criticize the Pakistani state by applying the scale of humanism.

Next comes the character of Murda Fakir. It undoubtedly represented the desired position of the writer, who was of a conscientious type. While describing his identity, Hafiz said, "The person is more or less an educated one. He is a good Alem..." The use of the word 'Alem' or 'religious scholar' for identifying Murda Fakir was not at all urgent. Clearly, this word created another class who were against the use of religion by the state-side as an ideological parlance; where the natural idealism of religion was preserved, humanistic standpoint was protected. In this way, it indirectly maintained conformity with the democratic bourgeois politics.

An aspect of the linguistic significance expressed through the play's dialogues was that, standard Bangla was established as the language of the modern and progressive youths. Against the Farsi-Arabic and feudal-smelling language of the leader and Hafiz, the words and language of Murda Fakir and the martyred youths, and the relentless application of standard Bangla without any exception in building linguistic form undoubtedly reinforced this significance. Let us demonstrate the use of words and ideological expression of linguistic form by quoting two dialogues from Hafiz.

In response to lamentations of the leader regarding dearth of faithful people, Hafiz said: "They are all sons of bitches. They want to elicit salary as something due to them, not as a benefit given to them." Again, while supporting the argument in favour of bringing an odd-person like the guard for the secret mission at night, he said: "There are some tasks, Sir, which should not be unveiled even in front of the wife." The external features of word-form in both these dialogues are very clear. But at a deeper level, the relevant discourse appears beside applied words with news about the inner realm of politicism and state-vision. Let us consider the word 'benefit' in the first dialogue. The typology of interpersonal relationship that the word suggests is undoubtedly pre-modern; and because it was used with regard to the relationship between the state and the citizen, and as it came out of the mouth of a police officer, it became an indicator of the state itself. In the second dialogue, the words 'wife' and 'unveil' are quite heavy in terms of cultural messaging; even if they were not unmodern, they were not at all universal. But the captured message in the inner-structure of the dialogue was even more pathetic. The expression was not aimed at maintenance of special secrecy in the working of the state; rather, it was a self-confession about an unlawful task. It is notable that these types of words were absent in the dialogues of the dead youth and Murda Fakir; and even if similar words were present, they were certainly not used by attaching similar significance.

Humayun Azad had noted that the principal significance of Ekushey was the purification of Bangla language in Bangladesh. However problematic this narrative

may be with regard to the potentials for autocracy in linguistic form, the above-mentioned linguistic spirit of the play 'Kabor' fully condones Azad's claims.

However, in that case, problem arises at another spot. The regional Bangla dialect spoken by the guard in his dialogue as representative of the lower-class in the play creates an opportunity for deeper 'otherisation'. This kind of language-selection cannot be explained merely by emphasizing on upholding reality. Because, selecting simple spoken Bangla of ordinary citizens by a guard working in the civic domain (at least by omitting bookish words and style) could not have been unnatural at all. No doubt, this language-form used in the guard's dialogue was adopted to create diversity on the one hand, and to generate humour on the other. This selection was therefore quite effective in presenting diverse humour and comic relief. But it also created a big opportunity for 'otherisation' in that state by lower-class people, as 'standard' Bangla was established in the projected state as a symbolic feature.

In fact, this problem existed in many obsessions of 1952-centred state-project, which became established in nationalistic narratives or creative practices. It is true that there were working-class participants at some places of the Ekushey Movement. But because of the dominating influence of educated middle-class citizens, the workers or lower-class people were not even heard as a parallel voice, let alone as a high-pitched one. In fact, those who are referred to as ordinary or common people had joined the Ekushey and other subsequent movements. But the dreams, aspirations or interests of those ordinary people never became bigger. Therefore, Ekushey has given us a cluster of middle-class spirit. This has been a long-term problem in terms of state-vision, which has not been addressed properly by the Bangladesh state even after independence.

The reality of power-relations is especially noticeable in the play 'Kabor'. Elderly people were supposed to be present directly or indirectly as backers of youths – mainly students – who had engaged in a ferocious struggle against statism. A segment of those people who were in comparatively better positions with regard to power-relations were supposed to support them; but there is no such indication anywhere in this play. For this reason, there were two parties in the whole episode, and a binary narrative comprising devil and angel was created for evaluating it. This kind of division can be done with such certainty only when a state-structure is negated along with its ideological base. This is not possible in bourgeois, or liberal, or democratic political dispensation. Although the projected state-ideal in the play 'Kabor' was undoubtedly 'liberal-democratic', but it appears from its outline of political activities that the left-leaning ideology of Munier Chowdhury played a major role, consciously or unconsciously, in the framing of that outline.

The circumstances, data and facts support this conjecture. The communist movement was not only banned in the Pakistani state, it was also deemed to be the principal one among the most notable enemies of the state. The leftist leaders and activists therefore widely participated in all the movements – whether nationalistic or emanating from group-centred dissatisfaction – by considering the state-system

as its adversary. The massive participation and leadership role of the leftists in the 1952-movement have been acknowledged universally as a historical fact. The government itself publicised it as the work of ‘Communists and Indian Agents’. Munier Choudhury’s essays titled ‘Naughty Boy’ and ‘Fit Column’ depicted the reality of repression suffered by youths at the hands of the state and the guardians of society. While presenting the identity of an agitator of Ekushey in the play ‘Kabor’, the leader clearly noted: “You did not want to obey the country’s law when alive. Even after death, you now seek to disregard the rules of the after-life. You are possessed by the ghost of communism; therefore, you do not want to go to the grave now even after death.”

As the language movement was the most influential incident in post-1947 period and the most decisive one in determining the political direction, some basic ideas about politics, politicism and state-vision of that time have been narrated in this movement-centred literary work. The picture of a repressed people fighting a repressive state was mainly obtained through this.

The absence of a modern, democratic and humane entity becomes prime in the image of a repressive state drawn by this text. The sensitivities observed among the masses struggling against the state can be termed as the ideals of a democratic-bourgeois state. Therefore, although it was not directly mentioned by party-organisations or programmes, the projected state could be identified through this branding.

However, dependence on the middle-class, especially the students in this movement and struggle indicated an indelible deficit. Besides, this play has also not proposed any satisfactory compromise between the aspirations of the leftists and supporters of bourgeois democracy. Rather, it induces the readers to believe that the leftists in Pakistan, who were forced to pursue political activities in secrecy, participated and led ‘anti-state’ programmes in their own way. However, the tremendous nationalistic pull in overall sentiment and language ultimately forced them to adopt a nationalistic posture in both size and shape. The writer also does not raise much objection to that. One of the proofs for that is: the play used the term ‘mother’s language’ by avoiding the comparatively subtle points in the demand for ‘state-language’; and the term ‘mother’s son’ was highlighted as the main target of state repression. However diverse the demands of the Ekushey Movement might have been, however expansive it might have been in the social and political horizon, not a single moment elapsed in making the nationalistic tune of East Bengal its prime component. The play ‘Kabor’ bears testimony to that very deeply.

The writer is a professor the Department of Bangla, University of Dhaka, curenly serving on deputation as Director General of Bangla Academy

Translation: Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed

Reference and Courtesy : Special supplement on 21 February 2026, Press Information Department.

Verses of Ekushey

Hasan Hafiz

In consciousness is it fountain of light
In cyclone or gusty storm
It lives forever
Burns with resolute valour.

Paying with blood's high price
The soul gets language
It is the nectar of vitality,
Shows the path in darkness
The stones of regression
Erode unceasingly,
The infinite glory of Ekushey
Speaks
With flowers
Respect and
Love,
Free soul till eternity
Sky-piercing martyrs' monument...

On blood-drenched highway
The impeccable simile of rose
Fuming in protest,
The habitat was dormant
Immortal sons of
The climate and soil,
The people
Rose up in protest
Not only for language
But in the spirit of freedom
Sharp, polished
Thunder-flowers bloom,
The conspiracies
Vicious and crooked
Repression, tortures
Washed away by blood-stream
In revolt and cataclysm,
Drawn with sun's alphabet
Resolute and courageous
The faces of martyrs.

Climbing the steps of Fifty-two
Sixty-nine, Seventy-one
After the tumultuous Ninety
Again Twenty-four –
The sequence in that order –
Inspiration's enduring provender.

Translation: Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed

*Reference and Courtesy : Special supplement on 21 February 2026,
Press Information Department.*

Liberation War : 1971

Ayub Syed

The War of Liberation... is an undivided manifesto
of the strength of spirit, An alphabet of killing field ,
An unflinching vow of emotive freedom
An unending narrative of the memories
Of the war field.

Besides, the sun rays are on way to glory
Millions of hearts rise in protest,
In the rage of grenade vigorous declaration
Of pride; On the other hand, the call of rebellion.

Liberation war... bayoneted nakedness of shame
In the fiery fight of heroic women
Lingering resonance of metallic spirit is heard !
In the blood smeared liberty the rhythm of poets
an ambience to stick of the mother land.
Radiant wisdom coloured in red - green...
Triumphant heroes... Bangladesh of Mine !

Translated by Professor Mujib Rahman



Career planning and development

Khaleda Begum

‘What do you want to be in life’ – a common question to all the children during their school life. It is one of the important topics of essays to be answered in school exams. Doctor, engineer, teacher, scientist, high official—are the candid answers. Secondary school students try to have the group of their preferences like Science, Commerce or Humanities and university students like to get the subjects required to fulfill their dreams. At the last part of their academic life youths explore the job sectors. This time, job vacancy advertisement in the newspaper or online become more interesting than the pages of sports and entertainment. Friends chatting limits in the discussion of job application, prepare documents. Coaching for Job exams and interview takes the places of school-college

coaching. Now, shelves are filled with job interview books, BCS guidebooks, bankers’ recruitment guides. Online browsing is destined to get a placement in any work place. Some attend seminars, workshop and job fairs as a part of extending research and other skills.

Among career preferences, civil service takes the lead and huge preparation follows. Tough competition is there in the series of exams – preliminary, written, viva-voce; medical test, police verification that finally ends with an appointment letter. What a relief...after such a big fight! Dream comes true! This is really unbelievable, after crossing all these hurdles, now; one becomes an officer and ‘no more unemployed’. An amazing feeling with a new settlement in life as if one is flying in the sky. Life carries the status of having a new office, a prestigious position, social status, and above all, a source of regular earning. Smile in the faces of loved ones makes you happier than before. Life acts free from all sorts of applications, exams and anxiety. That person remains busy with some routine tasks from morning to evening. However, there are some fundamental trainings and service related exams for being permanent in the service and to be eligible for promotions. After successful completion of these formalities, life becomes smooth and steady again.



Nevertheless, is it enough, and is it the complete happiness? What do you think? No, this is not okay. Among all these businesses if you look around, for government officers, there are many windows including higher study both at home and aboard, deputation and lien. Of course work comes first; there is no compromise with sincerity in the work place. Therefore, you have to search after proper accomplishment of the tasks you are assigned with. Some preparations and planning are also required in this case.

As a part of planning, the whole length of career path could be divided into different segments like 5 or 10 years. If your job length is 30 years and more, and you can divide it into 5 parts; then each part will have 5 years or more. In the initial years or the first 5 years officers remain busy with having basic trainings, professional and senior scale exams and overseas higher studies. The lucky one gets their first promotion after the successful completion of first 5 years. One or two transfer orders may be issued for officers in this phase under normal procedure by this time.

Career development goals are set during the first few years of service. In fact, career plan depends on individual's interest and actions are taken accordingly. Some are highly ambitious and take challenges to work in new places and environment. Normally, these drives are taken in the second 5 years of the career path which creates the foundation for the next 20 years. Officers search for deputation in different offices and sometimes peruse for lien. Because posting in a new office might have more facilities than his or her present office. Lien in international organizations and multinational projects might offer higher salaries and other amenities. These endeavors continue in the third and fourth 5 years of the service trajectory.

