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The Interplay Between Environment
and Tourism in Bangladesh



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Chief Adviser Dr Muhammad Yunus dicusses with Advisers about the National Budget of the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 on 22 June at his office, Tejgaon



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Editorial

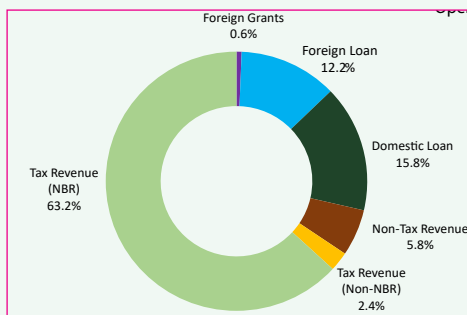

The Interim Government's first and 54th budget of the country has been announced by the Finance Adviser Dr. Salehuddin Ahmed on June 02, 2025. The proposed budget of FY 2025-26 amounted Tk. 7,90,000 crore, which is 12.7 percent of the total GDP of the country. This budget was announced with an aim to build an equitable and sustainable economic system. After the July Mass Uprising, initiatives have been taken to reform all the concerned financial sectors and to bring back the country into normalcy. This budget is a step forward to ensure the quality of life for all and a system based on non-discrimination at all levels.

Pollution free world will be more livable and peaceful and so expected. 'Beat the Plastic' is the theme of World Environment Day 2025, which is one of the biggest challenges for our earth and us. Plastic waste clogs rivers, pollutes oceans and endangers wildlife. And as it breaks down into smaller to smallest parts, it infiltrates every corner of the earth. We do have to work hard to save our only planet.

Kazi Nazrul Islam has been officially declared as the national poet of Bangladesh through a notification dated December 15, 2024 with retrospective effect from May 4, 1972. He is such a poet whose writings is still influential and impactful in our thoughts and protests. Nazrul can encourage us to raise voices against all sorts of oppressions, discriminations be it social injustice, or religious fundamentalism or even against the State and Nazrul is still relevant even at this age.

Articles on those abovementioned aspects along with 'The Enigmatic Artistry of Rabindranath Tagore...', 'Some Beautiful Colour throated Migratory Birds of Bangladesh' etc. and our regular national events have also been incorporated in this Issue.

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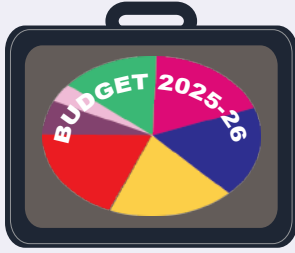


Challenging Budget to Build a
New Bangladesh

M. Quamruzzaman

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Challenging Budget to Build a New Bangladesh

M. Quamruzzaman

budget taking into account challenges such as high inflation, increased revenue collection, troubled financial sector reforms, and the global context.

A steep hike in the tax for investments, the Finance Adviser announced cancelling exemption of corporate tax and value added tax for industries.

Announcements have also been made to relax duty on imported products such as refined sugar, petroleum products, buses, minibuses etc. while there would be hike in duty on cosmetics, toys, cell phones, and different types of door locks in an effort to address the tariff rationalisation issue ahead of the country's graduation from the least developed countries' block in November 2026.



Finance Adviser Dr. Salehuddin Ahmed announces national budget 2025-2026 in a televised presentation on June 2, 2025

The interim government has announced a proposed national budget of Tk 7.9 trillion for the fiscal year 2025-26, which is lower than the outgoing budget by 70 billion taka. Finance Adviser Dr. Salehuddin Ahmed announced the new national budget in a televised presentation in the absence of National Parliament on June 2, 2025. This is the country's 54th and the first budget of the interim government formed after the mass uprising in the August 2024.

The decision to reduce the size of the national budget was taken actually to reduce government expenditure and make the budget implementable, in coordination with the restrictive monetary policy to control inflation in the country.

The interim government has announced the proposed national

The latest overall inflation rate was 9.05 percent. In order to control inflation, the proposed budget has expanded the coverage of social security programmes along with various food-friendly programmes.

To achieve the revenue target, the proposed budget proposes to expand

the tax base, increase tax rates, restructure tax rates, increase VAT coverage, and increase government service spending and fees.

In addition, the budget has given greater importance to agriculture, food production and management, employment creation, industrialization, investment attraction, and addressing post-LDC challenges.

Resource: Tk. 4.99 trillion

Tax Revenue (NBR)- 63.2% (VAT- 37.8%, Import Duty- 10.3%,
Income Tax- 36.5%, Supplementary Duty- 13.7%, others- 1.7%)

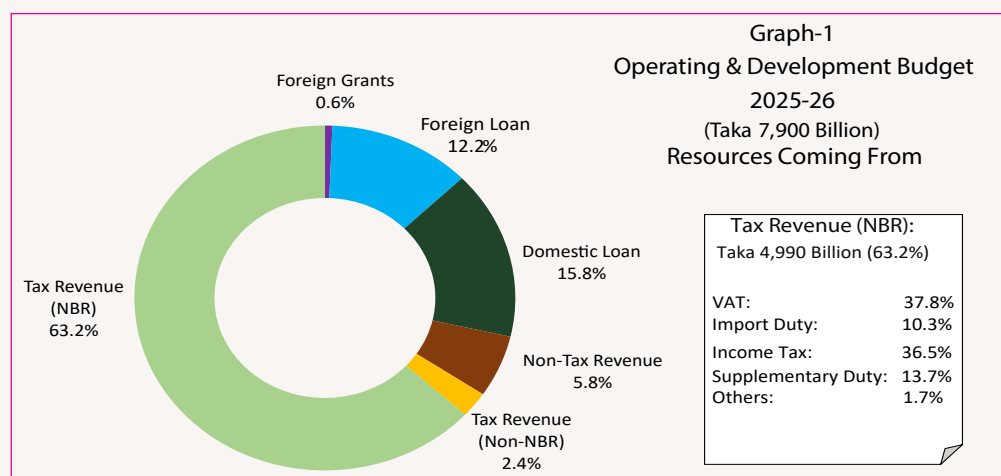
Tax Revenue- (Non NBR)- 2.4%

Non Tax Revenue- 5.8%

Domestic loan- 15.8%

Foreign loan- 12.2%

Foreign Grants- 0.60%



Sector-wise Resource Distribution: Tk. 7.90 Trillion

(Operating & Development Budget)

Including Subsidies & Incentives and pensions

Public Administration- 23.5%

Interest- 15.4%

Education & Technology- 14%

Transport & Communication- 9.0%

Agriculture- 5.9%

Local Govt. & Rural Development- 5.7%

Social security & Welfare- 5.7%

Health- 5.3%

Defence- 5.2%

Public Order & Security- 4.3%

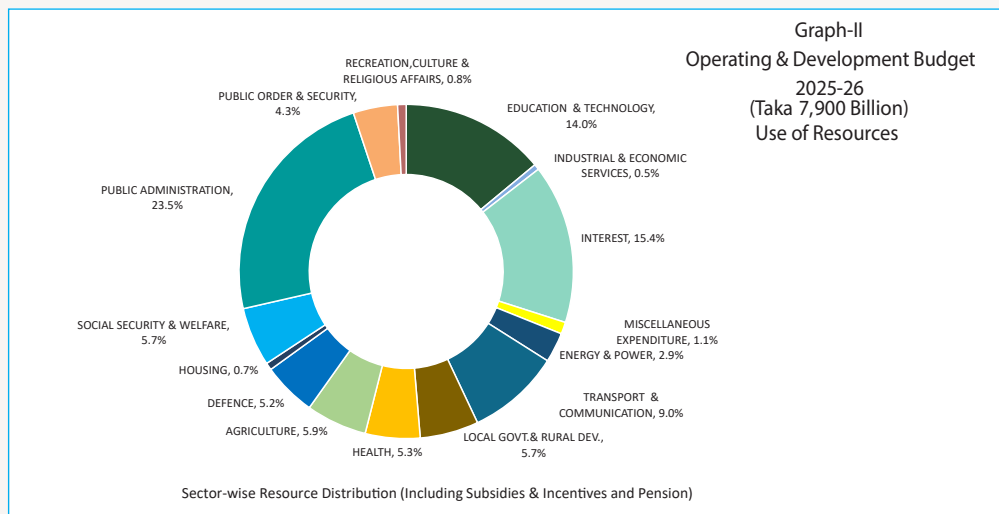
Energy & Power- 2.9%

Miscellaneous Expenditure- 1.1%

Recreation, Culture & Religious Affairs- 0.8%

Housing- 0.7%

Industrial & Economic Services- 0.5%



Sector-wise distribution of Development Budget:

Total Tk. 2.46 Trillion

Transport & Communication- 24.8%

Education- 13.2%

Local Govt. & Rural Development- 9.1%

General Public Service- 8.9%

Power & Energy- 8.0%

Health- 6.8%

Agriculture- 5.9%

Science & Information Technology- 5.4%

Environment, Climate Change & Water Resources- 4.1%

Housing & Community Amenities- 3.9%

Social Protection- 2.9%

Recreation, Culture & Religion- 2.2%

Industrial & Economic Services- 2.1%

Public Order & Safety- 1.7%

Defence- 1%

Total Revenue: Tk. 5.64 trillion

NBR- Tax Revenue- Tk 4.99 Trillion

Non-NBR Tax Revenue- Tk. 190 billion

Non-Tax Revenue- Tk. 460 billion

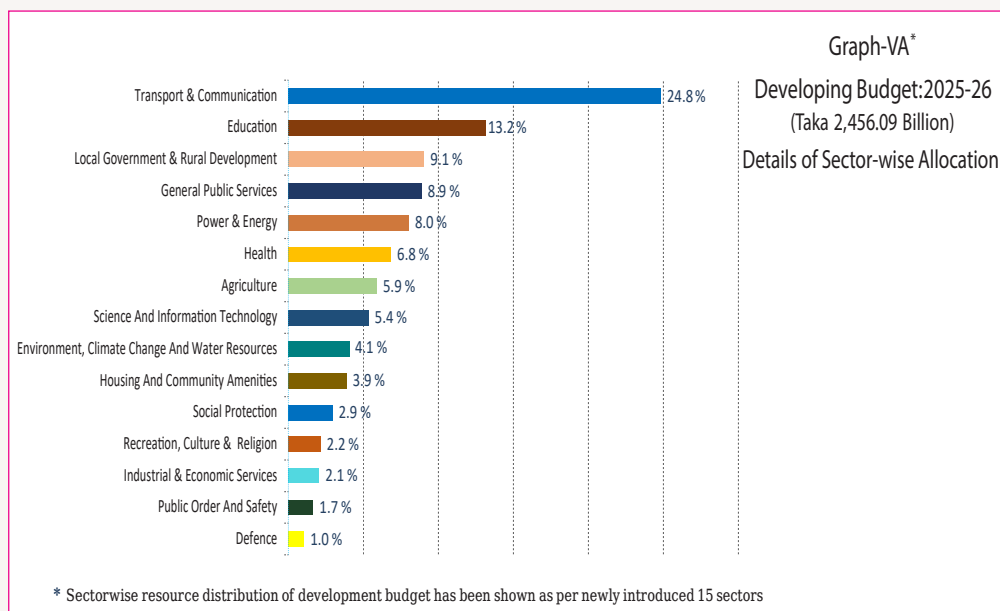
Total Expenditure: Tk. 7.90 trillion

Operating Expenditure- Tk. 5.35 Trillion

ADP- Tk. 2.3 trillion

Non-ADP & Others- Tk. 247 Billion

Total Deficit- Tk. 2.26 Trillion



Salient features of the Budget 2025-2026

Budget size: The total expenditure in the proposed budget is estimated at Tk 7 lakh 90 thousand crore i.e. taka 7.90 trillion. This is 12.7 percent of GDP. The budget size is reduced by Tk. 70 billion compared to the original budget of the current fiscal year. The original budget size of the current 2024-25 fiscal year was 7 lakh 97 thousand crore i.e taka 7.97 trillion.

Revenue: The biggest challenge of the proposed budget is financing, i.e. revenue collection. Currently, Bangladesh's tax-GDP ratio is below 8 percent. The total receipts from domestic sources in the proposed budget are estimated at 5.64 taka trillion, which is 9 percent of GDP. The target for revenue collection under the control of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) is Tk 4.99 trillion. This is Tk 190 billion more than the target set in the original budget for the current fiscal year. In addition, the target for non-NBR tax collection is Tk 190 billion and the net tax receipt (NTR) target has been set at taka 460 billion. In addition to this, foreign grants are expected to be taka 5,0 billion.

Budget deficit: The proposed budget deficit is estimated at Tk 2.26 trillion. This is 3.6 percent of GDP. To meet the budget deficit, a total of Tk 1.25 trillion has been set for borrowing from domestic sources and Tk 1.1 trillion from foreign sources in the next budget. The deficit target in this current fiscal year was Tk 2.56 trillion, which was 4.6 percent of GDP.

GDP growth rate: The GDP growth target has been set at 5.5 percent. In the current fiscal year, it was 6.75 percent. However, the World Bank, IMF and ADB have predicted that this time the growth will be much lower than this.