Officers usually get their 2nd and 3rd promotion by this time. At this point an officer reaches the mid level of career when he or she has to take on leadership roles. At the fourth stage, the leaders reach the strategic level when he or she must make plan for taking his/her organization ahead, lead his/her team to achieve

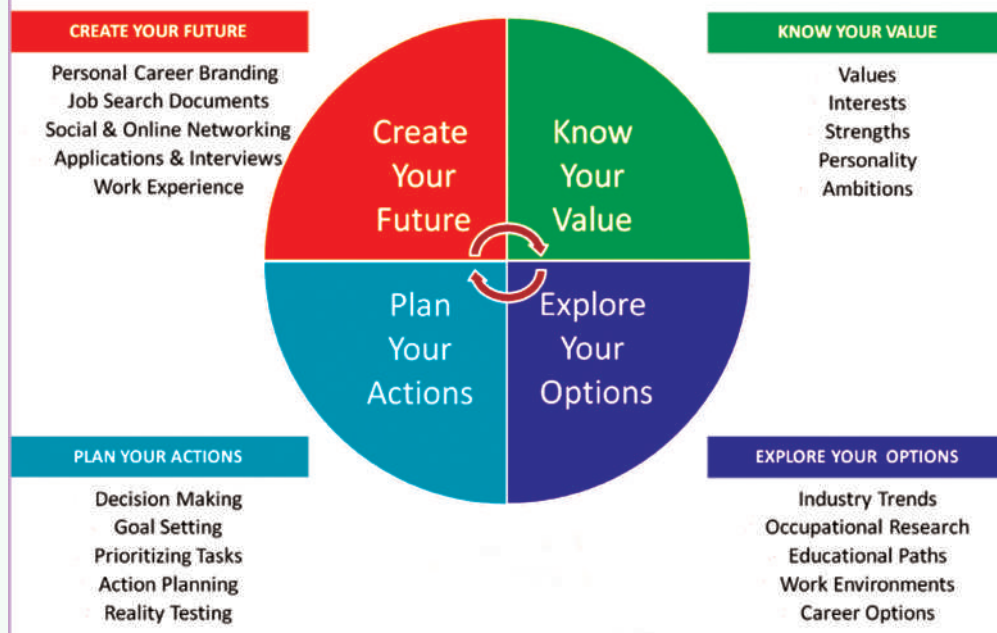
the goals of the office. At the fifth and final stage career path involves strategic thinking and mentorship to advance into executive roles or a higher level of expertise. Exploring external opportunities including consulting, contracting or moving to a larger place to increase scope and impact might be the concern at this stage. Besides these, during this time leaders not only think about his/her career but also create opportunities for the junior colleagues.

Search for higher study and training

Website of the Ministry of Public Administration is the main source of information to find circular on higher study with scholarships; and different trainings for government officers. Regular visit to this website will provide appropriate information to the interested officers. Scholarships are mainly awarded by our development partners including Australia, Japan, China, India, Thailand, USA, UK and so on. Subjects, on which officers can do Masters are Public Administration, Public Policy, Climate Change, Economics, Public Policy and Governance,



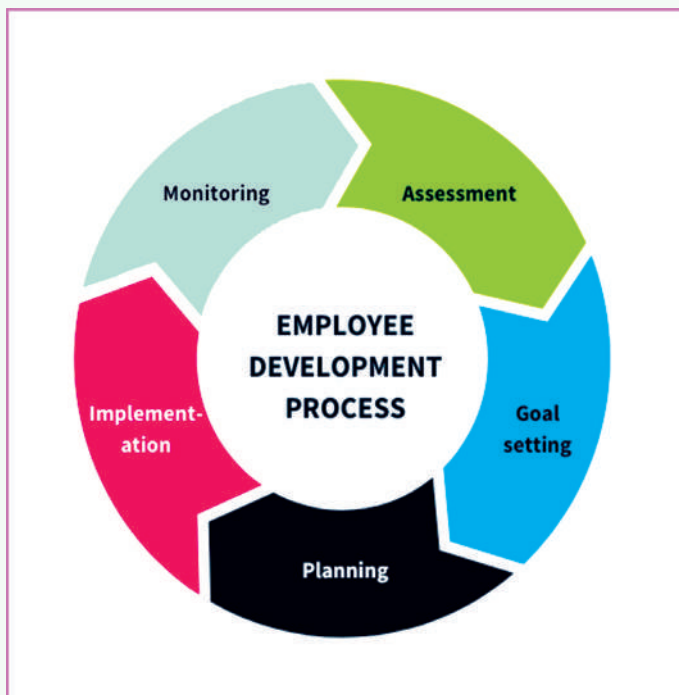
Career Development Model



Renewable and Sustainable Energy, Development Studies, Environmental Management, Energy Study, Gender and Women Studies, Engineering Studies, International Relations (International Peacekeeping), Civil Engineering, Global Economics, Global Project Management, Terrorism, Security and Policing, Educational Leadership, Accounting and Finance and so on.

Officers can do their PhD in Environmental and Conservation Science, Economics, Energy Economics, Management, Business and Informatics, Agribusiness, Humanities, Law, Development Economics, Educational Development, E-Governance and so on. For Diploma they can choose Project Management, Road Management and Engineering, Comparative Criminology and Justice, Social Policy, Conservation and Land Management and other subjects.

Many prominent universities in the USA, UK, Australia, Japan, China, India, South Korea, Thailand such as Harvard University, University of Texas, Minnesota State University, Oxford University, University of Bedfordshire, University of Birmingham, University of Manchester, University of Essex, University of Southampton Australian National, Flinders University, Monash University, Macquarie University, University of Malaya, Griffith University, Central Queensland University, Hiroshima University, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Duke University, ITC-ILO (USA), NCGG, AIT (Italy), National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA-Vietnam), Staff College of India (ASCI), JICA-TIC (Japan), KDI School of Public Policy and Management, South Korea



and many others offer post graduate courses to Bangladesh professionals.

English proficiency test like International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is a must for availing these courses. A few months of rigorous practice of the four sections of this course including reading, writing, listening and speaking will yield a handsome result here. Practice is crucial for the IELTS exam because it helps candidates becoming familiar with the test

format, identifying and improving weaknesses, building speed and confidence, and understanding how to meet specific scoring requirements. Regular practice, especially through full mock tests, ensures candidates to prepare for the pressure and timing of the actual exam.

It's not necessary that government officers will apply only for government scholarships. On obtaining required qualification they can apply personally according to their own interest and seek permission from the government. Interested officers should go through the 'Public Administration Training and Higher Studies Policy 2023' to have proper guidance regarding higher studies and training so as to develop their career.

In fact, the term 'Career' does not mean only a job, morning to evening engagement for accomplishing some tasks. Rather it is also a journey towards attaining a destination and the path for that destination must be engrained with proper knowledge, practice and upgraded skills. The Oxford definition portrays Career as a person's progress through life, often focusing on a chosen profession or sequence of related jobs with advanced opportunities. While, 'Development' refers to the process of growth, improvement or advancement, especially in knowledge and skills, is making "career development" a lifelong process of managing one's work journey for growth and achievement. Therefore, in every stages of our career trajectory, we must try to reach a newer height with depth and dimension through our self-improvement.

Khaleda Begum is a Civil Servant of the Bangladesh Government



Family Cards: Hope and Beyond

Parikshit Chowdhury

Let me start with a scene many Bangladeshi families know too well. A woman in Dhaka wakes before dawn and moves from one household to another, working as a domestic helper. Her income has barely kept pace with rising prices. She often skips a meal so her children can eat. She cannot visit a doctor when necessary and has to postpone buying school supplies. For her, every household expense becomes a careful calculation. Her story is not unique; it is the reality for millions across Bangladesh.

In February, inflation stood at 9.13 percent, while wages increased by only about 8 percent. On paper, the gap looks small. But in real life, it is the difference between eating and going to bed hungry. It is the difference between seeing a doctor



Prime Minister Tarique Rahman after inaugurating 'Family Card' program poses with the family card recipients at a photo session at the T&T playground adjacent to Korail slum Banani, Dhaka on 10 March 2026



Prime Minister Tarique Rahman delivers financial assistance through mobile financial system to 37,567 beneficiaries under Family Card Piloting Phase in the inaugural program of 'Family Card' at Banani, Dhaka on 10 March 2026

and silently enduring pain. It is the quiet moment when a child stops going to school because the family simply cannot afford it.

This hardship did not appear overnight. It began with the COVID-19 pandemic, which left lasting scars. Then the Russia-Ukraine war started, and once again the cost of food and fuel rose across the world. Now, the ongoing USA-Israel-Iran war has shaken the Middle East, a region that connects global trade routes. Vital shipping lanes have been disrupted, oil supplies have become uncertain, and businesses that depend on this region are struggling to operate normally.

For countries far away, including Bangladesh, these distant conflicts arrive in the form of anxiety over higher prices, fewer opportunities, and harder daily choices. This is no longer just about economics. It is about survival, sacrifice, and the quiet resilience of people trying to endure another day.

Buried with burden

During these shocks, women- especially those on the margins- absorb the impact first and most deeply. The domestic worker, the widow raising her children alone, and the rural mother stretching a day's earnings across a week are among the earliest victims of these hardships.

When prices rise, it is often women who adjust. They quietly carry the burden of keeping families afloat by sacrificing their own needs. Their sacrifices rarely appear in economic data, but they define the lived reality of poverty.

Right now, around 18 to 19 percent of Bangladesh's population lives below the poverty line. Even more concerning, about 5 to 6 percent live in extreme poverty. Behind these numbers are families who are not just struggling to get ahead, but struggling to get by. In many homes, mothers skip meals so their children can eat, yet those children still grow up facing malnutrition and limited opportunities.

Poverty, in this sense, is not only about income. It is about the constant trade-offs people are forced to make- between food and medicine, between education and survival, between today's needs and tomorrow's hopes.

Policy with women first

This is why the Family Card initiative has drawn such attention. It is not just another social safety net. It signals a shift in thinking- one that places women at the centre of economic support. Notably, The Family Card initiative began as a pledge in the BNP manifesto, a promise of Prime Minister Tarique Rahman to place support where it is needed most. It reflects a commitment to fairness and inclusion, with a clear focus on women who lead their families- the pilot phase of the initiative, covering 40,000 households, was launched by the Prime Minister in March this year. Each family is receiving Tk 2,500 per month or the equivalent in essentials such as rice, lentils, oil, and sugar. The payments are made directly into the bank accounts or mobile wallets of the woman heading the household, eliminating intermediaries and delays. The program combines careful door-to-door field surveys with digital verification. This double-checked process



Prime Minister Tarique Rahman distributes 'Family Card' to the women beneficiaries at Banani T&T playground adjacent to Karail slum on 10 March 2026



Prime Minister Tarique Rahman after inauguration of the 'Family Card' program exchanges greetings with the women present on 10 March 2026

is designed not just to provide aid, but to restore confidence that social protection can be both compassionate and transparent.

This direct approach to fund transfer is significant. It ensures that assistance reaches the intended recipient without passing through multiple hands. More importantly, by placing financial control in the hands of women, it recognizes the role they already play in managing households and making difficult decisions every day.

The program's emphasis on women aligns with decades of development research. Nobel laureate Amartya Sen's capability approach emphasizes that poverty is not only about income but about the freedom and capacity to live a dignified life. Philosopher Martha Nussbaum underscores the importance of women's autonomy in controlling resources as essential for genuine development. Social scientists such as Sylvia Walby highlight that economic independence is a foundation for breaking patriarchal constraints. By placing resources in women's hands, the Family Card program operationalizes these insights, transforming economic support into a social and political statement.

Bangladesh has seen glimpses of this approach before. In the early 1990s, under Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, education for girls was made free up to secondary level, later strengthened by stipend programs that helped keep girls in school. Expanding access to education for girls created long-term social gains. But education alone is not enough. Without economic agency, many women remain



LGRD Minister Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir distributes 'Family Card' to the women beneficiaries at the premises of Rahimanpur Sammilito Eidgah Alim Madrasha in Thakurgaon Sadar Upazila, Thakurgaon on 10 March 2026

dependent and vulnerable. What the Family Card attempts to do is to bridge that gap by combining financial support with direct control.

Who qualifies and how it works

The success of the program depends heavily on how well it identifies those who truly need support.

The first and foremost strategy the government is implementing aims at families who need help most. This includes landless households, women heading their families, people with disabilities, daily wage earners, and other marginalized communities. At the same time, households with government jobs, employees of state or semi-state institutions, or those with significant assets such as cars, air conditioners, or large savings will not qualify.

Applicants will provide basic identification and contact information, which will then be checked against official records. Digital cross-checking will help prevent duplication and improve accuracy, while on-the-ground surveys will ensure that those without digital access are not excluded.

Although the exact application process is still being finalized, the intention is clear. The system will combine human judgment with technological tools to create a fair and transparent selection process. This balance is important, especially in a country where both inclusion and accountability must go hand in hand.

According to a study by a local think tank RAPID, if effectively implemented, the Family Card program could reduce overall poverty from 18.7 percent to 11.3 percent, while extreme poverty could drop from 5.6 percent to 2.2 percent. In absolute terms, this initiative has the potential to lift 1.23 crore people out of poverty and help 1.56 crore families escape economic vulnerability.

Lessons from beyond our borders

Bangladesh is not alone in leveraging social protection programs to empower women. Countries like Brazil, Mexico, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, and South Africa have implemented cash transfer programs targeting women, widely recognized by the World Bank, UNDP, Asian Development Bank, and Inter-American Development Bank. In Brazil, the Bolsa Família program channels benefits directly to mothers, improving family nutrition and school attendance. Mexico's Prospera initiative similarly provides conditional cash transfers to women, leading to measurable improvements in child health and female labor participation. In India, schemes such as the Janani Suraksha Yojana and direct benefit transfers for women-headed households have empowered women economically and socially, while Pakistan's Ehsaas program offers financial aid to female family heads, promoting financial inclusion and reducing vulnerability. The findings of World Bank, UNDP, and the Asian Development Bank show that directing financial support to women leads to better outcomes in nutrition, education, and health.

The lesson is clear. When women have control over resources, the benefits ripple through families and communities. Poverty reduction becomes more sustainable, and social development gains momentum.

Of course, these programs also highlight the challenges. Ensuring accurate targeting, preventing exclusion, and maintaining transparency are ongoing concerns. Bangladesh will need to navigate these carefully. But the global evidence offers reassurance that the overall direction is sound.

A hope to reshape the future

The Family Card initiative is more than financial support; it is a recognition of the vital role women play in sustaining families. For the woman who wakes before dawn to work in others' homes, a steady monthly transfer is not just money. It means her children can eat nutritious meals, healthcare can be accessed without delay, and school supplies are no longer a luxury. It brings stability to an uncertain world and allows her to make decisions that protect her family's health and future.

Beyond material aid, the program restores dignity. When support arrives in her name, it affirms her role not just as a caregiver but as a decision-maker. With financial control comes voice- within the household, her choices gain weight, and over time, this can reshape relationships, expectations, and even communities, fostering a more inclusive society.

Bangladesh faces global shocks- from pandemics to wars- that have strained families' livelihoods. Yet these challenges also offer an opportunity to redesign support systems. With transparency, fairness, and no political bias, the Family Card can become more than a safety net. It can be a model how poverty reduction and meaningful empowerment go hand in hand, offering millions not just survival, but hope, dignity, and a path toward a better future.

Parikshit Chowdhury is a government officer and a regular contributor on public policy and development, writes for newspapers, online platforms, and magazines



Empowerment or Illusion? Rethinking Women's Progress in Bangladesh

Nadia Fairuz

go beyond sugar-coated stories and regular celebrations and look more closely at power, institutions, and accountability. International Women's Day is a day when people all over the world celebrate women's accomplishments. It is also a chance to think critically about the limits of current methods of empowering women, especially in developing countries where structural barriers are still very strong. Gender equality, therefore, remains uneven not because of a lack of recognition, but because empowerment has too often been treated as symbolic rather than transformative.

History of Women's Day

Talking about the instances of early human civilization, the invention of agriculture is something that is most probably and widely known knowledge about women's credit to civilization, while other crucial contributions are seemingly meant to be forgotten! To enhance the comprehension of the chronology towards the current situation, the nineteenth century serves as a valuable point of reference.

The history of international women's day actually has roots in radical socialist politics, traced back to European and North American labor movements that

The essence of empowerment

The world today is claimed to be more equal for women and girls than ever before, but the reality is too fragile, and too uneven. Every ten minutes, a woman is killed by member/s of her own family. The representation of women in the workforce has remained stable for several decades. Women and girls contribute minimally to climate change but endure the most severe consequences. And at this rate, a girl born today will be 40 years old before women occupy as many parliamentary seats as males. These realities expose a fundamental paradox within the modern gender equality discourse: formal advancements have not resulted in meaningful empowerment for women.

This difference between what was promised and what actually happened shows that we need to



Women entrepreneurs in bangladesh

emerged around the turn of the 20th century. As factories became the primary sites of production, women began to engage in paid labor on an unprecedented scale. The incorporation of women into industrial manufacturing exposed them to harsh working conditions, long hours, unsafe environments, and extremely low wages. For the first time, women encountered exploitation both domestically and in the public economic sphere, intensifying their collective awareness of injustice and soon translated into organized resistance. Women workers from the garment and textile industries began mass demonstrations demanding shorter working hours, better wages, and political rights. One of the notable mobilizations occurred in New York in 1908, when thousands of women garment workers marched to protest inhumane working conditions and to demand suffrage.

By the first decade of the twentieth century, New York had become centers of garment and textile production, employing tens of thousands of immigrant women in very low age. These women worked in overcrowded factories under brutal conditions: twelve to fourteen hours workdays, fire hazards, wages barely sufficient for survival leading maximum profit to the factory owners. Repeated strike incidents between 1907 and 1909 gradually revealed the political powerlessness of women workers like- they could protest, but they could not vote; they could organize, but they had no institutional leverage over laws governing labor conditions. Inside socialist circles, this reality produced a strategic realization: women workers were essential to the working-class movement, yet they remained marginalized both by capitalism and by male-dominated labor unions. They were seen as a double-exploited class, oppressed as both workers and as women.

Women produced wealth for the system but had no political voice within it. By framing women's rights as a collective political issue rather than a private moral concern, the Socialists transformed feminist awareness into a mass political project. Building on this momentum, the Socialist Party of America established the first "National Woman's Day" on February 28, 1909.

But within these socialist movements, women were often treated as secondary participants. Many male socialist leaders thought class revolution will instinctively free women, henceforth they had no regard for suffrage or gender-specific demands. Socialist women activists, oppressed as workers and women, were frustrated. Clara Zetkin emerged as one of the most influential figures through her proposal in 1910, in challenging this neglect. She argued that women's oppression could not wait until after socialism ended, and that female workers needed to get politically active on their own. Zetkin believed that capitalism depended on two forms of women's labor: their cheap factory work and their unpaid domestic work in the home.

This made women central to the capitalist system, yet politically invisible within it. Aside from the fight against capitalism, she believed that women's freedom required them to be able to organize themselves as a political force. The idea for 1910 was based on the success of "National Woman's Day" in the United States in 1909, which was put together by socialist women after big garment



Self-reliant woman



women Police

worker strikes in New York. International socialist networks spread news of these protests, inspiring European activists. Zetkin and her colleagues saw in this example a powerful strategy: a single day of coordinated action could connect women workers across borders, amplify their demands, and increase women's rights awareness in the worldwide socialist movement.

The 1910 Copenhagen conference confronted several overlapping crises: the exclusion of women from voting rights in most European states, the worsening conditions of women workers under industrial capitalism, and the marginal position of women inside male-dominated labor parties. Zetkin's proposal for an annual International Women's Day was both symbolic and strategic and the proposal was adopted unanimously because it answered a collective need. Socialist women desired a way to have both governments and their own parties pay more attention to women's rights. International Women's Day would connect feminism with socialism by tying women's rights to class struggle and putting women's needs into a larger criticism of capitalism making the day never meant to be a celebration of women; rather meant to be a planned political intervention in world history.

The first implementation of this idea took place in 1911 in Germany, Austria, Denmark, and Switzerland who had strong socialist parties, active labor unions, and growing women's movements. More than a million women and men participated in rallies, marches, and public meetings. Their demands were centered on the right to occupy public office, improved working conditions, universal suffrage, and the

prevention of legal discrimination. These demonstrations were confrontational in nature, as they directly challenged both state authority and the economic order that depended on inexpensive female labor.

These early protests turned International Women's Day into a strong political tool. Its most historically decisive transformation occurred not in Western Europe, but in the volatile conditions of wartime. As industrial capitalism grew unevenly and the stresses of imperial war grew worse, women's fights over work and survival became linked to bigger problems with the legitimacy of the state. This confluence was most apparent in Russia, where International Women's Day in 1917 changed from a day of planned protest to the spark that started a revolution. In Russia, female laborers held a distinctive structural role within an economy burdened by rapid industrialization and complete warfare. Concentrated in textile industries and burdened with ensuring domestic survival, they encountered severe food shortages, inflation, and political marginalization. The prolonged exploitation under the Tsarist dictatorship, coupled with the destruction wrought by World War I, shifted the demands for sustenance and remuneration into calls for peace and political reform. Started in February 1917, women textile workers' march on International Women's Day evolved into a widespread insurrection that involved troops and industrial workers. The February Revolution and the abdication of the Tsar were the end results of a series of events that began with these protests on 8 March. Russian women were granted the opportunity to vote shortly thereafter. International Women's Day was forever associated with revolutionary politics as a result of this affair, which established March 8 as its official date.



Women at peacekeeping mission of UN



Female UN peacekeepers from Bangladesh Army

Recognition from the United Nations

Following the Bolshevik Revolution in late 1917, the newly established Soviet authority formalized this legacy. In 1921, during the Second International Conference of Communist Women in Moscow, 8 March was officially designated as International Women's Day to commemorate the contributions of women workers in instigating the revolution. During Vladimir Lenin's leadership, the Soviet state endorsed the day as an expression of its ideological dedication to women's liberation via labor, education, and political engagement. Subsequently, International Women's Day was established as an official annual observance in socialist nations, encompassing China, Eastern Europe, and later a significant portion of the Global South. During the interwar period and subsequent to World War II, International Women's Day expanded beyond communist nations into newly decolonizing societies, when women's movements linked gender equality with national liberation and growth. By the mid-twentieth century, the day transcended socialist doctrine and was gradually embraced by wider feminist movements advocating for legal equality, education, and social rights.

Gender issues gradually acquired institutional recognition within the United Nations. The Commission on the Status of Women was established in 1946, marking the first formal recognition that women's equality necessitated dedicated

international attention. The United Nations adopted conventions on the political rights of women and equality in marriage and employment during the 1950s and 1960s. However, these endeavors were inconsistently enforced and fragmented. In the early 1970s, it became evident that women's inequality was not solely a legal issue, but a human rights and development crisis.

The constraints of liberal democracy were being challenged by feminist movements in Western capitalist societies. Second-wave feminism confronted issues such as workplace discrimination, domestic violence, and reproductive rights, thereby exposing contradictions between formal equality and lived inequality.

These movements produced intellectual frameworks, including “Women in Development” (WID), that had an impact on international institutions. Development economists and policy planners began to contend that modernization had not necessarily enhanced the status of women; in numerous instances, capitalist industrialization had exacerbated their exploitation by concentrating them in informal, low-wage sectors and maintaining patriarchal family structures. Consequently, gender inequality was reclassified as a systemic failure of development rather than a residual cultural issue. The influence of Cold War politics was also crucial. As part of the ideological rivalry, both socialist and capitalist blocs endeavored to assert moral leadership regarding women's rights. Western states prioritized individual rights and political freedoms, while socialist states highlighted women's formal legal equality and labor participation. The United Nations was transformed into a neutral platform that enabled the translation of these competing models into a universal discourse of development and equality.



Women working at Garments sector



Women at service sector

The organization was able to integrate socialist traditions of International Women's Day with liberal human rights rhetoric and postcolonial development priorities by declaring 1975 as International Women's Year. In this regard, the declaration was not merely a commemorative act; it was a geopolitical compromise that transformed a historically radical, class-based movement into a globally acceptable policy agenda. Eventually, the First World Conference on Women took place in Mexico City in 1975. The World Plan of Action, which established a connection between women's equality and national development strategies, education, health, and employment, was developed at the conference, which assembled delegates from 133 countries and hundreds of activists and observers. Women's rights were integrated into international planning mechanisms for the first time, rather than being regarded as discrete legal issues. The UN Decade for Women (1976–1985) was also established at the conference, which institutionalized gender equality through continuous monitoring, research, and policy coordination.

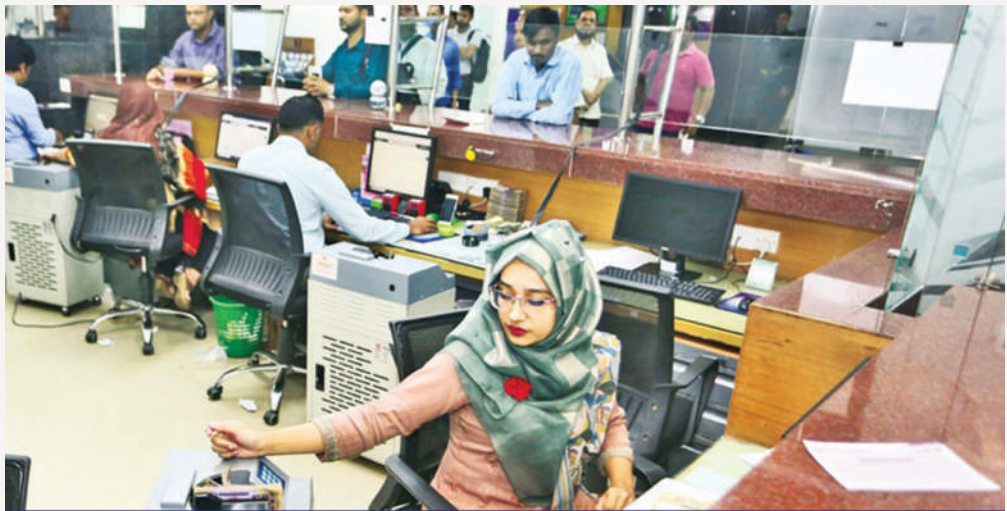
Women Empowerment in Bangladesh: Progress, Paradox, and Persistent Constraints

Women's involvement in wage earning activities is viewed as a process of empowering them. This is particularly important in third world countries where hierarchical gender relations exist between men and women. Women's earnings change the status of women in the family and increase their participation in decision making, transforming the patriarchal power relations into a more gender equitable one as found in a number of studies. After decolonization the agriculture based

economy of the third world countries saw a massive shift to industrialization. To run this economy it needs a huge bulk of labor supply and women became the main drive force due to their marginalized position in gendered belief and cultural practices in the society.