Inflation: The government wants to bring inflation down to 6.5 percent by the end of the next fiscal year. The same target was set for the current fiscal year as well. However, overall inflation in April was 9.35 percent.



The Chief Advisor Dr Muhammad Yunus presided over the meeting of the Advisory Council on the revised budget for the FY 2024-2025 and the proposed budget for the FY 2025-2026 held at his office on 2nd June 2025

Non-development expenditure: Although the size of the new budget has been reduced, it has been proposed to increase the allocation for the operational or non-development sector. The expenditure for this sector in the new fiscal year's budget is estimated at Tk 5.45 trillion. The budget for the current fiscal year allocates taka 5.70 trillion for this sector.

ADP: The size of the Annual Development Programme (ADP) in the proposed budget has been set at Tk 2.30 trillion. The original ADP in the budget for the outgoing fiscal year was Tk 2.65 trillion.

Interest payment: In the proposed budget, the expenditure on interest payment on loans has been estimated at Tk 1.22 trillion. Of this, interest on domestic loans is Tk 1.02 trillion. In addition, interest on foreign loans is Tk 220 billion.

Coverage of the social security system: Various allowances under the social security system have been increased by 50 to 100 taka. Among these, the monthly rate of old age allowance has been increased from 600 taka to 650 taka, the monthly allowance for widow, deserted & destitute women from 550 taka to 650 taka, the monthly allowance for the disabled from 850 taka to 900 taka, and the monthly allowance provided under the Mother and Child Support Programme has been increased from 800 taka to 850 taka.

Incentive for the govt. and semi-govt. employees: From 1 July 2025, employees of government and autonomous organisations will receive special incentives at a fixed rate on their basic salary.

This rate has been determined based on salary grade:

Grade 1 to 9: 10% of basic salary and Grade 10 to 20: 15% of basic salary.

Individual tax-free income limit: In this time of high inflation, the annual tax-free income limit for individual taxpayers is not increased, remaining unchanged at 3.5 lakh as before. However, for the tax years 2026-27 and 2027-28, the tax-free income limit for individual taxpayers has been increased to Tk. 375,000. For taxpayers who were injured in the July-Uprising of 2024, the tax-free income limit has been set at Tk 525,000.

Prices Up

The products and services which would be costlier include— all types of tableware, kitchenware, household goods, hygienic and toiletries including any similar products made of plastic, cotton yarn, yarn made of man-made fibre and other fibres, blades, screws, joints (connectors), nuts, bolts, electric line hardware and pole fittings including nails and bait, mobile phones, elevators, washing machines, microwave ovens and electric ovens, blenders, juicers, mixers, grinders, electric kettles, irons, rice cookers, multi-cookers and pressure-cookers and construction company services.

Prices Down

The goods which would be cheaper include sanitary napkins, diapers, packaged liquid milk and ballpoint pens; ice cream, computer monitors, liquefied natural gas (LNG), all types of handicrafts/utensils, including plates, bowls made of leaves, flowers or bark, handmade clay utensils and textile grade Pet Chips.

In the energy sector, the interim government has proposed a VAT exemption on the import of liquefied natural gas (LNG), which may positively impact gas prices and energy costs.

Tech-related products are also included in the plan, with VAT exemptions extended to computer monitors up to 30 inches, an increase from the previous 22-inch limit.

Similarly, VAT has been waived on lease rent for passenger aircrafts.

The supplementary duty on all types of ice cream has been halved, from 10 percent to 5 percent.

The budget also seeks to support the health sector by making healthcare equipment more accessible. Until 2030, all VAT will be exempted on the import and local purchase of necessary materials and spare parts used to manufacture hospital beds.

For greener transport and energy solutions, the existing VAT exemptions on locally produced motor vehicles will continue.

Along with that, hybrid and electric vehicles, including general and ICU ambulances, will be conditionally exempted from VAT until Jun 30, 2030.

The interim government also plans to fully exempt VAT on the production of lithium and graphene batteries until Jun 30, 2027. From Jul 1, 2028 to Jun 30, 2030, these batteries will be granted exemption from all VAT in excess of 5 percent.

The import of essential components for refrigerators, freezers, air conditioners, and their compressors will remain exempt from supplementary duty until 2028.

Remarks of govt. Officials on the budget

Finance Adviser Dr Salehuddin Ahmed said that the interim government has tried its best to deliver a people-oriented and business-friendly budget while the main goal is to award a practical, pragmatic and implementable budget.

Planning Adviser Dr Wahiduddin Mahmud said, ‘the primary objective of this budget is not to introduce sweeping structural reforms overnight but to begin a difficult but necessary process of stabilizing the economy and thus clearing the backlog of inherited challenges.’

Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Adviser Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan termed the national budget for fiscal 2025-26 (FY26) as exceptional one, which put much emphasis on reducing unnecessary expenses and disparities.

Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Ahsan H Mansur hoped that the inflation rate in the country would fall further against the target set in the proposed national budget for the fiscal year 2025-26. He said, ‘this budget (FY26) has aimed to maintain average inflation at 6.5%. I personally think the inflation should decline even further.’ The governor highlighted that the exchange rate was one of the major challenges in curbing inflation, adding that the situation has already improved significantly. ‘The exchange rate has remained stable at around Taka 122-123 per US dollar for a considerable time now. This has brought us a sense of relief and increased our confidence,’ he added. He further noted that the food inflation has dropped from double digits to around 8.5%, while non-food inflation has declined from 11.5% to just over 9%. ‘I believe this downward trend will continue further,’ he said.

Remittance Flow

Month	US \$ (in million)
July 2024	1,913.77
August 2024	2,224.15
September 2024	2,404.11
October 2024	2,395.08
November 2024	2,199.99
December 2024	2,638.78
January 2025	2,185.23
February 2025	2,527.65
March 2025	3,295.63
April 2025	2,752.33
May 2025	2,969.57
June 2025	2,810

Source : Bangladesh Bank

Analysis

The total revenue of the proposed budget is Tk. 5.64 trillion, which was Tk. 5.18 trillion in the revised budget in the last fiscal year. On the other hand the total expenditure of the proposed budget is Tk. 7.90 trillion, which was Tk. 7.44 trillion in the revised budget in the last fiscal year. In reality, compared to the previous fiscal year, the current fiscal year’s budget, although small, is not entirely inadequate.

Undoubtedly, Bangladesh economy pivoted into transition after the regime that was in power for over a decade and a half, which was ousted last year, leaving little by way of continuity in economic policy making. Restructuring and re-

configuring the shattered financial sector rightly received top priority of the interim government.

For the first time in many years, the price of essential food items did not rise during the month of Ramadan. The liberal import policy for food items and weakening of the syndicates that flourished under political indulgence in the past, undoubtedly accounted for this unprecedented behaviour of the market.

According to Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) source, the country's merchandise export earnings rose by 10.63 per cent to \$ 37.19 billion during the first nine months of the current fiscal based on the readymade garment (RMG) sector's strong and consistent growth. Export earnings were \$33.63 billion during the July-March period of the last fiscal. The single-month earnings in March, 2025 stood at \$4.25 billion, marking an 11.44 per cent increase, compared to the corresponding month in 2024.

As per Bangladesh Bank source, the total amount remitted from July 2024 to March 2025, the first nine months of current fiscal, stood at \$21.77 billion, compared to \$16.69 billion for the corresponding period last year. A new record was set in remittance earnings, reaching an all-time high of \$2.74 billion in just 24 days in March.

According to latest report of BBS, at the end of the second quarter of FY25 (October-December, 2024), the rate of growth of GDP was 4.48 per cent. This is a significant improvement from 1.81 per cent growth rate crawled during the first quarter (July-September) of fiscal year FY25. The increase in the rate of growth indicates that the shock of the political turmoil during the last days of the ousted regime and its after effects have been overcome to a great extent. Although it goes without saying that the implementation of the outgoing fiscal became slow due to the political changeover and unrest.

It is true that it was difficult for the current interim government to implement the unrealistic and extravagant budget of the previous government within last ten months. Moreover, this year's budget has been shortened compared to last year's due to various reasons like shortage of foreign exchange reserves, bankruptcy of domestic banks, money laundering, inflation, devaluation of the local currency-taka against the dollar, and the instability in the country, especially since August 5, 2024.

Conclusion

Yet, we believe, our country will rise again from the wreck. At this moment, there is nothing to be disappointed about this budget. It may be considered that this is the first time that a workable budget has been announced in the midst of an unstable situation and fragile economy of the country. We hope, the interim government, led by Professor Dr Yunus, will achieve success through the effective implementation of the proposed budget to move the country forward.

The author is columnist and former Senior Editor of the Bangladesh Quarterly



The Interplay Between Environment and Tourism in Bangladesh

Khaled Mehedi Hasan

This discussion examines how tourism and the environment intersect in Bangladesh, analyzing the country's ecological strengths, tourism potential, environmental threats, and strategies for sustainable development.

Bangladesh's Natural Wealth

Ecological Richness

Bangladesh's terrain includes a variety of ecosystems—rivers, wetlands, forests, coastal areas, and hill regions. The country is interwoven with major rivers like the Padma, Jamuna, and Meghna, supporting both agriculture and biodiversity. Several designated protected areas aim to conserve this ecological wealth, providing shelter for diverse species of wildlife and plants.

Key Natural Tourist Spots

1. Sundarbans Mangrove Forest

Recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Sundarbans is the world's largest mangrove forest, spread over 10,000 square kilometers—of which roughly 60% lies within Bangladesh. It is home to the endangered Royal Bengal Tiger and acts as a natural barrier against cyclones and tidal surges. The forest's breathtaking network of tidal waterways, mudflats, and small islands creates a mysterious and serene landscape, teeming with diverse wildlife and lush greenery. The interplay of light and shadow across the dense foliage, along with the rhythmic sounds of nature, gives the Sundarbans an almost mythical charm that captivates every visitor.

Bangladesh, situated in South Asia, is a land rich in natural wonders and cultural diversity. Despite its compact geographical size, the country features an impressive range of ecosystems, from the expansive Sundarbans mangrove forest to the undulating hills of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the picturesque beaches of Cox's Bazar and Kuakata, the unique seasonal beauty of the Haor wetlands, and the lush tea estates of Sylhet. These attractions contribute to the nation's emerging tourism industry. However, the relationship between tourism and the environment is both promising and precarious. While tourism can generate economic growth and raise environmental consciousness, it can also degrade ecosystems if not properly managed.



Sundarbans Mangrove Forest

2. Cox's Bazar

With a shoreline extending over 120 kilometers, Cox's Bazar is the longest natural sea beach on Earth. It attracts numerous tourists annually due to its scenic beauty and recreational potential. The beach's golden sands, gently sloping coastline, and the endless expanse of the Bay of Bengal create a mesmerizing view, especially during sunrise and sunset when the sky and sea merge into a canvas of vibrant



Cox's Bazar Sea Beach

colors. The rhythmic sound of the waves, swaying palm trees, and fresh sea breeze provide a tranquil escape from urban life. Nearby attractions such as Himchari Waterfall and Inani Beach add to the region's charm, offering breathtaking vistas and opportunities for nature photography, beach sports, and peaceful walks along the shore.

3. Sylhet's Tea Region

The Sylhet area is adorned with expansive tea gardens, cascading waterfalls, and green hills. The region is also a cultural melting pot, reflecting both indigenous traditions and the influence of the Bangladeshi diaspora. The endless rows of emerald tea bushes stretching across rolling hills create a soothing and picturesque landscape, especially when viewed in the early morning mist. The tranquil beauty



Sylhet's Tea garden

is heightened by the gentle rustling of tea leaves in the breeze and the sight of tea pickers in colorful attire moving rhythmically through the fields. Crystal-clear streams and hidden waterfalls like Madhabkunda and Hum Hum add a magical touch to the region, while the serene environment makes Sylhet an ideal destination for relaxation, photography, and nature walks.

4. Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT)

The districts of Rangamati, Bandarban, and Khagrachari offer stunning landscapes, rich biodiversity, and vibrant indigenous cultures. These features make the area ideal for eco and adventure tourism. Towering hills cloaked in dense greenery, winding rivers like the Sangu and Karnaphuli, and serene lakes such as Kaptai



Sajek Valley

Lake create a breathtaking natural setting that feels untouched and pristine. Waterfalls like Nafakhum and Amiakhum tumble through the rugged terrain, adding to the area's mystique. The cool mountain air, colorful tribal villages, and panoramic hilltop views—especially from spots like Nilgiri and Nilachal—offer a unique escape into nature. During sunrise and sunset, the entire region glows with soft hues, making it a paradise for photographers and travelers seeking peace and awe-inspiring beauty.

5. Kuakata Sea Beach

Kuakata Sea Beach, often called the “Daughter of the Sea,” is one of Bangladesh’s most enchanting natural wonders, located in the southern district of Patuakhali. It is uniquely famed as one of the few places in the world where visitors can witness both the sunrise and sunset over the sea from the same spot, a rare geographical feature that makes it a spectacular destination for nature lovers and photographers alike. Stretching over 18 kilometers of smooth, sandy shoreline bordered by swaying coconut palms and vast open skies, Kuakata offers mesmerizing views: at dawn, the horizon glows with soft golden hues as the sun rises from the east, while at dusk, the sky transforms into a fiery canvas of orange and pink as the sun sets into the Bay of Bengal in the west. Beyond these iconic sunrises and sunsets, Kuakata provides a tranquil atmosphere far removed from crowded tourist spots, with a wide and calm beach ideal for leisurely walks, horseback rides, or simply relaxing by the shore. Nearby attractions such as Fatra’s Char, Lebur Char, and Gangamati Reserved Forest further enhance the region’s natural charm with their mangrove forests, migratory birds, and unique coastal ecosystems. With its unspoiled beauty, serene ambiance, and sweeping ocean views, Kuakata remains a hidden gem—a perfect escape for those seeking peace, reflection, and a deep connection with nature.



Kuakata Sea Beach

6. Haor Wetlands

The Haor wetlands of Bangladesh, primarily located in the northeastern districts of Sunamganj, Sylhet, Kishoreganj, and Habiganj, are a stunning natural marvel that transforms dramatically with the seasons. During the monsoon, vast low-lying areas flood to create expansive, mirror-like lakes reflecting the sky and surrounding greenery, giving the landscape a surreal and tranquil beauty. These wetlands teem with biodiversity, hosting numerous migratory birds, freshwater fish, and aquatic plants, making them a haven for nature lovers and birdwatchers. As the waters recede in the dry season, fertile fields and vibrant rural villages emerge, showcasing the harmonious coexistence between nature and local communities. The changing moods of the haors—from shimmering waters in monsoon to lush farmland in winter—create a picturesque environment ideal for boating, fishing, and photography, making the haor region a unique and captivating part of Bangladesh’s natural heritage.

The State of Tourism in Bangladesh

Background

Bangladesh’s tourism sector has immense untapped potential, shaped by its rich natural landscapes, cultural heritage, and warm hospitality. While neighboring countries like India and Nepal have long been recognized as popular tourist destinations, Bangladesh is increasingly gaining attention for its unique attractions and authentic experiences. In recent years, both the public and private sectors have made significant strides to enhance tourism infrastructure, improve accessibility, and showcase the country’s diverse offerings on the international stage. These concerted efforts include developing better transportation networks, upgrading accommodations, and launching targeted marketing campaigns. As a result, Bangladesh is steadily emerging as a vibrant and promising destination, ready



Tanguar Haor

to welcome a growing number of travelers seeking new adventures and cultural discoveries.

Economic Significance

Tourism, although still a growing sector, contributes notably to Bangladesh's economy—comprising an estimated 3–4% of the GDP. It plays a vital role in generating foreign exchange earnings and attracting both domestic and international investments. The sector also provides employment opportunities for millions of people, directly in hotels, travel agencies, and tour operations, and indirectly by supporting ancillary industries such as transportation, catering, handicrafts, and local artisans. Furthermore, tourism stimulates rural development by promoting community-based initiatives and empowering small businesses, thereby contributing to poverty alleviation and inclusive economic growth across various regions of the country.

Varieties of Tourism

- ❑ **Nature-based Tourism:** Popular in places like Sundarbans and Sylhet.
- ❑ **Cultural and Heritage Tourism:** Involving ancient sites like Paharpur and Bagerhat.
- ❑ **Coastal and Marine Tourism:** Focused on beaches like Cox's Bazar and Kuakata.
- ❑ **Adventure and Trekking Tourism:** Flourishing in the hill regions.
- ❑ **Community-focused Tourism:** Involving local people in providing authentic experiences.

Environmental Implications of Tourism

Although tourism contributes economically, its environmental consequences can be significant if not properly regulated.



Plastics sculpture in Cox's Bazar is placed for raising awareness regarding plastic waste

1. Waste and Pollution

High tourist traffic in popular destinations like Cox's Bazar and St. Martin's Island has resulted in a significant increase in solid waste and marine pollution. The accumulation of plastic bottles, food packaging, and other non-biodegradable materials not only mars the natural beauty of these sites but also poses serious threats to local wildlife and marine ecosystems. Additionally, improper disposal of sewage and

runoff from tourist facilities can contaminate water sources, affecting both human health and aquatic life. The challenge is further compounded by the absence of efficient and comprehensive waste management systems, inadequate recycling infrastructure, and limited awareness among visitors and local communities about sustainable practices.

2. Forest Destruction and Habitat Encroachment

In many ecologically sensitive areas, rapid tourism development has sometimes proceeded without proper environmental clearance, resulting in deforestation and encroachment on vital wildlife habitats. The construction of hotels, roads, and other infrastructure often disrupts fragile ecosystems, fragmenting habitats that are crucial for endangered species and diverse plant life. This habitat loss not only threatens biodiversity but also undermines the ecological balance that supports local communities dependent on forest resources. Additionally, increased human activity can lead to soil erosion, water pollution, and disturbance to breeding grounds.

3. Wildlife Interference

Tourist activities, including loud boat rides and trekking, can disturb local wildlife in protected areas, affecting their natural behavior and reproductive patterns. Noise pollution from motorized boats and large groups of visitors can cause stress to animals, leading them to avoid important feeding or nesting sites. Frequent human presence may also disrupt migration routes and breeding cycles, reducing the chances of successful reproduction. Additionally, careless behavior such as littering or getting too close to sensitive habitats can degrade the environment and further threaten vulnerable species.

4. Water Resource Pressure

Tourism spikes can lead to overuse of local water supplies, particularly in drier or more densely populated destinations, creating shortages for nearby residents. Increased demand from hotels, resorts, restaurants, and recreational facilities places significant pressure on already limited freshwater resources. This can result in reduced water availability for local communities, agriculture, and daily household

needs, especially during peak tourist seasons. Over-extraction of groundwater may also lead to long-term environmental problems such as lowering of water tables, soil salinity, and degradation of aquatic ecosystems.

5. Erosion of Indigenous Cultures

While tourism introduces local cultures to the world and fosters greater appreciation and understanding, it also carries the risk of diluting or commodifying traditional customs. When cultural practices are adapted primarily to meet tourist expectations, there is a chance that their original meaning and significance may be lost. Over time, ceremonies, crafts, and rituals can become performances designed more for entertainment than authentic expression, which can weaken cultural identity. Additionally, the influx of visitors can sometimes lead to changes in community values and lifestyles, creating tension between preserving heritage and catering to economic benefits.

The Importance of Sustainable Tourism

Given the environmental sensitivity of many tourist spots in Bangladesh, it is vital to promote sustainable tourism—an approach that balances economic benefits with environmental preservation and cultural respect.

Core Principles of Sustainable Tourism

- 1. Environmental Stewardship:** Protecting natural ecosystems.
- 2. Cultural Preservation:** Promoting and safeguarding local traditions and heritage.
- 3. Economic Inclusivity:** Ensuring local communities benefit financially.
- 4. Local Involvement:** Empowering communities to participate in tourism-related decisions and operations.
- 5. Education and Outreach:** Encouraging tourists and hosts to act responsibly.

Examples from Bangladesh

- ❑ **Community-Led Tourism in CHT:** In the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), indigenous communities play a central role in community-led tourism by acting as hosts, guides, and cultural ambassadors. They offer visitors a chance to experience the region's rich heritage through homestays, traditional cuisine, handicrafts, music, and guided treks through scenic hills and forests. This form of tourism not only allows travelers to engage authentically with indigenous lifestyles and values but also empowers local people economically and socially. By involving the community directly, it ensures that tourism benefits are fairly distributed and that cultural practices are preserved rather than exploited. Additionally, it fosters mutual respect and understanding between visitors and indigenous groups while promoting environmental stewardship rooted in traditional knowledge.
- ❑ **Eco-lodging in Sylhet and elsewhere in Bangladesh:** Eco-lodging in Sylhet and other places represents a growing commitment to environmentally sensitive tourism, where accommodations are designed to minimize ecological footprints while offering a comfortable and immersive experience. These lodges are often built using locally sourced, sustainable materials such as bamboo, wood, and thatch, blending harmoniously with the natural landscape. They utilize renewable energy sources like solar power, implement water conservation measures, and promote waste reduction through composting and recycling. In addition to their green infrastructure, many eco-lodges actively support local

communities by sourcing food from nearby farms, employing local staff, and offering cultural programs such as traditional music, tea garden visits, and nature walks. This form of lodging not only preserves the ecological integrity of the Sylhet region but also educates visitors about sustainable living and the importance of conserving the area's unique biodiversity.

- ❑ **Visitor Regulation in the Sundarbans:** To safeguard the fragile ecosystem of the Sundarbans controlled tourism is implemented through limited permits, zoning regulations, and strict monitoring by forest authorities. Visitor numbers are capped in certain core zones to reduce human disturbance, particularly in areas critical to the survival of species like the Royal Bengal Tiger, estuarine crocodiles, and various migratory birds. Boats are required to follow designated routes and speed limits to prevent erosion and minimize noise pollution. In addition to physical restrictions, awareness campaigns and eco-education programs are conducted for both tourists and local tour operators to promote responsible behavior. These initiatives include briefings on waste disposal, wildlife observation etiquette, and the ecological significance of the mangrove habitat. Together, these regulatory measures aim to balance conservation efforts with sustainable tourism, ensuring the long-term preservation of this unique and vital natural heritage.

Institutional Framework and Policy Measures

Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC)

The Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC), formed in 1972, is the principal government agency, responsible for promoting and developing tourism in Bangladesh. As the national tourism organization, it plays a pivotal role in shaping tourism policies, infrastructure development, and marketing strategies. BPC operates a network of state-run hotels, motels, and restaurants across the country, particularly in key tourist destinations, providing affordable and reliable services to both domestic and international travelers. In addition to managing hospitality facilities, the corporation publishes tourism-related materials, and collaborates with private and international stakeholders to enhance the country's global tourism profile. Through its multifaceted efforts, BPC contributes significantly to the growth of tourism as a key sector in Bangladesh's economy.

National Tourism Policy

The Tourism Policy of 2010 encourages responsible tourism, environmental protection, and community participation, aiming to ensure that tourism growth aligns with the principles of sustainability and inclusivity. It emphasizes minimizing the negative environmental and cultural impacts of tourism while maximizing its economic and social benefits. The policy outlines strategies to engage local communities in tourism planning and service delivery, thereby fostering a sense of ownership and creating livelihood opportunities at the grassroots level. Additionally, it identifies niche tourism sectors—such as rural tourism, eco-tourism, adventure tourism, and cultural tourism—as priority areas for focused development and investment. Special attention is given to preserving Bangladesh's natural heritage and cultural diversity, with provisions for skill development, infrastructure improvement, and public-private partnerships. The policy also seeks to enhance international competitiveness by upgrading service standards and promoting Bangladesh as an attractive, safe, and sustainable tourist destination.

Protected Area Governance

Under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, the Forest Department is responsible for the administration, protection, and management of wildlife sanctuaries, national parks, and other protected areas in Bangladesh. Its role includes enforcing environmental laws, regulating access, conserving biodiversity, and overseeing afforestation and reforestation initiatives. In recent years, the introduction of co-management models has marked a significant shift toward participatory conservation. These models actively involve local communities in decision-making, monitoring, and benefit-sharing processes. For example, in Lawachara National Park, community members serve as eco-tour guides, participate in conservation awareness programs, and help reduce illegal logging and poaching through surveillance and reporting. This collaborative approach not only strengthens forest conservation but also provides alternative livelihoods for people living near protected areas, fostering a sense of ownership and environmental stewardship. Similar models have been expanded to other protected zones, reflecting a growing recognition that sustainable conservation efforts require the support and inclusion of local stakeholders.

Strategies for Moving Forward

1. Encouraging Green Investments

Providing incentives for eco-friendly businesses is crucial to promoting sustainable tourism in Bangladesh. Measures such as tax rebates, low-interest green loans, and fast-track approvals can encourage the adoption of environmentally responsible practices. For instance, resorts and hotels that invest in renewable energy sources like solar or biogas, implement rainwater harvesting systems, or use biodegradable packaging can be rewarded with financial and regulatory support. In tourism hotspots like the Sundarbans, Sylhet, and Cox's Bazar, such green infrastructure can significantly reduce pollution, energy consumption, and pressure on local ecosystems. The government may also encourage public-private partnerships to develop eco-lodges, plastic-free zones, and green transportation options.

2. Promoting Bangladesh as a Green Destination

Developing and marketing Bangladesh as a green destination can significantly enhance its appeal to environmentally and culturally conscious travelers. A national branding strategy should emphasize the country's unique blend of natural wonders alongside its rich cultural heritage. Highlighting eco-friendly travel opportunities, including community-based tourism in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, tea garden experiences in Sylhet, and wildlife tours can position Bangladesh as a responsible and rewarding destination. To support this image, tourism campaigns should showcase sustainability efforts like eco-lodges, green transport options, and conservation success stories. Collaborating with international travel platforms, influencers, and diaspora communities can help spread a positive and authentic message globally. Promoting Bangladesh in this way can attract a niche market of eco-tourists.