The contemporary phase of feminism in the South Asian subcontinent, which is frequently referred to as a unique “fourth wave” within a Third World feminist tradition, cannot be interpreted as a conventional derivative of Western feminist movements. It emerged from a historical landscape that was influenced by colonialism, anti-colonial nationalism, postcolonial state formation, and persistent socio-economic inequality. Contrary to earlier liberal feminist struggles, which were primarily focused on suffrage and legal equality, South Asian feminism has been intricately linked to issues of political legitimacy, religion, poverty, and education. Its intellectual foundations can be traced back to reformist thinkers like Begum Rokeya, who emphasized the importance of women’s education and rational thought in order to challenge both colonial domination and indigenous patriarchal systems. Rokeya’s writings interpreted empowerment as the development of intellectual autonomy among women, rather than as an imitation of Western modernity. She contended that ignorance, rather than biology, was the actual cause of women’s subordination. Consequently, education became the initial arena of feminist struggle in the subcontinent, establishing a connection between personal liberation and social transformation.

In the late twentieth century, activists like Kamala Bhasin further developed this tradition by articulating feminism as a critique of the intersecting systems of capitalism, caste, patriarchy, and class. Bhasin’s research underscored the interconnectedness of economic dependency and cultural control with the



Women in banking sector



Women at business sector

oppression of women in South Asia. Her emphasis on grassroots mobilization, language-based activism, and popular education was indicative of a subcontinental feminist perspective that prioritized collective consciousness over individual success. Empowerment was redefined during this period of feminism as a struggle over social norms, domestic labor, and bodily autonomy, rather than solely access to formal rights. Although voting and legal equality were considered significant, they were considered insufficient without economic independence and ideological transformation. Parallel to these intellectual movements, the extraordinary ascent of women to the highest positions of political authority in Asia was a phenomenon that both challenged patriarchal norms and exposed the intricacies of political representation. In addition to the long-standing examples of Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia in Bangladesh, the region has witnessed women serving as heads of state and government in a variety of contexts. These include Indira Gandhi in India, Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan, Sirimavo Bandaranaike historically in Sri Lanka, Park Geun-hye, Tsai Ing-wen, Haley V. Sheikh, and Maha Vajiralongkorn in ceremonial and constitutional roles with substantial influence. More recently, the geographic scope of women's political leadership has been exemplified by figures such as Sahle-Work Zewde (who, despite not being Asian, is frequently incorporated into comparative discussions of global female leadership) and Bidya Devi Bhandari. These cases illustrate that women in Asia have attained formal political authority in a variety of historical moments and regimes.

But this kind of exposure often goes hand-in-hand with aristocratic or dynastic politics instead of broad feminist institutionalization. Many of these leaders rose to power through political families, movements, or parties, demonstrating the ability to circumvent patriarchal systems without fundamental change. Female leadership has normalized women in top posts and inspired millions, but it has not always changed male-dominated party hierarchies, economic power relations, or social standards. The political leadership of women in Asia highlights a crucial tension: power redistribution remains incomplete, even though top participation can symbolize progress.

The Paradox, and Persistent Constraints

The paradox becomes most visible when one examines the everyday conditions of women in Bangladesh and the resistance faced by reformist agendas. Empowerment remains fragile and conditional for the majority of women, despite their constitutional rights to vote, access education, and even hold the highest political positions. The majority of working women are concentrated in low-wage sectors, such as informal labor and garments, where they lack employment security, maternity protection, and bargaining power. Economic insecurity remains a central constraint. The financial dependence on spouses perpetuates unequal power dynamics within households, rendering women susceptible to domestic violence, divorce, or abandonment. Autonomy is further restricted by social norms, as decisions regarding education, marriage, mobility, and employment are frequently determined by family and community pressure rather than individual choice. In



Woman as health care provider

this context, empowerment is less a matter of freedom and more a negotiation for survival within the intersecting authorities of family, religion, and state.

A critical illustration of these tensions emerged during the interim government period with the formation of the Women's Reform Commission. The commission aimed to evaluate discriminatory laws and suggest reforms regarding women's protection from violence, family law, and inheritance rights. Its proposals were consistent with international conventions and reflected a contemporary rights-based framework that prioritized institutional safeguards and legal equality. Nevertheless, the commission failed to account for the extent of ideological resistance that is deeply ingrained in society. The reforms were not framed as social justice by conservative organizations; rather, they were perceived as an assault on cultural identity and religious values. This misinterpretation revealed a structural weakness: legal reform is politically vulnerable when social consensus is absent, and rights discourse without cultural translation is at risk of appearing elitist and foreign. The major backlash initiated by Hefazat-e-Islam exemplified the contested terrain in which women's rights are situated in Bangladesh. Hefazat organized substantial street demonstrations, contending that the proposed reforms were in direct opposition to Islamic principles and jeopardized the stability of the family. The technical policy debate was transformed into a mass ideological confrontation as a result of the movement's reliance on madrasa networks and rural constituencies. This episode illustrated that feminism in Bangladesh does not function within a neutral policy space, but rather within a power dynamic that is influenced by populist politics and religious authority. The Reform Commission's failure was not merely administrative; it exposed the limitations of top-down empowerment when reform is disassociated from religious discourse and grassroots engagement.

These developments demonstrate that subcontinental feminism is both reformist and constrained. It endeavors to pursue legal recognition, suffrage, and education; however, it is met with resistance that is based on economic dependency and moral authority. The legacy of philosophers such as Begum Rokeya and Kamala Bhasin underscored the importance of social reconstruction through collective struggle and consciousness. In contrast, contemporary reform initiatives frequently depend solely on institutional mechanisms. The contradiction is that women's empowerment is advocated for through policy and leadership symbolism, yet economic precarity, religious interpretation, and patriarchal control continue to influence daily life. This demonstrates the reason why empowerment in Bangladesh is visible but not powerful like, recognized in law, yet perpetually contested in society.

Nadia Fairuz is a freelance writer



Current State of Pottery Manufacturing in Bangladesh

Md. Mosharraf Hossain



Though pottery was considered an indispensable need to bygone everyday life of Bangladeshi populace, currently the situation is worse. Its craftsmanship now is surviving by manufacturing such items of commodity making those entirely dependent on the patronization of a trivial section of urban virtuoso. Expressively, the general people do no longer favor it. Even the artificers are also disregardful to it because of the prevailing situation. In spite of all, interestingly, its manufacturing is still being practiced sporadically.

The present-day potters produce ewer or jar useable for extracting juice from date tree, strainer fit for washing rice, cooking pot suitable to preparing rice-pies, knobbed lid, ritualistic censer, saucer, bowl for freezing card, fancy vase, wall-plate, flower tub, toy, puppet etc. in a lesser scale. But to produce any of those, they have to undergo a number of troublesome successive steps as follows.

Collection of earth: It needs dark clay slime i.e. clayey earth deposited in different depths of river bed or marshy land and is left in dumping either in a trench or under a protected shed for months together.

Preparation of collected slime: Requisite quantity of earth, taken from the dump, is pounded and watered in order to get soften consistency like that of a paste.



Collected soil

Elutriation: To the primarily prepared paste some tampering substances like that of fine grained sand, husk, pulverized terracotta, blood, dung, lime etc. are to be added in requisite quantity and churn up with sharp metal spike so as to remain no chunk, particle and whit intact.

Levitation: In this step the elutriated material is laid for filtering so as to feculent particle and even air bubble do not exist therein.

Kneading: Dough of requisite size is made from the levitated material and is left for one or two days

for bringing mild hydration.

Shaping: It faces any suitable options from three current processes.

(a) Hand poking and nudging: Most obsolete in nature, this process depends only on the proficiency and intuition of an artificer and now-a-days popular to the lady artificers. They prepare each part of a figure



Wheel

or a pot separately and thereafter unite together, all being by hand and finger alone.

(b) Coiling: Also dependent on hand and finger motivation, in this process an artificer first turns a dough into a tubular coil, in the second step transforms it into a sheet of requisite size, in the third step winds it up like a ring and in the fourth step sheets are placed one above the other until a desired shape is made. Usually a man-artificer starts placing sheets from the top to the bottom in order to form a desired shape. Conversely, a lady-artificer starts this placing from the bottom



Shaping phase



Shaping phase

and goes up until the top is made.

(c) Wheel turning: Earthen ware artificers' wheel is a special kind of device set on an axis stand so that it can be easily rotated in any direction. The upper side of the wheel just on the axis there should have a hub fitted with spokes that join it with the outer rim of the wheel. An artificer places the dough or conglomeration on the hub and when begins rotating he/she shapes a desired form with the manipulation of his/her hands as well as fingers.



Kiln

Surface treatment: The newly created forms are then kept three to four days untouched so as to their water content gets evaporation to a minimum degree and attain a bit of harden surface. Thereafter an oval shaped anvil is put against a corner inside and tapping is done on the outer surface by a flat mallet or dabber. It can further be followed by applying colored emulsion called slip and even either painting or applique of inscribing are applied. In the next step they are left for two or three days to further drying.

Backing/firing: All the mildly hydrated forms are now piled up over a kiln, mostly being shaped like that of a shallow tubby ditch or container overlaid by a perforated platform. Unfortunately we do not have any evidence of older kiln from Bangladesh other than one supposed to have been located near Ananda Rajar Bari in Mainamati of Cumilla district. Come what may be, a present-day kiln ditch is provided with a shallow channel at one corner that receives kindling inside. In piling regular terraces are maintained, each being covered with a layer of straw. Thus a kiln achieves the status of receiving fire action.

Control of temperature: Before delivering kindles into the kiln ditch or container, the artificers have to decide whether they would maintain controlled firing or not. In case of the former decision, they apply mud coating on the whole surface of the pile and continue hitting for twenty to twenty-four hours at a fixed average rate of



Items of luxury variety

700 degree to 800 degree centigrade. Thereafter the pile is left therein for further three to four days to cool.

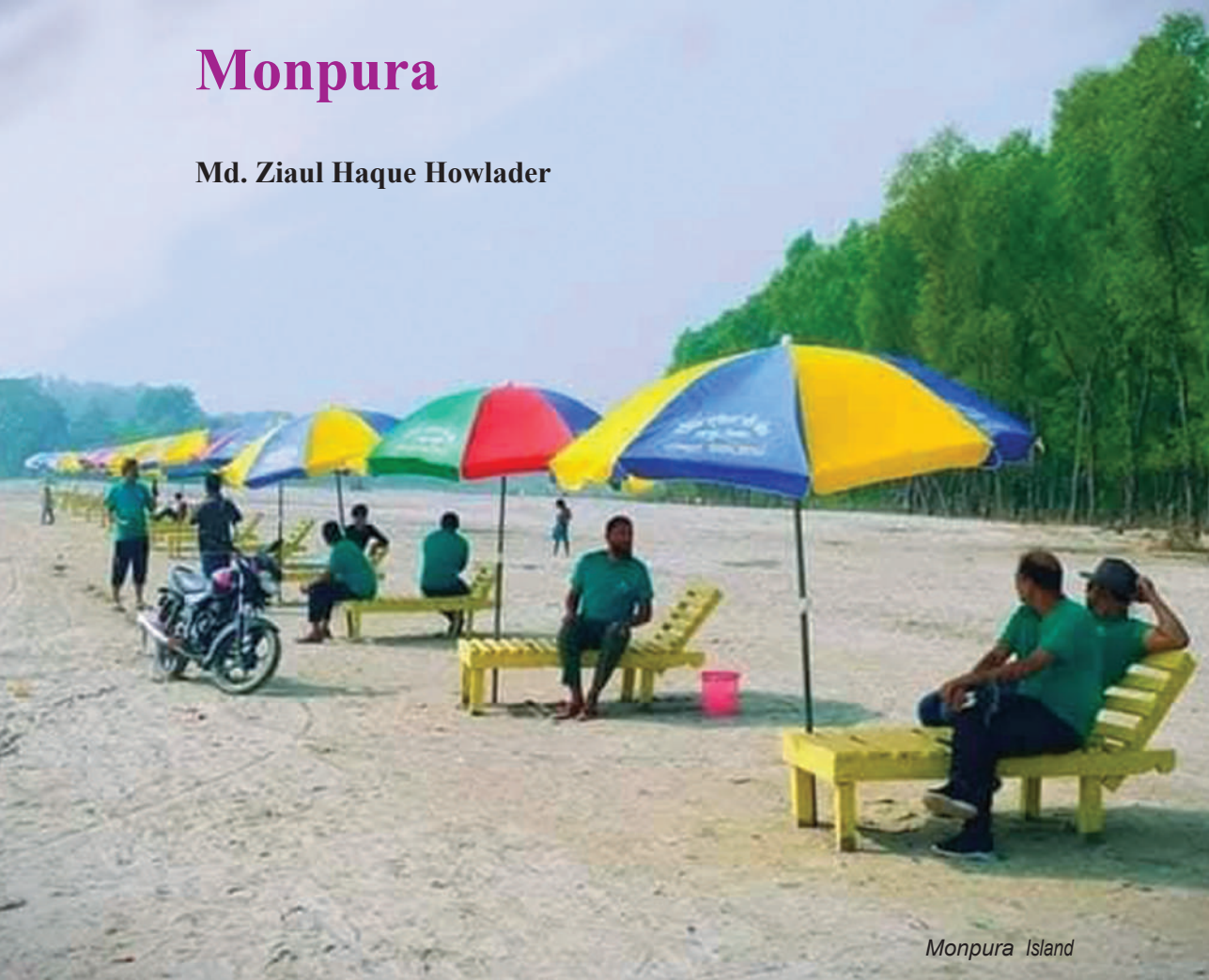
Final decoration: It is a casual decorative touch that may include the daubing with liquid pigment called 'wash' and even painting on the surface of a finished specimen.