3. Fostering Public-Private Collaboration

Establishing strong partnerships among government agencies, NGOs, and private sector stakeholders is crucial for advancing sustainable tourism in Bangladesh. Such collaborations can help pool financial resources, technical expertise, and local knowledge to develop environmentally responsible tourism infrastructure

and services. For example, joint initiatives can support the creation of eco-resorts in areas like the Chittagong Hill Tracts or Sylhet, or fund conservation projects in the Sundarbans and marine zones. NGOs can play a pivotal role by offering training in sustainable practices to local communities, while private investors can bring innovation and efficiency to service delivery. Government agencies, in turn, can provide regulatory frameworks and incentives to ensure that development aligns with environmental goals. Successful models—such as co-management approaches in Lawachara National Park—demonstrate the value of shared governance. Expanding such partnerships across the country can enhance accountability, generate inclusive economic benefits, and promote Bangladesh as a model for collaborative, sustainable tourism in the region.

4. Building Climate Resilience

Incorporating climate adaptation strategies into tourism infrastructure is essential for safeguarding Bangladesh's tourism sector against increasing climate risks. As the country regularly faces cyclones, flooding, and rising sea levels—particularly in vulnerable areas like the Sundarbans, Kuakata, and the coastal belt—resilient planning must become a priority. Tourism facilities should be designed using climate-smart architecture, including cyclone-resistant structures, elevated walkways, and sustainable drainage systems to withstand extreme weather events. Water conservation measures such as rainwater harvesting and low-flow fixtures are vital in areas where freshwater is scarce, especially during dry seasons. Furthermore, promoting alternative income-generating activities—like local handicrafts, agro-tourism, or cultural performances—during low tourist seasons can help communities maintain livelihoods even when climate events disrupt travel. Government agencies, NGOs, and the private sector should collaborate to integrate resilience planning into tourism policies, conduct climate risk assessments for tourist zones, and raise awareness among stakeholders. By proactively addressing climate threats, Bangladesh can ensure the long-term sustainability of its diverse tourism destinations and protect both its people and natural heritage.

Besides, strengthening policy enforcement, improving overall situation through training and education may also be fruitful.

Conclusion

The bond between tourism and the environment in Bangladesh is one of both opportunity and risk. The country's natural beauty and cultural wealth provide immense tourism potential. However, without sustainable planning and management, tourism can become a threat to these very assets. By embracing a sustainable tourism model that includes environmental protection, cultural respect, and local empowerment, Bangladesh can build a resilient, inclusive, and eco-friendly tourism industry.

With coordinated efforts from the government, local communities, and the private sector, Bangladesh has the potential to rise as a prominent destination for sustainable tourism in South Asia—setting a model for how economic development can coexist with ecological preservation.

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Kazi Nazrul Islam and Our Complex Modern World

Shahnaj Ranu

school's text book, "Dukhu Mia", needless to say Dukhu was the nickname of our great poet, and to me the introduction is not enough to know Nazrul. He was born to parents Kazi Faqeer Ahmed, an Imam to a mosque from where the enchanting lyrics of the Azan tuned his music in future, and Zahida Khatun, a house wife. His early childhood was restless, was a perfect example of the personification of "Stream of Consciousness". He worked in a shop, walked away with a jatra group, then again roaming in different places as we all know already. These phases are very important to know as they added various feathers and furs in his writings. I will not go into details of his writings, because I do not claim myself an expert to do so. Rather, I would like to take the privilege to highlight my understanding on the relevance of Kazi Nazrul Islam's literature to our modern world which is never so calm and quiet like a stagnant pond, it has its own problems and geopolitical calculation making it a vast ocean instead, difficult place for having a dignified existence, let alone dreaming high.

While saying so, I do wonder, is it very hard to find the similarities or differences between a world of 20th and 21st century? Yes, there were no technological advantage during Nazrul's time, no computer, no mobile device, no search engine like Google, he was not introduced with the Artificial Intelligence, he did not enjoy the satellite channels to have ready references, neither was acquaintance with the world literature of his time, nor was a traveler like many of his contemporary writers. But, surely he did not confine himself with the world around him. He learnt many languages, with his limited capacity he saw the world around him and eventually he had a very clear understanding of the political ambitions and nuisance, he knew

Kazi Nazrul Islam, our National Poet, widely known as the Rebel Poet, belongs to the first half of 20th century. The then world was torn apart with boundless chaos and instability in terms of political, economic or even social sectors along with two major World Wars, during 1940s. Kazi Nazrul Islam and the world both had many turmoil to face, many ups and downs to deal with, endless waves to count, many miseries to collect, and enormous struggles to do. And here we are to recollect those griefs and torments expressed in his life and literature and to measure our modern life in the same scale.

We had one short introduction of Kazi Nazrul Islam, in our primary



Kazi Nazrul Islam, as a soldier of World War I

the tyrannical faces of the rulers, could penetrate the characteristics of the colonization, discrimination and disparity as a whole. He knew the impact of the social injustices, oppression, and the ramification of the suppression of the basic rights on daily life. He knew the value of liberty and freedom. Nazrul Islam witnessed and experienced the extreme poverty; he even lost his favorite son, Bulbul, whom he could not provide proper treatment. Nazrul, desperate to seeking freedom and justice, raised his voice and his inner spirit compelled him to join the First World War. Thereby, the world got a poet who was a warrior, a rebel to the core. A tornado and a volcano immersed from the Bengal, and that is our national poet, Kazi Nazrul Islam. Our literature witnessed

a great rebellious poet born from a village Churulia, and became universal, surpassing all the boundary and outsmarting the modernism, no doubt I am talking about his historic poems like Bidrohi, Vangar Gan etc. When he says-

Ami mrinmoy, ami chinmoy
 Ami ajor, amor akhhoy, ami abyoi.
 Ami manob, danob debotar voy, bishwer ami chiro durjoy,
 Jagadishwar-Ishwar ami puroshuttom sattyā,
 Ami tathia tathia mathia firi sorgo-patal martyā!
 Ami unmad, ami unmad!!

Ami chineci amare,
Ajike amar khulia giyace sob bandh!!”

(I'm made of clay; I'm the embodiment of the Soul.
I'm imperishable, inexhaustible and immortal.
I intimidate the humans, demons and gods.
I'm ever-unconquerable.
I'm the God of gods, the supreme humanity,
Traversing the heaven and earth!
I'm mad, I'm mad!
I have realized myself,
All the barriers have crumbled away!!)

-Translated by Sajed Kamal

- He literally means to reveal the ultimate demand of the time, to have self-realization, to raise the voice and time to make the oppressors understand the power of a rebel. It is very difficult to find out another Nazrul in world literature, who is versatile in writings, at the same time dynamic in thoughts and liberal in viewpoint. Our Nazrul is the epitome of the heroism and valor.

Then look into the world of today, how it is with all its modern facilities, with the uninterrupted flow of information and having so many organizations working to establish human rights, children's rights, NGOs working for the dignity of the ethnic people, to ensure women empowerment, to destabilize the despots from the world and so on and so forth. We have so many heavy words like



Young Kazi Nazrul Islam in front of Dalmadal Cannon in Bishnupur Bankura, 1920s

‘Democracy’, ‘Liberalism’, ‘Equity’ ‘Capitalism’, etc. to make our brains washed away with the complexity, to digest them all no matter they provide proper nutrition to our soul or not. It reminds me of the poem of William Wordsworth “The world is too much with us” and regretfully, we are already in the grip of the modernism losing natural way of life.

Or even with the flow of information, we all have compromised our privacy, we have surrendered our soul to the Artificial Intelligence like Doctor Faustus and the worst part of this is we are not even aware of the fact! We pretend to be happy, to be saturated with the surroundings. We know everything knowing nothing; we are expert of the non-existence and ignorant of the existing milieu. We are powerfully powerless, and we are about to conquer the universe losing the own self corner. Nothing has changed actually; we were chained by the visual colonial lords at Nazrul’s time, and now are captivated by the virtual ones. Things are even pathetic in this modern world where we have to fight with the unseen knowing not where it would lead us and eventually would leave us. We are at the peak of the sufferings and about to explode. We are all rebel inside, waiting for the Second Coming, mentioned in the Bible.

So, the relevance of Nazrul, the poet is evidence in our modern world. I can still remember, recited a poem of the great poet namely “ Batayan pashe gobuk torur shari “ when I was a student of class 8 in a small village of North Bengal. Needless to mention that the poem was selected by our respected teachers and with shaking feet, trembling head, and nervous pronunciation I read those four lines from the poem-

“Tomader pane chahiya bondhu, ar ami jagibo na.
Kolahol kori sara dinoman karo dhyan vangibo na
Nischol nishchup
Apnar mone puribo ekaki gondhobidhur dhup!”
(Companions, I’ll never wake up again to look at you
I won’t interrupt anyone’s trance after a tumultuous day.
Silently, all alone, I’ll burn the incense of my suffering.)

-Translated by Prof. Fakhrul Alam

- It was too much for a young girl to understand the meaning and to carry the heaviness of the verse. I was puzzled, lost in the beauty of the lines instead. Since then I delved into the meaning and dwelled in that verse! Possibly it was God’s willing that I became a student of English literature later, and those four lines got their wings to fly in my imaginative sky. Finally, they came to me with their deeper meaning. By then I knew what it means to be gone forever from the known world, the pains, the misery to suffer all alone and what it means to be lonely amidst thousands. I became a fan of Nazrul, and also was jealous how he had penned his thoughts unlike me. Secretly, I started to imitate him, turned a rebel inside and a lover outside.

Even in this wonderfully composed poem, Batayan pashe gobuk torur shari,(Rows of Betelnut trees by my window) the poet has not failed to depict his miserable

world through rebellious
outburst. Just imagine when
he says-

“Molin matir bondhone
bandha hai osohay toru,
Podotole dhuli, urdhe tumar
shunno gogon-moru.

Diboshe purichho roudrer
dahe, nishithe vijichho
hime,

Kandibaro o nai shokti,
mritto afime porichho
jhime!

Tumar dukkho tumarei jodi,
bondhu byatha na hane,
Ki hobe rikto chitto voriya
amar byather dane!”

(Tied to exhausted earth,
you’ve become a row of
helpless trees,

Your feet are soiled with
dust, your heads enveloped
in emptiness.

Your days scald in the sun’s

heat, your night’s chill in the dew,

You lack the strength to cry, you seem to be in a deathlike stupor

If your problems fail to arouse you, companions, and stir you,

What can I hope to gain by burdening you with my gift of pain?)

-Translated by Prof. Fakhru Alam

-the eternal pain with seemingly no solution is evident. The poet is
disturbed, distressed and disoriented, yet how boldly he expresses his
feelings and urges to have self-realization. Oh Nazrul, our Nazrul!

Yes, nothing has changed since then, we pretend to be modern, and we pretend
to be wiser, pretend to have friends from all over the world through social media.
Inwardly, we are lonelier than ever. But we are blind, perceptual blind. We do not
know ourselves and we badly need someone like Nazrul to say-

“Jago jago, re musafir hoye ashe nishibhor.

Dake shudur pother banshi chharh musafir-khana tor”

(Wake Up, Wake Up, O Traveler

Dawn is approaching.

The flute of the distant path Calls leave you rest house...)

We need to wake up and loud it clearly – (I know myself), “Ami chineci amare!”



Kazi Nazrul Islam at Sitakunda Chandranath hill in 1929

We need to start the day with yielding promises and end it with translating those in reality. When the path is lost, the surrounding is murky, the sky is foggy, and the dreams are all shattered, Nazrul comes with his ever enchanting lines-

“Bolo Bir
Bolo unnoto momo shir!”
(Say, Valiant
Say: High is my head!)