The reason of its gradual deteriorating state may be termed unwanted. So, for preventing its further decadence it is our bounden duty to demarcate at least the root causes as a beginning. Through a recent (January, 2026) field study the author of this piece of writing observed at least three main reasons. (a) It is fragile and crude in nature in comparison to its metal, porcelain and celadon competitors. (b) The competitors are getting patronization from different corners. For example, since April of 1999, a plant has been running at Nabinagar in Savar of Dhaka district at the cost of taka 1,650 million and with technical assistance of NIKKO Company of Japan having capacity of manufacturing 10 tons of superior ware products. (c) The potters are being considered as lower community in the prevailing society. So, they are losing interest in this field.

Md. Mosharraf Hossain is a writer and art-historian

Monpura

Md. Ziaul Haque Howlader



Monpura Island

The breathtaking Monpura island has already been identified and documented as an important tourist destination in the development list by the Bangladesh government. The island has already started luring many tourists, especially the nature-lovers and river-cruisers. The movie ‘Monpura’ has already made an imprint in the minds of movie-lovers of Bangladesh. This movie thus helped Monpura Island to come to the forefront as an important tourist destination in the country. The very name Monpura itself denotes romanticism amongst the travel-loving people. It possesses a mesmerizing landscape of Bangladesh. The island is located in the northern Bay of Bengal, which borders the exit of the mighty Meghna River into the Bay. It falls under Bhola district. It is surrounded by the two largest islands of Bangladesh named ‘Bhola’ and ‘Hatia’. Total area of the Island is 373 square kilometers.



Sampan (one kind of boat) in Monpura Island



Red Crabs in Monpura beach



Tourists in the beach of Monpura island

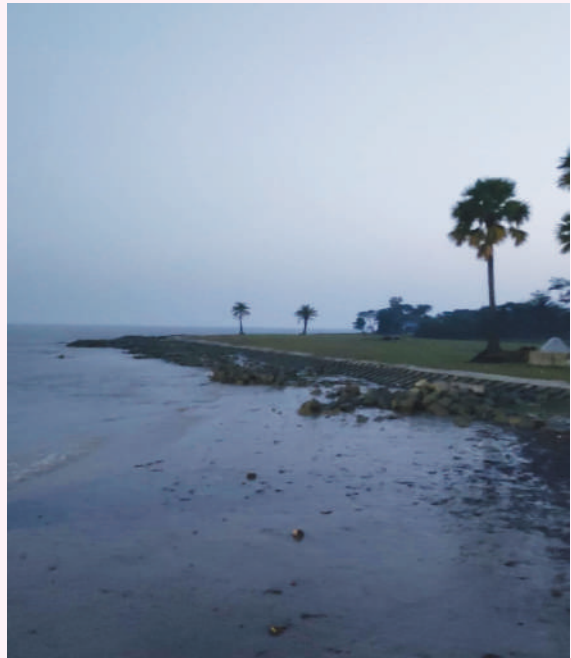


The mangrove area of Monpura island



One fine evening in Monpura island

The history of Monpura island varies according to sources. Owing to its geographical locations, the island always witnessed a booming population. The depiction of the island even was heard dates back to the 15th century, when travellers chose it for their business and settlement. Historians believe, the abundance of natural resources may have prompted the island's name 'Monpura'. The findings by the historians prove human settlements in this island date back to the early period of Mughal rules in the sub-continent.



One fine evening in Monpura island



Monpura Island, a serene place of natural beauty

There are many tourists attractions in the island, amongst which popular are - Dokhina Hawa Sea-beach, New Chara Bagan and Mangrove Forest, Deer Sanctuary, Monpura Landing Station, Chowdhury Project, many migratory birds etc. Dokhina Hawa sea beach is the largest one in the island. The beach looks like mostly Kuakata and Cox's Bazar sea beach. The perfect time to visit the sea-beach is during the sunrise and sunset as tourists will have an unobstructed breathtaking view to enjoy. The beach abounds with all sorts of amenities such as deck-chairs, hammocks, swings and small tree-houses etc. The landing station that stretched connecting bridge offers a breathtaking view of the sea as well as both the rising and setting of the crimson Sun. The bridge there is surrounded by the sea refreshed by soothing strong winds.

Another important attraction in the Monpura Island is 'Deer Sanctuary', which is a preserved area for wild deer. Tourists would enjoy the movement of deer hither and thither in the sanctuary. During the high tide, deer move in herd from one end to another end in the sanctuary. It is sometimes seen the crossing of deer halt the traffic of the roads near the sanctuary. Monkeys and pythons are also seen in the sanctuary. Chowdhury Project also appears as an important attraction as it offers

some space to have a view of the vastness of the sea and sky. It is a suitable place to spend some quality time with friends and family.

Monpura can be visited any day of the year; however, winter is the best time to visit the Island. Migratory birds flock to the island during winter that adds additional charm here. In summer, sometimes heat and torrential rain may cause inconvenience to the tourists. The common transports in the tiny island are – motorbike, auto rickshaws and easy bikes. Tourists can hire motorbike or easy bike for an entire day, which would cost 800-1000 Taka. There are several options to make overnight stay in Monpura. The Island has several budget hotels near Hazir Hat, Ramnewaj Bazar and Chowdhury Bazar; also has three Daak Bungalows for accommodations. Among the three Daak Bungalows - one is of government Daak Bungalow, the second one is the Press Club Guest House, and the third one is a private Bungalow named as Chowdhury Shaheen Daak Bungalows. Per seat cost at a Daak Bungalow is around 300-500 taka. There is also another Daak Bungalow, run by Bangladesh Water Development Board though its seats are rarely available.

There are some delicious cuisine in the island that tourists may enjoy. Chaler Roti (rice-flour cake), Duck Curries, Buffalo milk and yogurt made of Buffalo milk, fish curries and boiled traditional rice are popular here. Famous fishes here are – Hilsha, Vetki, Lobster, Boal etc.

The only means to travelling to Monppura island is waterway and lunches are the best mode of transport. Two launches named MV Farhan and MV Tashrif regularly ply from Sadarghat of Dhaka to directly Monpura. The launches leave Sadargat at around 5-6 pm in the afternoon and reach Monpura at 7 am next day. Each ticket at the deck costs Taka 500-600. There are also cabin in these launches. Per cabin costs Taka 1500-2000. Tourists are advised to avail cabin for a comfortable journey. Tourists are advised to travel carefully amidst stormy weather and carry drinking water with them. Littering in the islands is strongly discouraged.

The government may undertake a short and mid-term plan focusing the island to develop it as one of the most important island-based tourist destinations for the international tourists. For that here it require an uninterrupted all-weather river-connectivity, enhanced accommodation and dining facilities, visitors information and interpretation centre, eco-tourism and sustainable development most of all. Local people also need tourism and hospitality related trainings, such as- tour guiding, cooking, souvenir and handicrafts making, ICT, flower gardening, etc. Tourism can create many alternative jobs for the local educated youths and thus reduce the unemployment for the people in this island.

The writer is a tourism development activist



Visited Durham, a unique city in the UK

Dr. Syed Anwarul Haque

land, and an area to move around with all the other people there. It really is such a wonderful land.

The city of Durham is a world heritage site featuring Durham Castle, the University of Durham, and Durham Cathedral.

Durham, a unique city in the UK, is on a hilltop. Durham is such a city full of grandeur and activities. It has a university with a large number of students under different faculties. That is really difficult to think of. On the flat areas of Durham, where we sat most of the time, we were there. I found it full of the activities of the students and people roaming around.

During my visit to York, the UK, I visited Durham on October 4th, 2025. To my surprise, Durham is such a wonderful city on top of a hill I never thought of. We had initially some difficulties reaching the top flat areas of the hilly land, but eventually we overcame them. We finally reached the desired place, the market area, the main part of Durham.

It is difficult to think that eventually we arrived at our desired destination, the marketplace of Durham, with flat



Durham market place with a hero's statue

It was the town to buy every necessary article, including clothing. And also, to buy the groceries, food, and other articles of daily necessities. My son-in-law also bought some household necessities from there in the market in the flat areas of Durham.



Durham Cathedral, located high on the hilltop

We often sat there in the plain ground as others were doing to relax. There were people of different ages, including children, sitting there. We found a serene, atmospheric ideal to spend some time there and observe people going for different types of work as needed.

There was a hero's statue in the center of the flat land in Durham (photo 1), where other people and we with our family members were sitting. It was again a spectacular scene.

We could see the cathedral located on top, as well as a castle still further off from the plain land, where we were sitting. We could not think of reaching there, nor did we try to do so. It appeared to me impossible to reach there, so far away.

In the early days, castles were located on the top of the hills where invaders could not reach without difficulty. We also did not think of going there or trying to do so. Finally, we went to different parts of the flat areas of Durham to see more of the place. We saw a narrow creek at one corner and went down the stairs and close to the creek, where water was continuously flowing down. It was a wonderful sight, as the creek appeared to me. I have never seen such a creek. It was really an adventurous journey to the hilltop city in the UK.

I also found a narrow lane in Durham, where a lot of small shops were located, where articles of different kinds were sold. I found books, watches, and other necessities that could be bought there. But we passed through the lane without much notice of it.

There was a mini market in one corner of the flat areas of Durham. We had been there too. The mini market had a lot of small shops for mostly ladies' necessities, with jewelry and other small-scale items. I only looked through, while passing it. It was a narrow marketplace, where ladies, including my daughter and wife, made some purchases.

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Wings Over the Sundarbans: My Journey with Birds of Prey

Professor Dr. A N M Aminoor Rahman

Thirteen years ago on 26 January 2013, I had first seen this bird in flight while returning from Jamtola Sea Beach to Katka in the Sharankhola Range. The following year, on 14 March, I captured its flight photograph at close range over the Katka Beat Office. Later, in 2018, I saw the bird near Harintana within the same Range. On 20 July 2019, I encountered it near Karamjal in the Chandpai Range. I again observed the bird at Kochikhali in the Sharankhola Range on 27 March 2021 at noon. On 17 February 2023, I saw a pair sitting in their enormous nest near Dudhmukhi in the Chandpai Range. I observed another individual at Dimer Char, near Kochikhali in the Sharankhola Range on 28 September 2025. The bird that I have been speaking about is the White-bellied Sea Eagle—one of the extraordinary diurnal raptors of the Sundarbans. In Bangladesh the species is mostly found in the Sundarbans only.

Raptors of the Mangrove Sky

According to different sources, the Sundarbans of Bangladesh host between 270 and 300 species of resident and migratory birds. Among them are roughly 25 species of diurnal birds of prey—eagles, kites, buzzards, hawks, vultures, and related species. They belong to the order Accipitriformes. For many years, numerous biologists had sought to include them within the order Falconiformes alongside falcons. However, DNA studies conducted in 2008 revealed that falcons

After spending a couple of days observing bird and wildlife at Kokilmoni in the Sharankhola Range of the Sundarbans, we set off for Pokhir Khal, nestled between Andharmanik and Tambulbunia in the Chandpai Range. When the time reached 12:33 pm, a striking white-and-dark-brown bird drew the attention of all the photographers aboard the small launch, *MV Alor Kol*. Perched on a keora branch along the canal's edge, it remained motionless, patiently watching the water for prey. And then—what a moment! The sky and air of Kokilmoni seemed to tremble with the rapid clicks of our big cameras fitted with long lenses. As we continued photographing and the launch moved closer to the bird, the raptor took flight. We were fortunate to capture some flight images of the magnificent bird. The event took place on 27 December 2025.

are genetically closer to parrots and passerines than to eagle, kites, buzzards, hawks or vultures. The notable characteristics of members of the order Accipitriformes include a hooked beak, long and broad wings, and strong legs equipped with sharp talons. They typically form pair bonds for life, and in many cases the female is larger than the male. The order comprises nearly 250 species worldwide, of which 46 species are recorded in this country. These birds are divided into two families: Pandionidae (e.g., Osprey) and Accipitridae (e.g., White-bellied Sea Eagle, Brahminy Kite, Shikra, White-eyed Buzzard, Crested Goshawk etc.). Among the 25 species of diurnal raptors found in the Sundarbans, eight are more commonly observed. The following discussion focuses on these species.

1. Master of the Tidal Creeks: The Osprey

In search of the rare and Critically Endangered Masked Finfoot and two owl species, we traveled from Mongla to the Kalabogi Eco-Tourism Centre in the Khulna Range of the Sundarbans aboard the small launch *Alor Kol*. Around 8:00 am, we reached Kalabogi. It took another hour to arrive at the mouth of Hatdora Khal. But just as we were entering the canal, suddenly we encountered the master of the tidal creeks, a diurnal raptor. The event unfolded on 25 December 2025. We observed birds in Hatdora Khal for two days. On the second day, while returning, we saw the bird again. This time, under a bright sunny morning, we managed to take some excellent photographs of the bird. Whenever I visit the Sundarbans, I frequently encounter this migratory raptor. In 2019, I even saw it in July—perhaps that individual had not yet returned to its breeding grounds after migration.