-Translated by Kabir Chowdhury

Yes, it's true we are afraid of the world, we are yet to speak out our mind, we are rarely frequented by our true self, we are coward to our emotions and feelings, but this very same “we” can bring a change to the world. Once we know the power of human being and the kindness associated with this, we are invincible to any obstacle. A poet, born in 1899 in a small village, can still influence and impact our thoughts, our protests, can encourage raising voices against all sorts of oppression, discrimination be it social injustice, religious fundamentalism, or even against the State even at this age. He is still in our literature with his powerful message and thereby in our revolt to have a slogan-

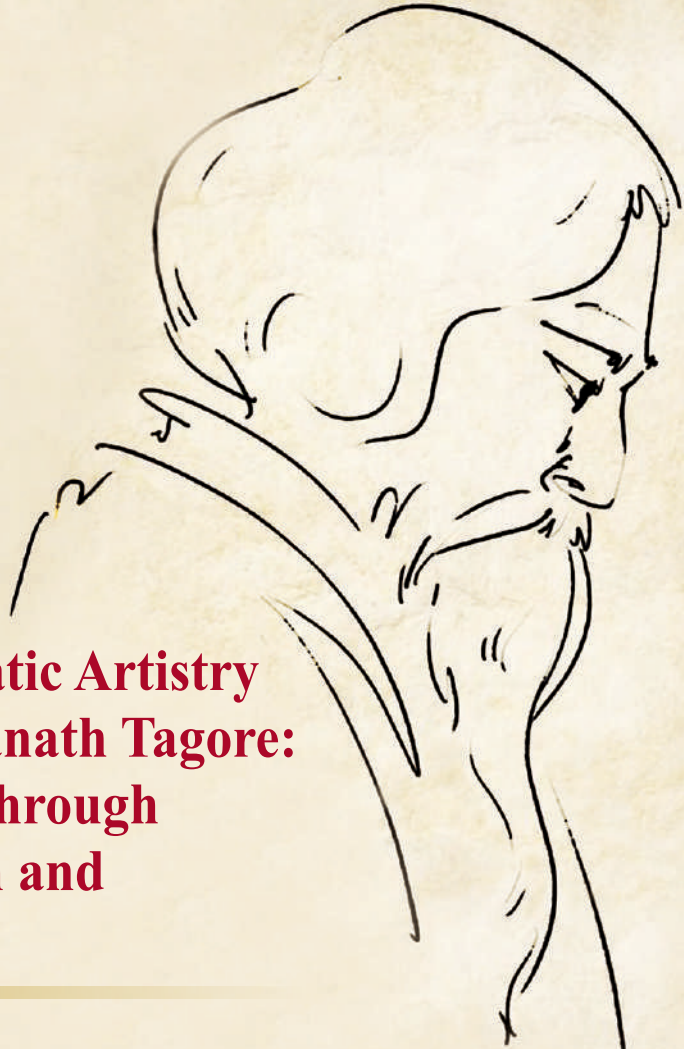
“Karar oi louho kopat
Venge felo korre lopat
Rokto jomat shikol pujar pashan bedi
Ore o torun ishan
Baja tor proloy bishan
Dhongsho nishan uruk prachir prachir vedi”

(Destroy those iron gates of prison,
Demolish the blood-stained stony altars
Of chain worshipping!
O youthful Shiva,
Blow your horn of universal cataclysm!
Let the flag of destruction
Rise amidst the rubble of prison walls
Of the East!!)

-Translated by Sajed Kamal

Nazrul Islam has the indelible footprints in our life, in our literature. He is everywhere. Those who are yet to realize the truth will someday reiterate, “Ajike amar khulia giyace sob bandh, ami unmad !” (I'm mad! All the barriers have crumbled away!!) Yes, they will. The morning with a clear sunshine is waiting for us, surely.

Shahnaj Ranu, Counsellor (Political), Bangladesh Embassy, Abu Dhabi



The Enigmatic Artistry of Rabindranath Tagore: A Journey through Imagination and Inspiration

Nasrin Mustafa

Art can uplift, provoke, soothe, entertain and educate us. It is an important part of our life. At its most profound level, it takes us from the everyday to a place of introspection and contemplation to see the bigger picture of the human condition. In the vast panorama of South Asian art, Rabindranath Tagore stands as a luminous figure whose brilliance extends far beyond his celebrated literary prowess. While Tagore is widely acclaimed for his poetry, novels, and philosophical essays, his artistic journey into the realm of visual arts offers a lesser-known, yet profoundly intriguing dimension of his creative genius. Through his paintings, Tagore invites us to traverse a unique landscape where imagination, spirituality, and self-expression intertwine.

A Renaissance Soul in the Modern Age

Rabindranath Tagore, born in 1861 in Kolkata, was a man of many facets. The laureate of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913, Tagore's influence spanned across diverse fields. His visual art, however, often remains overshadowed by his literary achievements. Yet, it is in his art that one can witness the full breadth of



PIYALI, Rabindranath Tagore, Pen & Ink on paper, 1940

his creative spirit—an exploration of self, society, and the cosmic.

The quote “Art is the response of man’s creative soul to the call of the real” is attributed to Rabindranath Tagore. It captures his view of art as a profound and sincere engagement with the deeper truths of existence. Tagore believed that art transcends mere representation and serves as a medium through which the artist’s inner vision and response to reality are expressed. Art is deeply concerned with reality which, in Tagore’s view, consists of man, the Eternal, the Creator. The reality, which is central to all art, is the reality of a man who is universal and eternal. Tagore’s foray into painting began relatively late in his life, around the 1920s, when he was in his sixties. This period marked a departure from his established literary career, as he embraced a new form of expression with the same intensity and introspection that characterized his writings. Tagore’s art is not merely a hobby or a diversion; it is a profound extension of his philosophical and spiritual quest.

The Artistic Language of Tagore

Tagore began writing poetry at a very early age, and during his lifetime he published nearly 60 volumes of verse, in which he experimented with many poetic forms and techniques—lyric, sonnet, ode, dramatic monologue, dialogue poems, long narratives and descriptive works, and prose poems. Between 1928 and 1940, Rabindranath painted more than 2000 images. He never gave any title to his paintings however, in the collection of the NGMA they have been titled by the institution. Fed by memories and the subconscious, Rabindranath’s art was spontaneous and dramatic.

He was immensely attracted to primitive art, European Expressionism and Japanese art. Distortion of form, aberrant use of colour and sensitive handling of lines, characterized his paintings. His paintings had a strange surrealism and bizarre expression. Tagore’s paintings are a vivid testament to his imaginative expertise. His works are marked by an innovative use of color, form, and symbolism. Unlike the traditional Indian art of his time, which often adhered to realistic and decorative conventions, Tagore’s paintings are imbued with a modernist sensibility. They break away from realism to embrace abstraction and surrealism, reflecting a

deep engagement with both Eastern and Western artistic traditions.

The thematic core of Tagore's artwork often revolves around the exploration of the human condition and its relation to the divine. His paintings are replete with symbolic imagery—figures that seem to hover between the realms of the tangible and the ethereal. In his depictions of women, for instance,



Landscape, Rabindranath Tagore, Crayon on paper, 1935

Tagore portrays them as enigmatic, almost mystical beings, embodying both grace and otherworldliness. These figures are less about physicality and more about an inner essence, evoking a sense of spiritual transcendence. The landscapes are always set in the liminal zone between day and night. The gentle descent of dusk was a favorite theme with him. The landscapes always show the foreground dark, brooding tree or a group of trees standing as sentinels. There is always some water and the vista stretches to some distant horizon. The pensive air about them is haunting.

Tagore's use of color is equally distinctive. His palette tends to be bold and unconventional, often juxtaposing vibrant hues with muted tones. This interplay of color enhances the emotional depth of his works, creating a visual rhythm that mirrors the lyrical quality of his poetry. The abstract forms and fluid lines in his paintings suggest a continuous flow of energy, reflecting his belief in the interconnectedness of all existence.

An Artistic Philosophy

Tagore's artistic philosophy was deeply rooted in his understanding of the universe and the human soul. He saw art not just as a form of aesthetic expression but as a means of exploring and connecting with the deeper truths of existence. His paintings often resonate with the same mystical and philosophical inquiries that permeate his literature.

In his own words, Tagore described art as a bridge between the material and the spiritual, a medium through which the artist can communicate the inexpressible. This perspective is evident in his visual works, where the abstract and the symbolic serve as conduits for expressing profound truths. Tagore's art is thus a reflection of his belief in the transformative power of creativity, capable of transcending the boundaries of language and conventional understanding.

Legacy and Influence

Tagore's contributions to the visual arts may not have achieved the same level



Mother & Child, Rabindranath Tagore, pen & black ink on paper, 1930-1931

of global recognition as his literary works, but they have left an indelible mark on the Indian artistic landscape. His paintings continue to be celebrated for their originality and emotional depth, and they have inspired generations of artists to explore new avenues of expression.

In the contemporary art scene, Tagore's works are increasingly being re-evaluated and appreciated for their avant-garde qualities. Exhibitions and retrospectives showcase the richness of his artistic output offering new insights into his multifaceted genius. The rediscovery of Tagore's visual art underscores the importance of his creative legacy and invites us to delve deeper into the intersections of art, spirituality, and human experience.

Critics' reviews

Critics have offered a diverse range of comments on

Rabindranath Tagore's art, reflecting its complexity and the nuances of its reception. Overall, critical responses to Rabindranath Tagore's art reveal a rich tapestry of perspectives, reflecting both admiration for his innovative approach and debates about his technical skills. His paintings are seen as a profound extension of his literary and philosophical explorations, offering a unique and valuable perspective within the broader context of modern art.

Art historian R. Siva Kumar notes that Tagore's paintings exhibit a bold departure from traditional Indian art forms. His use of abstract forms and fluid lines challenges conventional aesthetics, aligning his work with the modernist movements of his time. Kumar highlights that Tagore's art integrates Eastern and Western influences, creating a unique visual language that reflects his deep intellectual and spiritual inquiries.

Tagore's work in general is imbued with sadness, may be it was his personal tragedy due to great loss of his mother at his early life, the suicide of his childhood playmate, sister-in-law and literary companion, Kadambari Devi, and the years between 1902 and 1907, saw the deaths of his wife, daughter and youngest son. Tagore's employment of symbolism and mystical elements in his art has garnered significant attention. Critics like Sudhir Chandra have pointed out that Tagore's paintings often feature symbolic representations and abstract forms that convey

complex spiritual and philosophical ideas. Chandra argues that these elements are reflective of Tagore's literary themes, where the search for the divine and the exploration of human consciousness are central. Tagore's use of symbolism is seen as a way to transcend the limitations of language, offering viewers a direct engagement with his inner vision.

Art critic Partha Mitter has discussed the emotional and spiritual resonance in Tagore's work. Mitter notes that Tagore's paintings are imbued with a sense of otherworldliness and introspection, which is consistent with his literary output. The fluidity and abstraction in his art are interpreted as expressions of his quest for deeper spiritual truths and his reflection on the human condition. Mitter suggests that the emotional depth of Tagore's paintings creates a meditative space for viewers inviting them to engage with the artist's contemplative journey.

While many critics appreciate the innovative aspects of Tagore's art, some have critiqued his technical skill and execution. Art critic and historian Ghulam Mohammed's review points out that Tagore's approach to painting often prioritizes conceptual expression over technical precision. Mohammed argues that Tagore's lack of formal training in painting is evident in his loose brushwork and unconventional compositions, which may not always appeal to those who value technical mastery in visual art.

Critics have also examined the impact and legacy of Tagore's visual art. Tagore's art is often seen as part of his broader cultural and intellectual contributions, influencing both contemporary and later artists. Scholars like Pratapaditya Pal have highlighted how Tagore's work prefigures certain elements of modern Indian art, paving the way for future generations to explore similar themes of abstraction and spirituality. Pal asserts that while Tagore's visual art may not have achieved the same fame as his literary work, it remains a crucial part of his legacy and offers valuable insights into his creative universe.

In discussing Tagore's art, critics also consider its cultural context and reception. Art critic and curator Naman P. Ahuja has noted that while Tagore's paintings are celebrated in some circles, they have been somewhat overlooked in mainstream art discourse. Ahuja attributes this to a general tendency to focus on Tagore's literary achievements rather than his visual art. However, he argues that this oversight is gradually being rectified as exhibitions and scholarly work which increasingly highlights the significance of Tagore's artistic contributions.

Conclusion

Rabindranath Tagore's artistic journey is a testament to the boundless nature of human creativity. His paintings, though often eclipsed by his literary acclaim, represent a unique and profound facet of his artistic vision. Through his visual art, Tagore challenges us to see beyond the surface, to explore the realms of imagination and spirituality, and to appreciate the deep connections that bind us all.

In celebrating the art of Rabindranath Tagore, we not only honor a masterful artist but also embrace a vision of creativity that transcends boundaries and speaks to the universal quest for meaning and beauty.

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Memoirs of Higher Studies in Germany

Prof. Syed Anwarul Haque

Exchange Program (DAAD) to study “Salinity and heavy metal interactions in maize” from 24 November 1994 to 23 February 1995. My wife also flew to Hannover, the nearest airport to Braunschweig, as I did, but separately. My wife landed earlier at the airport and was waiting for me. On my arrival at the Hannover airport, we found a driver with a vehicle waiting for us. Prof. Ewald Schnug, Head of the Institute of Plant Nutrition and Soil Science at Braunschweig, sent an official vehicle for us at the airport, Hannover, where we arrived from Aberdeen. The driver drove us directly to the Institute at Braunschweig.

Federal Agriculture Research Center (FAL)

The Agriculture Research Center at Braunschweig, where I worked under the DAAD Fellowship, was established in Braunschweig in 1947 on a large property previously used for aviation research. The Federal Agricultural Research Center (FAL) was founded against the background of an insufficient food supply as a consequence of the Second World War. The Research Center included a broad spectrum of topics under one roof, including the research areas of Soil/Plants, Animals, Technology, and Economics. FAL’s research topics were always related to contemporary policy decision needs.