Osprey diving toward prey at the mouth of Hatdora Khal, Kalabogi, Sundarbans

The raptor seen at Hatdora Khal is an uncommon migratory bird of Bangladesh—the Osprey, also known as the Fish Eagle or Fish Hawk. Its Bangla name is *Mecho Eagle*, *Mesho Baj* or *Machmoural* (West Bengal). The scientific name of this bird is *Pandion haliaetus*, belonging to the family Pandionidae. The species is distributed across all continents except Antarctica. The subspecies that migrates to Bangladesh during winter breeds in Europe, Central Asia, and North Africa. During winter, they are found singly or in scattered pairs across the Sundarbans, St. Martin's Islands, Sonadia Islands, and wetlands, rivers, and coastal regions throughout the country.

Adults measure 50–66 centimeter (cm) in length and weigh between 0.9 and 2.1 kilograms (kg). Their breeding season is March–April. They build enormous nests made of sticks on forked branches of trees near freshwater lakes or rivers, on the ground, on mountain tops, or even on telephone poles. Some nests can measure up to two meters in diameter and weigh as much as 135 kg. The same nest is used year after year. The female lays 2–4 white or yellowish eggs marked with dull reddish spots. She alone incubates the eggs, which hatch in 35–38 days. The nestlings learn to fly at 1.5–2.0 months of age. Lifespan is approximately 10 years.

2. Sentinel of the Forest Edge: The Crested Serpent Eagle

Throughout my visits to the Sundarbans, one species I encountered every time, which is a snake-eating hawk. Most recently, last December, I encountered several adults at Kokilmoni and Pokhir Khal, and on the final day, an immature



Juvenile Crested Serpent Eagle at Karamjal Eco-Tourism Center

bird at Karamjal. This snake-eating raptor is a very common resident bird of Bangladesh—the Crested Serpent Eagle. In Bangla which is known as *Shapchur*, *Shapkhaori*, *Shapkheko Baj*, *Tila Eagle*, *Dumba Eagle*, *Hadal Eagle* or *Tilaj Baj* (West Bengal). Its scientific name is *Spilornis cheela*, belonging to the family Accipitridae. Its global distribution is confined to Asia, where it is resident across South and Southeast Asia.

Adult birds measure 50–75 cm in length and weigh between 420 and 1,800 grams (g). They inhabit forest edges and rural areas, including the Sundarbans. Perched on leafless branches or soaring overhead, searching for prey. Folding their wings, they dive swiftly to capture non-venomous snakes such as rat snakes and vine snakes with their long talons. In the absence of snakes, they also feed on frogs, rodents, and lizards. Their breeding season is February–May. They build nests in the same location each year. The female lays a single white egg and incubates it alone. The egg hatches in 27–35 days, and the nestling fledges in about two months. Lifespan is around 13 years.

3. A Vanishing Giant: The White-rumped Vulture

About forty years ago, on a winter morning, I was traveling from our village home in Gazaria, Munshiganj, to my younger aunt's house in Hoglekandi in the same Upazilla. On the way, I saw 30–40 large birds feeding on a dead cow. Their enormous size frightened me so much that I could hardly move forward. That was the first time in my life I encountered such a fearsome diurnal bird.

In April 2011, I went to Sylhet Agricultural University to conduct examinations for veterinary students. After the exam, I visited Deorachhara Tea Estate in Moulvibazar with the late wildlife photographer Tania Khan and her husband, the late Munir Khan. There, high in a large tree, we saw two pairs of big birds with naked necks sitting on two separate nests, incubating eggs. Two years later,



Three White-rumped Vultures in a shade tree at Deorachhara Tea Estate, Moulvibazar

I revisited Deorachhara with Tania Apa and observed seven individuals. In the Sundarbans, however, I have seen them only once—at Laudobe near Karamjal and Dangmari in the Chandpai Range in January 2017.

This formidable-looking bird is the White-rumped Vulture, a very rare and Critically Endangered resident species in Bangladesh. It is also known as the Asian White-backed Vulture. Bangla name is *Shokun* or *Bangla Shokun*. Its scientific name is *Gyps bengalensis*. Besides Bangladesh, it occurs in India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. Once commonly seen in forest edges, open fields, villages, and dumping grounds, it is now largely confined to the Sylhet and Khulna divisions.

Adult birds measure 76–93 cm in length and weigh between 3.5 and 6.0 kg. The breeding season is September–March. They build large stick nests high in trees or on abandoned structures and reuse them year after year with minor repairs. The female lays a single bluish-white egg. Both parents incubate the egg, which hatches in 40–45 days. The nestling fledges at about three months of age. Lifespan is approximately 16 years.

4. Master of Many Forms: The Changeable Hawk-Eagle

Beginning at dawn, we searched around Jamtola Khal in Katka and its surrounding creeks for the rare Masked Finfoot, but found no trace of the Critically Endangered species. Instead, we satisfied ourselves photographing Ruddy Kingfisher, Brown-winged Kingfisher, Grey-capped Pigmy Wood-pecker, Rufous Woodpecker, Great Egret, Large Cuckoo-shrike and Scarlet Minivet. As we were returning toward the launch anchored near the Katka office area, we noticed a dark brown raptor perched on a large keora tree. This is the story of March 2014. Two years earlier, I had seen the same species in a village near Bagerhat. In January 2017, I encountered another light-colored morph of this bird near Dangmari in the Sundarbans. In February 2024, I observed a pair of two different color morphs nesting in a rain tree near Sherpur town.



Changeable Hawk-Eagle (Pale morph) in flight at Laudobe, Sundarbans

This uncommon resident raptor is the Changeable Hawk-Eagle, scientifically known as *Nisaetus cirrhatu*s. Bangla name is *Bohurupi Eagle*, *Kalo Eagle*, *Sikhajukto Eagle* or *Shabaj Sadal* (West Bengal). It inhabits open forests, forest edges, agricultural lands near forests, and wetlands throughout Bangladesh, including the Sundarbans. Outside the country, the raptor is distributed across South and Southeast Asia.

The bird measures 51–82 cm in length and weighs 1.3–1.9 kg. Because it molts several times a year, its plumage varies considerably. The breeding season is January–April. They construct nests high in trees using sticks and green leaves. The female lays a single egg, pale with reddish markings, and incubates it alone for about 40 days. The nestling fledges in 60–68 days. Lifespan is around 18–19 years.

5. Small but Formidable: The Shikra

While departing Katka for Andharmanik in the eastern forest division aboard the launch *Rajkannya*, the sun was directly overhead. At 4:45 pm, we entered Sundari Khal from the Shela River. Shortly afterward, we saw a family of small-clawed otters. Moving ahead, we noticed a small raptor perched on a dead tree branch. Although I had seen the species earlier in Kaptai National Park in Rangamati, this was my first close encounter in the Sundarbans. Just as I was about to press the shutter, a Brown-winged Kingfisher flew past with its loud “chak-chak-chak” call. Distracted, I tried to capture the kingfisher instead—and missed the raptor.

The following morning, entering Andharmanik Khal at dawn, we encountered several species of bird including Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, Striated Heron, Common Kingfisher, and Small Minivet. Then suddenly, we saw the same raptor perched again on another dead tree. This time, a cascade of shutter clicks followed. As the launch drew close, the bird took flight,



Shikra sitting on a tree in the Hatdora Khal, Kalabogi

allowing us excellent action photographs. This was in March 2014. Since then, almost every visit to the Sundarbans includes multiple sightings of this species.

This small diurnal raptor is the Shikra, a common resident bird of Bangladesh. Bangla name is *Turki Baj*, *Shikra* or *Shikre Baj* (West Bengal). Its scientific name is *Accipiter badius*. Besides the Sundarbans, it inhabits open forests, forest edges, and rural groves throughout the country. It is also distributed across Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and much of Asia.

Adults measure 31–35 cm in length and weigh 100–193 g. The breeding season is April–May. They build small platform nests 6–12 meters above ground using twigs, grass, and roots. The female lays 2–4 bluish-grey eggs, which hatch in 30–35 days. The young fledge in 40–45 days. Lifespan is 6–7 years.

6. Monarch of the Mangroves: The White-bellied Sea Eagle

The white and dark brown raptor described at the beginning of this feature—the one perched on the keora branch at Kokilmoni—is the White-bellied Sea Eagle, a rare resident bird of Bangladesh. It is also known as the White Sea Eagle. In Bangla it is known as *Shindhu Eagle*, *Sada Eagle*, *Sada Sagor Eagle*, *Shubro-bokkho Shindhu Eagle* or *Shomudra Baj* (West Bengal). Its scientific name is *Haliaeetus leucogaster*. It inhabits the Sundarbans and other coastal forests. Beyond Bangladesh, it is found in India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, China, and Australia.

Adults measure 66–90 cm in length. Males weigh 1.8–3.0 kg; females 2.5–4.5 kg, with females slightly larger. The breeding season is October–January. They build massive platform nests 1.2–1.5 meters wide and 0.5–1.8 meters deep high in riverside trees, using sticks, grass, weeds, and leaves. The male primarily constructs the nest. The same nest is used year after year with minor repairs. The female lays two white eggs, which hatch in 36–42 days. The female incubates



Pair of White-bellied Sea Eagles at their nest in Dudhmukhi

primarily, though the male assists when she leaves to feed. The nestlings begin flying at 65–70 days. Lifespan is about 14–15 years.

7. Lord of the Wetlands: The Grey-headed Fish Eagle

I first observed this large raptor on 24 February 2015 in Ruiya village near Barishal City while searching for the rare Blue-eared Kingfisher. Later, I observed the species several times in different locations of Dhaka, Rajshahi, and Chattogram. In the Sundarbans, I have seen it several times, but one memory stands out vividly. In January 2017, while visiting Laudobe, near Dhangmari Forest Station, to witness a forest ritual called Bon Bibir Puja, I suddenly saw two crows chasing a much larger grey raptor in the sky. Through my viewfinder, I realized it was the same species that I saw in Barishal. The large raptor struggled to escape the crows' relentless harassment. As the birds came closer, my 300 mm lens could no longer frame them properly, and many close shots turned out blurred.



Grey-headed Fish Eagle mobbed by two crows at Laudobe

This rare and Near-Threatened resident raptor species is the Grey-headed Fish Eagle. Bangla name is *Bouli Eagle*, *Ukhosh*, *Dhushor-matha Kura Eagle* or *Machmar Baj* (West Bengal). Its scientific name is *Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus*. It inhabits ponds, wetlands, and rivers throughout Bangladesh, usually singly or in pairs, and is distributed across South and Southeast Asia.

Adults measure 61–75 cm in length and weigh 1.6–2.7 kg. During breeding season (November–February), they build massive stick nests up to 1.5 meters in diameter near water bodies. They lay 1–3 white eggs. Both parents incubate the eggs for 45–50 days. The nestlings fledge at about 70 days. Lifespan is approximately 17–18 years.

8. The Flame-winged Guardian: The Brahminy Kite

While writing about the last diurnal raptor I observed in the Sundarbans, I am reminded of poet Jibanananda Das's famous poem "Hay Chil" ("O Kite"). This bird is seen throughout the Sundarbans, especially around Katka and Kochikhali

office areas. It hunts fish but also feeds readily on poultry offal, which explains why flocks are often seen circling tourist launches.

The flame-winged kite of the poet's verse is the Brahminy Kite—a very common resident bird of Bangladesh. Its Bangla name is *Shongho Chil*, *Lal Chil*, *Khoyeri Chil*, *Sonali-dana Chi* or *Chondichil* and scientific name is *Haliastur indus*. It is distributed across Asia and Australia.

Adults measure 44–52 cm in length. Males weigh 409–650 g and females weigh 434–700 g. The breeding season is December–April. They build loose nests 2–30 meters above the ground using sticks, grass, weeds, and debris, repairing and reusing the same nest annually. The female lays 1–3 white eggs, which hatch in 28–35 days. Both parents share incubation and nestling-rearing, which fledge in 40–56 days. Lifespan is about 11–12 years.



Brahminy Kite flying gracefully near the Katka office area

Concluding Reflection

The diurnal birds of prey of the Sundarbans are not merely hunters of the mangrove sky—they are guardians of ecological balance and living symbols of wilderness. Through years of observation, photography, and repeated encounters, they have become integral to my personal journey through this tidal forest. Each sighting has been more than a record—it has been a memory etched against the vast horizon of the Sundarbans.

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

Major National Events

January-March

13 January, 2026

CA urges restoration of SAARC as academic, political coop platform

Chief Adviser Prof Dr Muhammad Yunus criticised the decline of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and urged regional governments to revive it as a platform for academic and political cooperation.

It's "a shame", he said about the moribund state of the bloc, while also talking domestic political changes before an audience from home and abroad at a regional conference that began in Dhaka on January 13.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the regional higher-education conference, he notes that young people have floated a political party and would appear on the ballot in elections scheduled for 12 February. "I am confident that some of them will be elected," he said, without naming the party.

The three-day South Asian Regional Conference on State of Higher Education and Future Pathway (SARCHE 2026) is being held at a city hotel and attended by academics and policymakers from across South Asia, the UK and the World Bank.

Source: The Financial Express

14 January, 2026

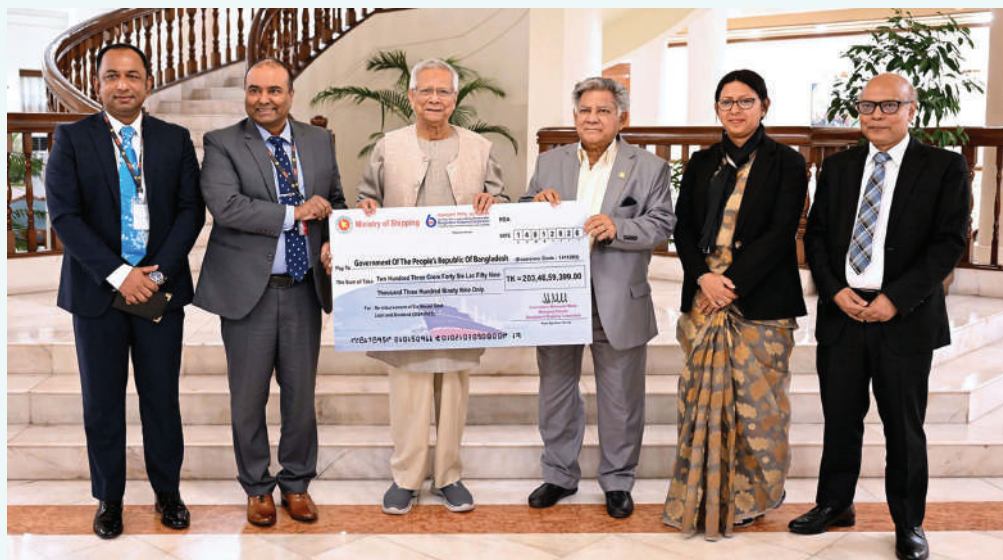
Strengthen BSC fleet to bolster footprint on global shipping

Strengthen Bangladesh Shipping Corporation to bolster its footprint on global shipping routes and protect the country's maritime interests, the Chief Adviser instructs as BSC begins booking higher profits.

Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus gave the direction on January 14 while receiving payments from the corporation, also calling for sustained profitability and long-term planning to expand the national fleet.



Chief Adviser Prof Dr Muhammad Yunus speaks at the inaugural session of the three-day "South Asian Regional Conference on the State of Higher Education and Future Pathways" at a city hotel on January 13



Chief Adviser Prof Dr Muhammad Yunus receiving a cheque for Tk 2.03 billion (Tk203.47 crore) at the State Guest House Jamuna in the city on January 14

Speaking at the cheque-handover ceremony at the state-guesthouse Jamuna, the Head of interim government said, BSC 'must capitalise on its recent financial turnaround and ensure that its own earnings are reinvested to make the corporation more resilient and competitive'. *Source: The Financial Express*

19 January, 2026

CA urges people to vote 'yes' in referendum to endorse July charter

Interim Government Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus urged Bangladesh's citizens to vote 'Yes' in the national referendum on February 12 as 'it's a historic opportunity' to reshape the state and lock in democratic reforms.

In a nationally televised video address broadcast on January, 19 evening, Yunus entreated voters not only to support the referendum themselves but also to mobilise others to participate in the balloting to endorse the July Charter born out of the 2024 mass uprising.

'The key to building a new Bangladesh is now in your hands,' he said. 'If you stamp 'Yes', the door to a new Bangladesh will open,' he said.

'Cast your vote for 'Yes' yourself. Encourage everyone you know to do the same and bring them to the polling centres. Change the country. God willing, together we will seize this opportunity to rebuild our nation,' the head of post-uprising government of Bangladesh said. *Source: The Financial Express*

20 January, 2026

July Uprising Memorial Museum will show path to nation: CA

Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus said on January 20 that if the nation

becomes bewildered for any reason, it will find the path in the July Uprising Memorial Museum which has been possible to be built while the blood of the July martyrs is still fresh.

'It has been possible to build this museum while the blood of the July martyrs is still fresh. It is an unprecedented example for the entire world,' he said.



Chief Adviser Prof Dr Muhammad Yunus visits the July Uprising Memorial Museum at Ganobhaban in the capital to inspect the final-stage work of the museum on January 20

The Chief Adviser added: "We do not want there to be a need to build such a museum anywhere in the future. If our nation ever becomes perplexed for any reason, it will find its path in this museum". Prof Yunus made the remarks after inspecting the progress in the final phase work of the July Uprising Memorial Museum at the Ganobhaban in Dhaka, the residence of ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. *Source: The Financial Express*

22 January, 2026

Cabinet approves Dhaka Central Univ ordinance, Japan trade pact

A slew of far-reaching ordinances and policy proposals get the interim government's nod to unclog long-stalled reforms in higher education, trade and governance while Bangladesh heads towards a crucial electoral moment.

At a weekly meeting of the Advisory Council, chaired by Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus, ministers signed off on 11 out of 13 agenda items, including the long-anticipated Dhaka Central University Ordinance 2026, and a proposal to conclude Bangladesh-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (BJEPA) on January 22.

Two drafts - on money laundering prevention and the national qualifications framework - were sent back for further scrutiny, a move officials framed as evidence of deliberation rather than haste. *Source: The Financial Express*

23 January, 2026

Feb election a benchmark for future polls

Chief Adviser Prof Dr Muhammad Yunus said, the February 12 general elections would set a benchmark for all future polls in Bangladesh.



US Ambassador Brent Christensen at a meeting with Chief Adviser Prof Dr Muhammad Yunus at the state guest house Jamuna in Dhaka on January 23

He made the remarks when the newly appointed US Ambassador to Bangladesh, Brent Christensen, paid his maiden courtesy call on the Chief Adviser at the state guest house Jamuna in Dhaka on January 23, said the Chief Adviser's press wing.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed a wide range of issues, including the upcoming general

elections, sweeping labour laws, approved by the interim government, the planned Bangladesh-US tariff agreement and Rohingya crisis.

The Chief Adviser highlighted key foreign policy initiatives of the interim government including Dhaka's planned bid for ASEAN membership, and the need to revive Saarc as a key platform for regional and economic cooperation in South Asia. *Source: The Daily Star*

25 January, 2026

ECNEC okays Tk 24.59b 1000-bed modern hospital in Nilphamari

In a major move to decentralise the country's healthcare system, the government has approved a China-supported 1000-bed hospital in Bangladesh's northern district Nilphamari.

Presided over by the Chief Advisor Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus, the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) approved the project at the cost of Tk 24.59 billion along with 24 others at its meeting on January 25.

Under the "Establishment of a 1,000-bed Bangladesh-China Friendship General Hospital, the project aims to provide advanced medical services to the people of the northern region and neighboring countries. Planning Advisor Dr Wahiduddin Mahmud said.

The ECNEC also endorsed 24 more projects with an aggregate cost of Tk 451.91 billion.

The proposed Nilphamari hospital, named the Bangladesh-China Friendship General Hospital, is viewed as a "gift" from the Chinese government to mark five decades of diplomatic ties and is set to transform the medical landscape of North Bengal. *Source: The Financial Express*

28 January, 2026

Prof Yunus calls for ethical use of technology, rejects fraud for prosperity

Bangladesh can never be a land of fraud, said Chief Adviser Prof Dr Muhammad Yunus on January 28.

He said, Bangladesh must use technology ethically to avoid misuse and succeed in a fast-changing digital world.

'This country can never be a land of fraud. We want to hold our heads high through our own qualities. We have that capability,' he

said, pointing his finger at the challenges Bangladesh faces on the global stage due to the widespread use of fake documents.

Citing an example of an individual who used all forged certificates to enter a foreign country as a doctor, Prof Yunus said, the nation must move away from such practices to fully benefit from advanced technology.

'Let us make up our minds that we will come out of fraud, take steps to ensure realistic policies, and build a pro-people system of governance,' the Chief Adviser said, expressing displeasure over the misuse of technology in producing fake documents. *Source: The Financial Express*

30 January, 2026

Dhaka, Beijing tie-up must continue with new govt, says CA

Chief Adviser Prof Dr Muhammad Yunus said, the cooperation between Bangladesh and China must continue, although a new government will soon take office.

'In a few weeks, I will be out of this office and a new government will be formed, but the work between our two countries must go on,' he said during a meeting with a delegation from the China-Bangladesh Partnership Forum at the State Guest House Jamuna recently.

The delegation included senior Chinese academics, investors and industry leaders from the biomedical, infrastructure, digital, and legal sectors, said the Chief Adviser's Press Wing on January 30.

Xin-yuan Fu, a leading Chinese biomedical scientist and Director of West China



Chief Adviser Prof Dr Muhammad Yunus speaks at the inaugural session of the 'Digital Device and Innovation Expo 2026' at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the capital on January 28



Chief Advisor Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus met a delegation from China Bangladesh partnership forum at the state guest house Jamuna on January 30

School of Medicine at Sichuan University, commended Prof Yunus' vision, and said, he was very much looking forward to working with Bangladeshi academics and contributing to improving people's lives. *Source: The Financial Express*

17 February, 2026

Triumphant Tarique takes oath as 11th PM

Zia-family heir Tarique Rahman, who led his party to a sweeping electoral victory, becomes Prime Minister of Bangladesh to usher in what supporters describe as a new political era.

The swearing-in ceremony of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) Chair and his cabinet members was held on February 17 at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban under a clear spring sky -- first such investiture in Bangladesh's history, in a break with longstanding tradition of oath-taking at the Bangabhaban presidential palace.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin administered the oath at the open-air ceremony largely attended by foreign dignitaries.

Tarique Rahman was sworn in, 49 members of the new cabinet took their oath of office and secrecy -- 25 as Full Minister and 24 as State Minister. With this, a BNP-led government formally began its tenure, returning the party to power for the first time since 2006.

Tarique Rahman arrived at 3:58pm, accompanied by his wife Zubaida Rahman and daughter Zaima Rahman, to a standing ovation. President Shahabuddin entered shortly afterwards, and the ceremony began with recitation from the Holy Quran.



President Mohammed Shahabuddin administers the oath to Tarique Rahman as the country's 11th Prime Minister at the south plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban in the capital on February 17



President Mohammed Shahabuddin administers the oath to the newly appointed Ministers at the South Plaza of Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban in Dhaka on February 17

Of the 50-member cabinet, which includes three technocrats, 41 are new faces. Sixteen of the 25 ministers are first-timers, while all 24 state ministers are new to executive office. Rahman himself is serving in a cabinet position for the first time.

Source: Financial Express

18 February, 2026

Stabilising prices, smooth power supply, bettering law, order first

Holding commodity prices in checks and uninterrupted electricity supply ahead of the fasting month Ramadan alongside bettering law-and-order situation come first in the priorities the new government set on the first day of its function.



Prime Minister Tarique Rahman presides over the first cabinet meeting of the newly formed government at the Secretariat in the capital on February 18

Newly elected Prime Minister Tarique Rahman issued a slew of ‘zero-tolerance’ directions from the maiden cabinet meeting on February, 18 with a paramount priority of stabilising the country, reeling from political upheavals.

Laying the highest emphasis on the above-mentioned three issues, the first cabinet meeting also decided on a 180-day action plan for guiding Bangladesh into an inclusive developing nation.

The Prime Minister sat for two separate meetings with his cabinet members and all the secretaries in the Cabinet Division at the secretariat.

After the cabinet meeting was over, at least four Ministers informed journalists that the new government’s first priority is keep the essential commodity prices stable, electricity supply uninterrupted and a better law-and-order situation. *Source: Financial Express*

19 February, 2026

Chiefs of three services meet PM

The Chiefs of the three services paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Tarique Rahman at the Secretariat on February 19.

Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman, Chief of Naval Staff Admiral M Nazmul Hassan and Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Hasan Mahmood Khan met the PM at his office.

The PM arrived at his Secretariat office in the morning for his second day of official work.



Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman, Chief of Naval Staff Admiral M Nazmul Hassan, and Air Chief Marshal Hasan Mahmood Khan meet Prime Minister Tarique Rahman at the Secretariat in the capital on February 19

After reaching the office, he held a meeting with the three service chiefs.

PM's Adviser Brig Gen (retd) Dr AKM Shamsul Islam was also present at the meeting.

Earlier in the morning, Cabinet Secretary Dr Nasimul Ghani and Principal Secretary ABM Abdus Sattar received the PM at the Secretariat. *Source: Financial Express*

21 February, 2026

Nation observes Amar Ekushey with solemnity

The nation on February 21 observed Amar Ekushey and International Mother Language Day with solemnity and quiet pride, marking the 74th anniversary of the historic 1952 Language Movement that laid the foundation of Bangladesh's linguistic and cultural identity.

The day's observances began just after midnight at the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital, where President Mohammed Shahabuddin placed the first floral wreath at the altar of the monument.

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman followed shortly afterwards, paying his first official tribute as the head of the government.