On arrival at the institute, we were formally greeted by Prof. Schnug at his office. We had some informal discussions, including research activities to be started soon at the Institute. He sent us for dinner with one of his research scientists from the Institute to a nearby restaurant, since it was already evening. We had our dinner completed and came back to a small apartment arranged for us on the campus of the Institute. Close by on the same campus, there was also a big hall for other

I had the opportunity to attend a higher academic program in Germany at the Federal Agricultural Research Center in Braunschweig for three months under the German Academic Exchange Program (DAAD) Fellowship. The study program commenced on 24 November 1994 and ended on 23 February 1995. It followed my other academic program for six months in Aberdeen, Scotland, UK, under the EU Fellowship.

Braunschweig city is located in the north-central part of Germany. The nearest airport was Hannover. On completion of my Postdoc research work in Aberdeen (Scotland), I left for Braunschweig, Germany, on a 3-month German Academic



The Federal Agricultural Research Center (FAL), Braunschweig in Germany

foreign scientists to stay and, if needed to cook, where all necessary cooking arrangements were also available, including a refrigerator, utensils, gas stoves, etc. We had to pass through a forest with a narrow road leading to our small campus for foreigners from the institute, where we were working. In between, there was a library for reading books, journals, digests, Newspapers, etc. I often used the library for reading journals, and Science Digests contained useful information.

Accommodation at the Institute

We had been staying in good accommodation, a well-furnished small apartment close to the Guest House in Braunschweig, where other scientists stayed in single-room accommodations. We had a cozy small accommodation with a bath and a small kitchen. My wife used to cook for two of us. She liked cooking. We used to buy food materials for cooking from the market in the city center. There was a bus stop near the Institute that led to the city center. The city center was also a place to move around and to buy household articles, and clothing, as well as for recreation, such as moving around shopping malls, popping into cinema halls, etc.

FAL Bus stop to the city center

Near the institute, there was a bus stop to the city center, where from both of us, my wife and I used to go to the city center. When I was at the institute doing my research work, my wife often used to go to the city center for shopping. It was her routine work. My wife used to go to the shopping center using city transport

(local bus). While coming back from the city center, she used to pop into the room, where I used to work at the Institute. Then we went together to our apartment at FAL.

I used to do my experiment with Prof. Dr. Helal, an Egyptian scientist, who had been at the Institute at Braunschweig for a pretty long time. I used to work in his Lab. We invited him once to our apartment for dinner with us. He brought a plate of chocolates with him. It was close to Christmas. Dr. Helal told me a story that happened to him once, while he was driving on a highway in Germany. He was driving late at night, and the road was empty. Seeing the street empty, he drove, disobeying the red signal. The very next morning, he got a slip from the Road Transport Authority indicating that he was barred from running a vehicle on the street for the next 3 months. So strict were the rules and regulations on driving cars and other vehicles on highways in Germany. We also invited Dr. Schnug to a dinner with us at our residence in Braunschweig. He liked our food very much and appreciated the arrangement of the dinner with us at the Institute.

Dr. Schnug also invited us to a dinner in a spectacular place at a high altitude with rivulets of ice water by the roadside in hilly areas. Hills were partly covered by snow as well. We could experience the spectacular scenery from a distance on the way to the restaurant, where we had our dinner hosted by Prof. Schnug. The dinner was delicious and special with fried duck, bread, special coffee, etc. Once during our stay in Braunschweig, Prof. Schnug also invited us to his house, located in another district, where he used to come for his office work regularly. We went to his house in a car driven by him. Dr. Haneclaus, a co-researcher of Dr. Schnug, also accompanied us on the trip. We had dinner there, specially cooked for us at his house. We stayed overnight at Prof. Schnug's house. The following morning, we left for Braunschweig by train. Prof. Schnug drove us to the railway station. We came back to Braunschweig by train. It indicated Prof. Schnug's love and good wishes for us, which were overwhelming. He also helped me later in supporting my participation in different scientific conferences abroad.

Christmas Time in Braunschweig

Our stay in Braunschweig became colorful with the beginning of Christmas. We had been to the city center often to enjoy the Christmas decorations and buy a lot of needed articles, moving from Department stores to stores. It was always joyful to be at Christmas time in Europe. Christmas trees were seen everywhere and were colorfully decorated. I came to know recently from CNN news that the Christmas tree was first introduced by the Germans in the 16th century, which was not known to me earlier. We also spent leisure time at Coffee bars enjoying Christmas. Staying for Christmas in Braunschweig was wonderful. Every house was decorated with lighting and festoons. Shops become enjoyable to visit, purchasing colorful articles at reduced prices. People moved from shop to shop and had special gatherings, particularly at different Coffee shops.



Berlin wall

Visited Berlin, East, and West, already reunified

In the middle of my stay in Braunschweig, we had a trip to Berlin by a tourist bus. By the time Berlin was reunified. It was a long way to reach Berlin. On our way, we faced a rainfall. We went around East Berlin before reaching West Berlin. At that time (early winter, 1995), East Berlin was under reconstruction work for development. I made two visits earlier to West Berlin before the reunification of East and West Germany. The trip to Berlin was good and interesting. We moved around Berlin's city center, doing some shopping at the Super Malls. We also saw the landmark church that still had a high top but was built in the 1890s. It was badly damaged in a bombing raid by the British in 1943 during World War II. The spire of the church, which was built in 1895 by Kaiser Wilhelm II to honor his grandfather, Kaiser Wilhelm I, was nicknamed "Hollow Tooth" by the locals. On the same day in the afternoon, we left Berlin for Braunschweig.

Before I left for home, I gave a talk on the subject, 'Nutrient management and salinity problems,' at a Colloquium at the Institute, where both Dr. Schnug and Dr. Helal, my research supervisor, were present. Our research work was published in *Communications in Soil Science and Plant Analysis*, Georgia, USA, in 1996. We left for home, Bangladesh, on 23rd February 1995.

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Sadarghat – a Living Heritage in Dhaka

Md. Ziaul Haque Howlader

built for boats and ships. With the evolution of Dhaka city for more than four hundred years, Sadarghat has also underwent many changes.

During the British colonial rule, Sadarghat as a riverfront hosted the offices of the Magistrates and collectors for long time. The British colonial rulers developed ghats (wharfs), such as Wiseghat, Sadarghat and Northbrook Hall ghat. The Viceroy of India travelled by ship from Calcutta to Dhaka's riverside palaces for balls and parties.

Sadarghat – the port of Dhaka – is one of the most important and busiest riverfronts in Bangladesh. It is the life-line of Dhaka for transporting passengers and cargoes in water-way to most of the districts in the country. Dhaka was once called the Venice of the East for its trading and commerce as well as important location surrounded by a net of rivers. The strategic riverine location of Dhaka made it a hub for Eurasian traders including the French, Portuguese, British and Armenians. It was the hub for famous muslin trade in Bengal as well as one of the most prosperous cities in the world. The river-front Sadarghat played an important part of those histories. It was established in 17th century during the Mughal period. Mughal Emperor Jahangir took initiatives for construction of a river port to serve Dhaka. Initially it was



Sadarghat



River Buriganga flows beside Sadarghat

Historians coin Sadarghat as a living tapestry of our profound effort, living culture and significant history. The Buriganga River itself is the testament of many histories from Mughal regime to legacy of Pallashey War and British era. Dhaka was decorated by the Mughals as a city with well-laid garden, tombs, mosques, palaces, forts and play-grounds. The foot-prints of Mughal era are still visible



Crowded Sadarghat

to us. The importance of pre-colonial Dhaka city reached the Zenith at the late 17th and early 18th centuries, when it was a melting ground to merchants from Asia and Europe. The Port of Dhaka – Sadarghat – was a major trading port for both the riverine and sear-borne trade and commerce. The historical Sadarghat is still widely known as the busiest river-port of Bangladesh, which stands on the Buriganga River.

Sadarghat is located at the south-eastern part of old Dhaka city. Sadarghat denotes city wharf or city waterfront. It stands just a few meters left of historical Ahsan Manzil. Sadarghat is the eye-witness of many significant events as well as trading, commerce and river transportations since the Mughal era. It is just five minutes journey from Gulistan Bus-stand. Sadarghat launch ghat – the bustling terminal – serves as an important transportation hub for carrying goods to the southern Bangladesh. It is a vital port for passengers travelling across the country by waterways. Though there is seen a little decrease of passengers movement towards southern Bengal via Sadarghat after the inauguration of the Padma Bridge, Sadarghat launch terminal still play an import role to the Bangladesh's economy for goods and passengers carrying towards south Bengal. Sadarghat offers a panorama of river life to tourists. It remains open twenty-four hours a day.



Launches laden with passengers on the River Buriganga

Sadarghat being a busy port, hundreds of passengers are seen moving to and fro along the jetty. Launches and ships remain anchored for departure or after arrivals. Passengers are busy to get in to launches or get down from arriving launches and ships. It is fascinating to have a glance of the launches and ships laden with passengers and goods arriving or departing with loud whistle down the Buriganga River. The departing passengers are also seen waiting for launches, when they arrive early or launches are delay to arrive at Sadarghat jetties.

Sadarghat launch terminal is an essential centre for commuting as well as a lively place for tourists. Tourists can feel the real taste of busy Dhaka and they can immerse themselves in the daily rhythm of life in the old Dhaka city. The vibrant atmosphere is characterized by the loud sounds of boat horn, vendors chattering, and the colourful sight of wooden vessels navigating the Buriganga River.

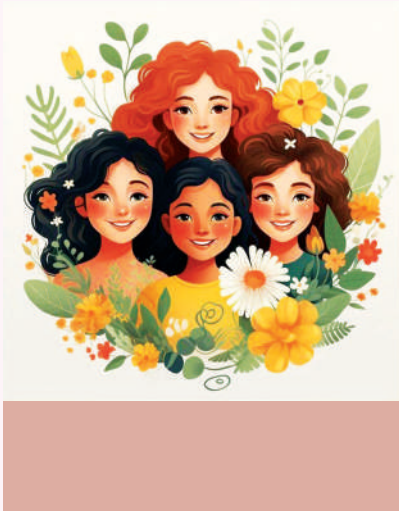


Launches and Boats anchored at Sadarghat

Sadarghat is an important part of Buckland embankment. Therefore, tourists can enjoy a stroll along the banks of Buriganga river, where they can sight people of many professions sitting on same streets carrying out own business together without any conflict. They can watch the cobblers, barbers, hawkers, tailors, fruits vendors, tea-stalls, makeshift shops for selling clothes, sweet-meat shops, snacks corner, traditional juice sellers, rickshaw & car repairing workshops and many more. Tourist can enjoy the narrow alleys and traffic congestions. They can enjoy rickshaw pullers calling loudly for passengers and haggling for rent. It's a perfect place for people to have a glance the diverse crowd. Visiting Sadarghat and taking pictures at Sadarghat will definitely memorable experience for tourists.

At Sadarghat, visitors can enjoy boat journey to nearby destinations down the Buriganga. The traditional ferry rides provides a unique view of landscape and local culture. The scenic backdrop of the river, combined with the energetic vibe of the terminal, makes it an ideal location for photography enthusiasts. While visiting Sadarghat, it is advised to visit the other nearby historical sites and local markets. The nearby historical sites are – Badamtoli market, Sir Salimullah Medical College, Ahsan Manzil, Brahammasamaj Temple, Begum Magazine publishing house, Beauty Boarding, Ruplal House, Armenian Church, Bahadursha Park etc. Tourists are also advised to savour the cuisine of old Dhaka such as – Biriyani, Laschi, Bakhorkhani, Faluda etc. To have the most authentic country's experience, there is no alternative to visit the Sadarghat area. Sadarghat is already known to the global tourists by dint of an article, published in the Lonely Planet magazine and the tour operators of Bangladesh who conduct package tour on Sadarghat. Initiative should be there to write more on Sadarghat to let our next generation know about it along with taking initiative to declare Sadarghat as a Living Heritage by the concerned department.

The writer is General Manager, Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, Dhaka



Feminism: A Historic Movement of Awareness

Khondokar Mahfuzul Haque

‘Feminism’ is different from any ‘exclusion’. Because feminism is not grounded in a single theoretical and conceptual framework. There is no single figure that has defined feminism for all and for all time.

The word ‘femme’ was combined with the word ‘Ism’ to form ‘feminism’. The word ‘femme’ is derived from the French word. Which means ‘woman’. Basically, the word ‘feminism’ has been used in imitation of communism, socialism, apartheid...etc.

In the early 19th century, the French socialist Charles Fourier first coined the term ‘feminism’. In the 80s of the same century, ‘Hubertin Auculter’ used the word ‘feminism’ for the first time. It was first mentioned in an appendix to the Oxford Dictionary in 1933.



Ria Rani Modak, young journalist, speaks about the challenges of women in this sector

‘Feminism’ is a doctrine about women. It is a movement that demands the full rights of a woman as a man as a human being. Feminism is the process of creating a balanced and developed society based on justice with the combination of men and women. It is a struggle to establish control over one’s life and body at home and out side. The struggle for equality, dignity and freedom of women is what ‘feminism’ is today.



Women’s procession for women friendly working environment

A woman or man who realizes the existence of gender inequality, male dominance and patriarchy and takes effective action against it, is a feminist. So it can be said that men can also be feminists in light of this.

Feminism emerged in the 1870s. The ‘Declaration of Independence’ was made in America on July 4, 1776 and the US Constitution was adopted in 1787. It did not recognize the equal rights of women. As a result, women began to demand equal rights at that time. It is marked in history as the birth of feminism.

Then, in 1789, the ideals of the French Revolution, the great sayings of ‘Equality, Friendship and Fraternity’, applied only to men. Women’s suffrage was not included in that context. As a result, women had to go to the movement to get the right to vote. In 1790, ‘Alima Chi. Goose’ wrote the book ‘Declaration of the Rights of Women and the Female Citizen’ in favor of women’s rights. In this book the writer raised the question, ‘If women have the right to go to the gallows, why should they not have the right to go to Parliament?’

One of the women’s demands then spread to other countries. Finally, after a long struggle, in 1893, New Zealand became the first country to recognize women’s suffrage. France abolished this discrimination in 1945, India in 1949 and Switzerland in 1971 and gave women the right to vote. All countries except Switzerland abolished this discrimination against women in the 20th century. It was the result of tireless efforts of feminist activists. Notable feminists included Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Susan B. Anthony etc.

In order to discuss the social, civil and religious status and rights of women, on July 19-20, 1848, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott organized a ‘Women’s Rights Conference’ in the city of Seneca Falls, USA. It presented a ‘Declaration of Sentiment’ containing 18 demands. One of the main demands was the right of women to get higher education. In 1848, out of the 18 demands, all except suffrage were unanimously accepted. Queen’s College was established in the United States in 1848 to provide higher education to the women.

In 1857, women workers in New York garment factories began a bloody struggle

for having better working conditions, shorter working hours and trade union rights. As a result, women workers were able to form a trade union on March 8, 1860. Because of this movement, March 8 has been recognized as International Women's Day. The participation of thousands of working women in the 'Pary Commune' in 1871 took feminism to a new level. In 1889, at the International Workers' Conference in Paris, feminist leader Clara Zetkin demanded 'equal pay for equal work' for both men and women.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the philosopher Harriet Taylor Mill and her husband John Stuart Mill became vocal about women's economic and political rights. They worked for women's human rights at the workplace, equal participation in education and property, and suffrage. In 1865, John Stuart Mill made a strong case for women's rights in the US Parliament. He wrote the sensational book 'The Subject of Women' - aimed at providing all the rights of women.

In the 1930s, the feminist movement began in the United States with the movement to abolish slavery and alcoholism. During this time, women introduced feminism into politics by addressing public meetings, consequently in America in 1890 'National American Women Suffrage Association' and 'National Union of Women Suffrage Societies' in 1897 is formed. Emily Davis, Emily Pankhurst, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson etc. led the feminist organizations at that time. Emmeline Pankhurst was imprisoned for fighting women's rights and against exploitation. Betty Friedan founded 'National Organization for Women' the United States in 1966. In 1970 at Ruskin College, Oxford, four special issues equal pay and allowances for men and women, equal education and opportunities for men and women, 24-hour childcare centers and free contraception and abortion on demand were raised.

Later, economic freedom of women, legal freedom, freedom from intimidation, freedom from terrorist activities, freedom from forced molestation of women and



Women working at garments factory expect equal honour as men



Women working at the Tea Garden

repeal of all laws that can continue or perpetuate the domination and aggression of men over women etc. was presented as a political agenda and the women's liberation movement took a leading role in manifesting a new kind of politics.

30 years after its establishment, the United Nations came forward to recognize women's rights. As a result of the feminist movement, the year 1975 was declared as the 'International Women's Year' and the year 1976-85 was declared as the 'International Women's Decade' in 1972 at the United Nations General Assembly Resolution No. 3010. In 1977, the United Nations recognized March 8 as International Women's Day. In 1979, UNODC adopted the Charter on the Elimination of All Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Also, the 'World Women's Conference' is also being held under the initiative of the United Nations to recognize women's rights.

Feminism movement thus has taken the form of 'international movement' without being confined to the borders of the countries and nations.

According to the stereo type conventional concept of 'femininity' women are subservient, weak, timid, powerless, helpless, weak, sub-dependent, gentle, subservient, ambitious, patient, compassionate, merciful, perfect, subservient, victimized, etc. But 'feminism' has made women aware of discrimination and exploitation. Women are portrayed as symbols of peace, equality and development. Feminism has evaluated women's connection with nature upheld women from negative to positive. Status and thus has awakened women's creativity and sense of responsibility. Concept of feminism has highlighted the importance of women's participation and thus empowered women.

As a result of which women are now considered an integral part of development and must for the world.

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Some Beautiful Colour-throated Migratory Birds of Bangladesh

Professor Dr. A N M Aminoos Rahman

and their own country is transformed into a liveable habitat.

In their native country, they mate, construct nests, lay and incubate eggs, as well as care for and nourish their young. They then move back to their winter residence with their young at the start of winter. As previously stated, they do not visit their winter refuge, instead, migrate to save their lives. It is an integral part of their life cycle. Before I go into further detail, let me tell you about my first encounter with at least one of these migratory coloured-throated birds.

Moulvibazar is a district in the northeastern part of our country. It has the largest number of tea gardens in Bangladesh. In this district, Kamalgonj is an important upazila in terms of natural and wildlife resources, tea gardens, and tribal cultural diversity.

A little over two and a half years have passed. One Thursday night, I left Dhaka with my nephew for Sreemongol, a tourist city known as the tea capital of Moulvibazar. I got off the bus at dawn and went to hotel when the dawn light had not yet appeared.

Our universe is a home to a variety of birds. Some of them are really gorgeous. The majority of the birds are beautiful due to their plumage colour, but others are attractive due to the beauty of their throat, head, face, crest, parts of their body. While some birds are attractive due to their flight, others are gorgeous due to the way they sing. On the other hand, some birds have beauty and wonder throughout their bodies.

Nonetheless, the bird group I am discussing here belong to the same family as the Oriental Magpie Robin, the national bird of Bangladesh. These birds are not guests or tourists to our country; rather winter migrants. In other words, they migrate to our country or a country that is relatively less cold and where food and shelter are available. This way they save their lives when unable to survive in their native habitat or country due to hostile conditions like extreme cold, snow, lack of food and shelter, etc. At the start of the summer, they head back to their homeland after spending the whole winter and spring here. Food scarcity and habitat problems are then resolved,

After having my within breakfast exactly half an hour, I set off for the Kurma tea plantation in Kamalganj, accompanied by my local bird mate, Khukon Singha.

The ‘Kurma Tea Garden’ is a state-owned garden of the ‘National Tea Company’ of Bangladesh. It is very near to the Indian border. One has to pass this garden to explore the renowned ‘Hum Hum Waterfalls’. The auto-rickshaw was rushing forward through the winter fog. It was quite cold, and I had to cover my face with a muffler.

Before we got to Kurma, the sun rose. By 7:00 am, after an hour and a half of riding the auto-rickshaw, we arrived at the ‘Kurma Tea Garden’ and proceeded to the ‘Kurma Bird Sanctuary’, a tiny protected area inside the tea garden. Even after waiting for around half an hour, the bird we were searching for—which ought to have come out of the bushes by then—was nowhere to be found.

The long-awaited black surrounded ruby-throated bird finally appeared from the bushes beyond the marsh at 7:32:12 am. However, the rays of the sun were too intense to capture a clear image. Almost all the photographs I captured turned dark. Additionally, the bird disappeared quickly into the bushes.

The bird spent rest of the day in hiding. Due to the excessive heat, lack of food, and mobile network, we were in excruciating misery for almost five and a half hours. Of course, Khukon had made arrangements in advance so the lunch arrived. The next step was to wait once more. After three more hours of standing there, I heard no sound from the bird. I was thinking to myself, ‘Oh, if the bird had come in the soft afternoon light, I could have taken some great photographs’. However, it did not arrive though I stood there for hours.

The two other photographers who were with me had already booked their train tickets back to Dhaka, so they left reluctantly. The sunlight was fading. It wouldn’t be long before I could get a good picture. However, I saw no trace of the bird. But instead of giving up, I just stood still there.

It was 4:53:24 PM when a red dot appeared on a reed branch in the bushes ahead. I was unable to determine what it was. Eventually, the red dot became more visible and resembled a tiny bird. The pressure of my index finger on the camera shutter gradually increased. The bird made its way gently up the reeds from the lower to the upper branch. After taking 206 photographs in two minutes and 12 seconds, the bird disappeared into the darkness of the bush again. The delight of discovering a new bird quickly overcame the exhaustion of the entire day!

The bird species I just described is the Chinese Rubythroat, a rare migratory bird of our country. There are four additional species beside this one, and some of them have red, blue, and orange feathers on their throats. In addition to the bird mentioned in the narrative, I was able to take photographs of three other additional bird species that visit this country during winter.

Although the English names for these five bird species are Rubythroats (3 species), Bluethroat (1), and Firethroat (1), the Bangla term Gumpigora or Gupigla refers to the strikingly colorful feathers on their throats. Two of the five species visit the country regularly throughout the winter, while the other three are rare. Among these five species, the males and females have very distinct throat colours. Only males exhibit a red, blue, or orange throat colour. On the other hand, the females have plain throats. They all survive in nature for longer than four years. Here is a very quick overview of them.



A male Siberian Rubythroat strikes a stunning stance on the dry reeds of Aftabnagar, Dhaka

1. Siberian Rubythroat: Peter Simon Pallas made the first description of this little passerine bird in 1776. Originally belonging to the Turdidae family of thrushes, it is now more often recognized as an Old-World Flycatcher of the Muscicapidae family. This bird is known scientifically as *Calliope calliope*. The Siberian Rubythroat is called Lalgala, Lalgala Fidda, or Gumpigora in Bangla, due to its vivid red throat. In West Bangla, it is known as Gupigola or Gangula. It is one of the common migratory birds of Bangladesh. Its primary range include Siberia, Mongolia, northern Japan and Korea, and central China. It spends the winter migrating to Bangladesh, Taiwan, and the Philippines, among other countries in South and Southeast Asia.

The Siberian Rubythroat weighs just 16 to 19 grams (g) and is somewhat larger than a European Robin, measuring 14 to 16 centimeters (cm) from the tip of its beak to the tip of its tail. With the exception of its characteristic black tail with red side patches, it is plain brown above. Its white supercilium is robust. The male's throat is red with a short black border that is followed by a wide white border. The brilliantly colored borders and throat are absent in females.

Throughout the country, it can be found in reed beds, grasslands, marshes, and shaded thickets in the heart of the forests or jungles throughout the winter. This extremely timid bird typically lives on the ground alone or in pairs, hopping about behind shrubs while flapping their tails. Its favorite foods are insects and larvae. It may also consume tiny fruits and snails. 'Chuck', 'Lew-eeee', 'Uh-yuh', or 'Chik-chik---chik-chik---chik-chik---' are some of its call sounds.



Another male Siberian Rubythroat at a Turkey farm in Ikuria, South Keranigonj, Dhaka

The breeding season of this bird lasts from May to July or even August. The nest is a loose cup or dome formed of fine grasses and roots that is typically put on the ground under bushes or tall grasses. It is typically lightly lined with hair and plant down. The female lays 4 to 6 eggs, which are bluish-gray, with a few reddish spots. The eggs are incubated only by the female, which hatch in 14 days. Both parents take care of the nestlings. The nestlings learn to fly at about 12 days, but then they stay with their parents for another couple of weeks.

2. Chinese Rubythroat: The first formal description of the bird was by the Russian geographer Nikolay Przhevalsky in 1876. This small passerine bird is closely related to the Siberian Rubythroat, which however lacks the distinctive white tail-tips and white tail bases. Its scientific name is *Calliope tschebaiewi*. In Bangla, it is known as 'China Lalgola'. In November 2022, I observed this incredibly rare bird for the first time at 'Kurma Bird Sanctuary' in Kamalganj Upazila of Moulvibazar. This winter, I caught a glimpse of it near Aftanagar, Dhaka but was unable to snap a photo. This year for the first time the central Chinese resident bird visited Dhaka, despite its erratic winter migration to the Sylhet division's bushland. The bird is found in the Himalayan range and central China from Pakistan to Myanmar.

The length of the bird ranges from 14 to 15 cm. The male has a white forehead and supercilium and is slaty brown above. It has brownish wings and a blackish tail with white tips and base. The chin and throat center are crimson, while the breast and throat sides are black. There are thin grey fringes around each of the breast's black feathers. It has a white belly and vent. The female has smoky underparts and a diffuse supercilium. Her upper body is drab and brownish grey. The small moustachial



A male Chinese Rubythroat stands in a stunning stance on a reed branch at the 'Kurma Bird Sanctuary' within the Kurma Tea Garden in Kamalgonj, Moulvibazar

line and the center of the throat are both white.

A very shy bird, it wanders alone or in couples around the boundaries of the forest, hopping with its tail up among bushes, tea gardens, swamps, and moist meadows. When it feels threatened, it goes straight into the bushes. For food, it consumes lizards, snails, insects, and larvae. The raspy calls it produces include 'Charak', 'Skiap', 'Eat-Eat' and other sweet whistles.