He stood in silence along with members of his cabinet and senior leaders of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party.



Prime Minister Tarique Rahman pays tributes to the martyrs of the 1952 language movement at the Central Shaheed Minar on 21st February 2006

Cultural institutions marked the occasion with special programmes.

At the Bangla Academy, the ‘Amar Ekushey Baktrita’ and poetry recitation sessions were held at Nazrul Mancha, where scores of poets presented works dedicated to the spirit of 1952. *Source: Financial Express*

21 February, 2006

PM chairs meeting on religious, social harmony

A meeting on strengthening religious and social harmony was held at the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) in Tejgaon on February 21.

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman presided over the meeting.

Ministers, State Ministers and relevant senior officials attended the meeting held at the Cabinet Conference Room of the PMO.

The Prime Minister began work at the PMO on February 21 for the first time after assuming office.

Though it was a public holiday, he went to the office at 10:10am, where Principal Secretary ABM Abdus Sattar and Additional Press Secretary Atikur Rahman Rumon received him.



Prime Minister Tarique Rahman presides over a meeting on strengthening social and religious harmony at the Prime Minister's Office in the capital's Tejgaon on February 21

PM Tarique Rahman spoke with several long-serving employees at his office after recognising them from previous years of service. *Source: Financial Express*

22 February, 2026

Saudi envoy calls on PM

Saudi Ambassador to Bangladesh Dr Abdullah Zafer H Bin Abiyah on February 22 paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Tarique Rahman.



Saudi Ambassador to Bangladesh Dr Abdullah Zafer H Bin Abiyah pays a courtesy call on Prime Minister Tarique Rahman at the Secretariat in the capital on February 22



Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen presents a token of goodwill to Prime Minister Tarique Rahman following a courtesy call at the Secretariat in the capital on February 23

He met the Premier at the Cabinet Division in the Bangladesh Secretariat around 11am, Prime Minister's Press Secretary Saleh Shibly.

The Prime Minister conveyed his respectful regards to The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud as well as to His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Source: Financial Express

23 February, 2026

PM reaffirms commitment to 'One China' policy

Bangladesh reaffirms its commitment to the 'One China' policy and pledges to deepen strategic ties with Beijing as the country's new Prime Minister moves to consolidate key foreign relationships following his inauguration.

Tarique Rahman made the remarks during a meeting in Dhaka with Yao Wen, China's ambassador in Bangladesh, where the two sides exchanged what officials described as in-depth views on bilateral relations and regional and international issues of shared interest.

According to a spokesperson for the Chinese embassy, Rahman thanked the ambassador for his congratulations and for conveying the best wishes of Chinese leaders.

He stated that Bangladesh would "firmly adhere to the One-China principle", uphold its longstanding friendship with Beijing and work to further deepen cooperation, the spokesman said. *Source: Financial Express*

25 February, 2026

BDR carnage an assault on sovereignty: PM

The National Martyred Army Day was observed with due dignity on February 25



Prime Minister Tarique Rahman observes a one-minute silence after laying a wreath at the Banani Military Graveyard in the capital on February 25, in memory of the army officers killed in the 2009 BDR (now BGB) carnage

commemorating the 17th martyrdom anniversary of the army officers who were killed in the 2009 BDR (now BGB) carnage.

On the occasion, President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Prime Minister Tarique Rahman paid rich tributes to the martyred soldiers and officers of the paramilitary border security forces at the Banani Graveyard in the morning, said a release of the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) Directorate.

A total of 74 people, including 57 army officers with the then Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) DG among them were killed during the carnage at the Pilkhana headquarters of the paramilitary force on February 25-26, 2009.

Earlier on February 23 the government declared February 25 as ‘National Martyred Army Day’ to honour the army officers who lost their lives in the Pilkhana tragedy.

Source: Financial Express

26 February, 2026

Book fair will go global next year, PM hopes

Amid the grandeur of the Amar Ekushey Book Fair’s inauguration, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman has called for a bold step: transforming the annual celebration of Bengali literature into an international literary festival, showcasing Bangladesh’s language and culture to the world.

He spoke at the opening of the fair at the Bangla Academy on February 26.



Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, with his family members, browses books at a stall at the Amar Ekushey Book Fair 2026 on the Bangla Academy premises in the capital on February 26

‘In honour of the martyrs of the Language Movement, we celebrate Ekushey each year with pride to uphold the dignity of our mother tongue.

Amar Ekushey is observed worldwide as International Mother Language Day. This venue, the Bangla Academy, embodies the aspirations of the 1952 Language Movement martyrs.’

Source: Financial Express

6 March, 2026

President urges innovation to expand jute products globally

President Mohammed Shahabuddin on March 6 called on the



Those who were honoured in various categories for their significant contribution to the development of the jute sector pose with President Mohammed Shahabuddin at a programme at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital on March 6, marking the National Jute Day

country's youth to explore startups and innovation in the jute sector, promote the 'Made in Bangladesh' brand and utilise global e-commerce platforms to expand jute products in international markets.

'There will be a call to the creative young generation to open new horizons in the jute sector by promoting 'Made in Bangladesh' branding through startups and innovation, and by connecting with global e-commerce platforms. Spread Bangladeshi jute products across the world market,' he said.

He made the call while addressing the inaugural ceremony of National Jute Day 2026 and a nine-day Jute and Diversified Jute Products Fair at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital. *Source: The Financial Express*



President Mohammed Shahabuddin poses for a photograph with the recipients of the "Best Indomitable Women Award" at an International Women's Day programme at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital on March 8

8 March, 2026

Int'l Women's Day observed with great gusto

The International Women's Day was observed in the country on March 8 with the clarion call for actions to ensure rights, justice and safety for women, with special focus on the need to end the culture of impunity.

Different human rights organisations and civil society platforms organised various programmes highlighting challenges being faced by women and honouring those whose contributions have brought out social and political emancipation of women.

While addressing a programme organised by National Press Club on March 8, the State Minister also laid importance on increasing female representation in media

leadership and starting women’s political empowerment from the grassroots level.

Source: The Financial Express

10 March, 2026

PM opens ‘Family Card’ programme for women’s empowerment

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman inaugurated on March 10 the government’s landmark “Family Card” programme to ensure women’s empowerment in the country as he distributed cards among them at a function in Dhaka.

The Premier handed over the family cards to 17 women at the inauguration ceremony at T&T playground in Banani, adjacent to Korail slum, in the city.

Later, Tarique Rahman sent the money of family cards to accounts of 37,567 women in 14 places of different districts by pressing the button on a laptop.

The Family Card Programme is part of the government’s commitment to achieving national development and social justice by empowering women and recognising them as the heads of families in social protection programmes.

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman said empowering women is crucial as it is quite impossible to advance the country leaving half of the population behind. *Source: The Financial Express*



Prime Minister Tarique Rahman hands over family cards during the inauguration of the family card distribution programme at the T&T playground in the capital’s Banani on March 10



The 13th Parliament goes into first session at the Sangsad Bhaban in the capital on March 12

12 March, 2026

13th JS maiden session begins

The 13th Jatiya Sangsad began its maiden session on March 12 with chaotic scenes as opposition lawmakers protested inside the chamber over allowing the president to address the House, eventually staging a walkout.

The first sitting of the new parliament took place about 20 months after the final session of the 12th Jatiya Sangsad, which had been prorogued on July 3, 2024.

The inaugural sitting of the new Parliament began at 11:00am, with newly elected members exchanging greetings among themselves ahead of the beginning of proceedings.

Initially, the opposition members participated cordially in electing the new speaker and deputy speakers, adopting the condolence motion, tabling 133 ordinances from the interim government, and nominating a new panel to preside over the JS sessions in the absence of the speaker.

However, the atmosphere in the House turned tense during the president's address.

Source: News Age

14 March, 2026

PM pledges 'peaceful Bangladesh' for people of all faiths

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman has underscored his commitment to building



Prime Minister Tarique Rahman hands over a cheque to a recipient of monthly allowances for imams, muazzins and other religious leaders at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital on March 14

a ‘peaceful Bangladesh’ with people of all religions, urging citizens not to let anyone sow divisions among them.

‘Today, people of all faiths are sitting together, in the same row. This is part of Bangladesh’s age-old tradition. No one should be allowed to create divisions among us,’ he said at an event on March 14.

‘Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Christians -- together, we will build a peaceful Bangladesh. We will build a safe state and a safe society for all, which is what people from every class and profession aspire to.’

The Premier was speaking at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium, where the Ministry of Religious Affairs launched a pilot scheme for monthly honorariums for imams, muazzins and khadems of mosques, priests and caretakers of temples, and heads and deputy heads of Buddhist monasteries.

Tarique said the programme had initially brought 4,908 mosques, 990 temples and 144 Buddhist monasteries under coverage. *Source: The Financial Express*

16 March, 2026

PM pledges to build strong, prosperous BD

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman on March 16 pledged to transform Bangladesh into a beautiful, prosperous, economically and politically strong country with the support of its people, saying that his government has begun nation-building work through a nationwide canal-restoration programme.

Addressing a public rally near Sahapara canal in Kaharol upazila after inaugurating the canal-excavation and re-excavation programme, he also urged people to remain alert against those attempting to create chaos and mislead them with sweet words.

‘We have started the work to build the nation through the canal-excavation programme... We want to create a Bangladesh where people can assert their own rights and where the country will be strong both economically and politically.

This is the Bangladesh we aim to build,’ Tarique Rahman said. *Source: The Financial Express*

24 March, 2026

Eid-ul-Fitr celebrated with festivity

The holy Eid-ul-Fitr, one of the biggest religious festivals of Muslims, was celebrated nationwide on March 21 amid much enthusiasm and religious fervour.

The main jamaat of the Eid-ul-Fitr was held at the National Eidgah on the High Court premises around 8.30am.



Prime Minister Tarique Rahman inaugurates the re-excavation of Sahapara Canal in Dinajpur's Kaharol upazila by cutting soil with a spade on March 16



President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Prime Minister Tarique Rahman offered their Eid-ul-Fitr prayers at the National Eidgah Maidan in the capital on March 21

President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Prime Minister Tarique Rahman offered their Eid-ul-Fitr prayers at the National Eidgah Maidan.

Khatib of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque, Mufti Muhammad Abdul Malek, led the prayers at the National Eidgah and administered munajat (prayer), seeking peace and welfare for the country and the whole Muslim world. *Source: The Financial Express*

25 March, 2026

Genocide Day observed

The nation on March 25 observed the Genocide Day in remembrance of the brutality carried out by Pakistani Army on the unarmed Bangalees on the black night of March 25 in 1971 under the infamous ‘Operation Searchlight’.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Prime Minister Tarique Rahman issued special messages on the eve of the day.

The government organised various programmes at the state level to mark the day with due respect. As part of the programmes, one-minute symbolic ‘blackout’ was observed from 10.30pm to 10.31pm on March 25 throughout the country.

Newspapers also published special supplements on genocide committed by the occupation Pakistani forces on the night of March 25, 1971.

Besides, discussions were held in all educational institutions including schools, colleges, madrasahs and technical institutes where valiant freedom fighters and noted personalities shared their memories with students, highlighting the genocide and the Great Liberation War.

Rare photos and documentaries on mass killing were exhibited at selected venues in all city corporation areas, including the capital.

Similar programmes were observed across the country marking the day. *Source: New Age*



President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Prime Minister Tarique Rahman pay tributes to martyrs at the National Martyrs' Memorial in Savar marking the 56th Independence and National Day on March 26

26 March, 2026

Spirit of solidarity rekindles as nation celebrates Independence Day

At daybreak March 26, all roads led to the national memorial for homage paying as Bangladesh celebrated its Independence Day with great respect to the sacrifices made by the martyred freedom fighters.

It appears as semblance solidarity rekindled as national leaders and people from all walks of life offered petals and wreaths at the independence memorial at Savar, before celebrations marking the 56th Independence Day and National Day were set off in the capital, Dhaka, and across the country.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Prime Minister Tarique Rahman presented wreaths of flowers at the National Martyrs' Memorial (Jatiya Smriti Saudha) in Savar as tribute to the martyrs of the Liberation War at dawn.

30 March, 2026

Don't involve in politics during sports life, PM urges athletes

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman on March 30 called on athletes not to be affiliated with any political party or group during professional sports tenure, saying rather they should represent the country through sporting excellence.

‘In your (sports persons) professional sports career, you should not get involved with any political party or group, rather represent the country through your sporting excellence,’ he said.



Prime Minister Tarique Rahman distributing sports card to one of the athletes during sports cards and allowance distribution program at the Shapla Hall of PMO in Tejgaon on March 30

The Prime Minister was addressing the inaugural ceremony of the sports card and allowance distribution programme at his office this morning.

Tarique also urged the sports persons to lead Bangladesh to a higher position in the global sports arena by winning games at home and abroad.

‘I believe that if you have patriotism, strong will, and team spirit, no one can stand in your way of successful progress,’ he said. *Source: The New Age*

Report Compilation: Mazharul Hoque, Mamun Hossain



Newly appointed Prime Minister Tarique Rahman delivered the nation's purpose speech on 18 February 2026



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