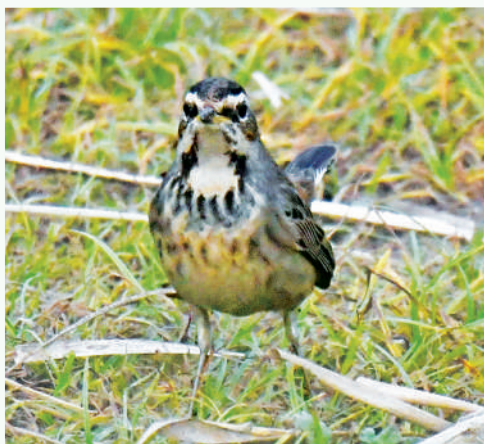
The breeding seasons is in between May and August. Large circular nests are erected under bushes or in the primary habitat's rocks during this time. The 4 to 6 bluish-green eggs with reddish flecks are laid. The female incubates them alone. The eggs hatch in 14 days. Both parents take care of the chicks. The chicks learn to fly in about 16 days.

3. Himalayan Rubythroat: The species was first formally described in 1837 by John Gould, an English naturalist and bird illustrator. The Himalayan Rubythroat is closely related to the Siberian Rubythroat, which however lacks the distinctive white tail-tips and white tail bases. Additionally, it was once thought to be a conspecific of the Chinese Rubythroat, also known as the White-tailed Rubythroat. However, they are now two distinct species. Scientific name of Himalayan Rubythroat is *Calliope pectoralis*. The Tien Shan and Himalayan ranges, which stretch from Afghanistan to Myanmar, are home to the species.

The species is a rare winter migrant to Bangladesh. It is a small bird with an average length of 14 to 16 cm and a weight of 20 to 26 g. It occurs in the marshy places near wetlands in northeast regions of Bangladesh. This species is shy and is seen alone mainly in scrub bushes and rarely in tall grasses of marshy places. It forages on the ground and low bushes. It feeds mainly on insects, caterpillars, spiders, mollusks. Breeding behaviors and duration are somewhat similar of other rubythroats.



A male bluethroat was spotted in Rajshahi's Shimla Park



A female bluethroat near a grassy thicket at Shimla Park, Rajshahi

4. Blue-throat: Scientifically it is known as *Cyanecula isvesica*. In Bangla, it is called Neelgola Fidda. It is referred to as Nilgrib, Gupikantha, Gupigora, or Gurpeora in West Bengal. This uncommon winter migratory bird is extremely nimble. Shimla Park, which is close to Rajshahi city, is where I initially spotted the species. After that, I saw it at various locations across the country. The primary habitats of this species are Western Alaska, Northern Europe, Eurasia, and the Canadian Yakut area. With the exception of Bangladesh, it migrates to other countries in Asia and Africa throughout the winter.

The bluethroat is similar in size to the European robin, measuring 13 to 14 cm in length and 12 to 25 g in weight. The upperpart of the bird is plain brown. The tail is distinctive having brown with black outer corners and red basal side patches. It has a strong white supercilium. The males have a remarkable throat pattern, with a bright, glossy blue throat that is surrounded by a broad, brick-red band below it and typically a thin, black band below that. In addition, there is often a red or white speck in the center of the blue throat. Although older birds may develop more distinctively male-like plumage, females typically have a cream throat and breast with a blackish crescent and very little blue.

In the winter, it can be seen in and around wetlands throughout the country. This extremely shy bird runs or jumps alone behind bushes. It walks or leaps on the ground to consume insects, larvae, earthworms, etc. When feeding, it frequently wags its tiny tail. It calls in various sounds like 'chak', 'charrak', 'tsii chak', 'quit', 'treee treee treee', 'schik shchik', etc.

The breeding season is from June to August. During this time, the female builds a cup-like nest of grass, tree bark, roots, and moss on wet soil behind bushes. She lays 3 to 5 olive-green or blue eggs with fine brown spots. The female incubates the eggs alone for 13 to 15 days. The parents take care of the nestlings together. The nestlings leave the nest at 13 to 14 days. They learn to fly at about 16 days.

5. Firethroat: This species of passerine bird, which belongs to the Muscicapidae family, is often referred to as David's Rubythroat or Père David's Orangethroat.



A male firethroat bathes in the stream of Hazarikhil Wildlife Sanctuary near Fotikchari, Chittagong



Male firethroat bathing at Hazarikhil Wildlife Sanctuary near Fotikchari, Chittagong

Scientifically, it is known as *Calliope pectordens*. In Bangla, it is called Ognigola, Kamolagola, or Nilgola Fidda. It is referred to as Lalkantha or Agungala Fidda in West Bengal. This rare winter visitor is now considered as Near Threatened in the country. There have only been 17 separate sighting reports nationwide so far. The bird is indigenous to western and central China, but during winter, it migrates to Bangladesh and other countries in South, East, and Southeast Asia. The Tangua and Gurmar Haors of Sylhet and the Sundarbans are where it is most commonly found. It was spotted this year in the Satchari National Park in Habiganj and the Hazarikhil Wildlife Sanctuary in Fatikchhari, Chittagong.

Firethroat is a small bird that weigh between 13.9 and 15.1 gm, and measure 14 to 15 cm in length. During breeding season, the male can be clearly identified by its slaty-blue back, dazzling orange-red throat and breast, buff underparts, and black mask that reaches the shoulders. During the winter, the throat becomes less colorful and has a hint of golden-brown as the black mask disappears. The female is plainer, with olive-brown upperparts, buff flanks, and a relatively brighter white throat.

In winter, it can be found in mangrove forests, dense shrubs, and bamboo thickets close to water. This shy bird is seen alone, running or jumping behind bushes. In Hazarikil Wildlife Sanctuary, I snapped photographs of it taking a dip in the stream by the lemon garden. It emerges from the lemon bush, took a long bath in the water, and then returns to the lemon bush. The bird feeds on insects, larvae, earthworms, and other creatures while walking or jumping on the ground over dry leaves. It summons voices such as ‘tok-tok’, ‘chipayarr’, ‘chichiee’, ‘tchiee’ and ‘tottiri-tuti---chiu-chi’.

They nest in bushes next to marshes, deep in valleys, and in dense bushes in mountainous forests, yet no information is available regarding their breeding behavior, season and duration. I wish they could live forever in the universe.

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

Major National Events

April-June



Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus exchanges Eid greetings and niceties with noted citizens of society at the Chief Adviser's Office (CAO) in the capital on March 31

3 April, 2025

Bear message of Eid to move nation forward, CA urges countrymen

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus on March 31 urged the countrymen to bear the message of Eid-ul-Fitr in mind to move the nation forward and establish peace in the country.

‘This year’s Eid is very important so that we get closer to each other and minimise our distance, make the nation and society united. Because, getting united this time is crucial and that should be achieved,’ he told a view-exchange function.

In his brief address, Prof Yunus said, all should bear this message in mind to move forward.

‘We will be tolerable to each other; we will build friendly relations with each other. Through this, peace returns to a society. Returning peace to Bangladesh is urgent now and this must be remembered in our mind every day,’ he said.

The Chief Adviser said, they want peace in the country so that people can pass their days freely.

Meanwhile, the Holy Eid-ul-Fitr, one of the greatest religious festivals of the

Muslims, was celebrated in festive mood with due dignity in the capital and elsewhere across the country on 31 March.

The Muslim devotees across the country celebrated Eid-ul-Fitr by offering Eid prayers.

In the hope of gaining the pleasure of Almighty Allah, millions of Muslims offered Eid prayers under the Samiyana at Eidgahs, mosques and open fields this morning.

Source: The Financial Express

4 April, 2025

Dr Yunus urges all to rise above differences to bolster BIMSTEC

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus on April 4 called upon the leaders of BIMSTEC-member states to extend their valued support in redeeming their collective commitments to revitalise the organisation, rising above differences and divergences.

‘We need a genuinely shared sense of mutual confidence and mutuality of interests, rising above our differences and divergences,’ he said while delivering his speech at the BIMSTEC Summit.

Thai Prime Minister and outgoing Chair of the Summit Paetongtarn Shinawatra and leaders of the member-states were present.

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus proposed a four-point agenda for the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC).



Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus joins other leaders of BIMSTEC during the 6th BIMSTEC Summit at Shangri-La Hotel in the Thai capital of Bangkok on April 4

He suggested harnessing the power of the youth, saying Bangladeshi youths are showing so much of intent and action, from the front, even to reform some of the long-established notions in governance. *Source: The Financial Express*

5 April 2025

CA to discuss tariff issue with US

Commerce Adviser Sheikh Bashir Uddin has said Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus will discuss the tariff issue with the US administration.

The Adviser gave the information at a press conference after an emergency meeting, convened by Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus, at the State Guest House Jamuna in Dhaka on April 5 evening.



Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus sits in an emergency meeting with high officials and experts at the state guest house Jamuna on April 5 in response to the latest US tariff hike on Bangladeshi exports

Bangladesh may consider redirecting and increasing its imports from the United States to help reduce the existing trade gap, Sheikh Bashir Uddin said.

Mr. Bashir Uddin noted that apart from the tariff issue, several other trade-related topics were discussed.

The government remained optimistic about resolving these issues through diplomatic circles. *Source: The Financial Express*

8 April 2025

Bangladesh has conducive scenario for investment: Prof Yunus

Chief adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus on April 8 announced that he would host a breakfast meeting for both Korean and Chinese investors to address any investment-related concerns and fast-track their investment in Bangladesh.



A delegation led by Pauline Ngan, Vice President of Mainland Headgear Company Limited, meets with Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus at the State Guest House Jamuna in Dhaka on April 8

The Chief Adviser informed this during a meeting with a group of Chinese investors at the State Guest House Jamuna.

The investors had come to Dhaka to participate in the Bangladesh Investment Summit 2025, Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiquil Alam said.

During the meeting, Professor Yunus stated that the investment climate, trade and labour-related reforms introduced by the Interim Government would attract more foreign investment to Bangladesh and facilitate the relocation of more Chinese and South Korean manufacturing plants to the country.

'Over the last eight months, we aimed to make it easier to invest in Bangladesh. The country has never had such a conducive environment for foreign investment before,' he added. *Source: The New Age*

9 April, 2025

UK firms willing to invest \$50m to help Bangladesh's drive

UK-based litigation firms have expressed their interest in investing up to \$50 million to help recover assets stolen and laundered from Bangladesh during Sheikh Hasina's regime.

They showed the intent during Bangladesh Bank (BB) Governor Dr. Ahsan H. Mansur's visit to London last month, according to a statement issued by the Chief Adviser's Office on April 9.

The fund would be invested to support the interim government's drive to recover the assets laundered from the country.

The governor, who also heads the Asset Recovery Taskforce, during his visit from March 17-21 held meetings with key stakeholders in the public and private sectors.

According to the statement, the Chief Advisor held an Asset Recovery Review meeting on March 10 when he directed all the key agencies to accelerate their efforts in the major money laundering destination countries. *Source: The Financial Express*



Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus presents Chairman of Youngone Corporation Kihak Sung with the document of honorary citizenship at Bangladesh Investment Summit at a hotel in the capital city on April 9

9 April, 2025

Invest in Bangladesh, do business with a purpose

Invest in Bangladesh under a changed perspective with a twin goal of making profit and benefiting society at large, Chief Adviser Dr Muhammad Yunus says in a clarion call to global entrepreneurs.

While inviting investors from across the world in his address to the inaugural session of the Bangladesh Investment Summit 2025 in Dhaka on April 9 he mentioned as a special feature of human capital that people of Bangladesh are full of ‘crazy ideas’ and such creative craze can transform the world.

“I keep reminding people, yes, you want to make profit. Go ahead. Make profit, maximise as much as you can, but we can add a little piece into it, social purpose,” the Nobel-laureate economist-turned ruler, who propounds ‘social business’,” told his audience. *Source: The Financial Express*

14 April, 2025

Nation celebrates Pahela Boishakh with great gusto

‘The Bangladeshi Nation’ celebrated Pahela Boishakh, first day of the Bengali New Year ---1432, on April 14 with unparalleled festivity, vibrant processions, and deep cultural significance- marking the first time in over a decade that celebrations lasted from dawn to nightfall.

During the previous fascist regime under the Awami League, Pahela Boishakh celebrations were restricted to 5:00 Pm due to security crackdowns.



Pahela Boishakh 1432 celebrations at Ramna Batamul

However, this year, a liberated Bangladesh saw people from all walks of life, communities, and ethnicities joining hands to celebrate the occasion in their own unique ways.

The capital city Dhaka witnessed a carnival of colours, with key spots bustling with cultural activities and music.

The centre of attraction on the day was the ‘Borshoboron Anondo Shovajatra’, a vibrant New Year procession that began from the Faculty of Fine Arts (Charukola) at Dhaka University. *Source: The Financial Express*

16 April, 2025

Yunus among Time’s 100

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus has been named among TIME magazine- adjudged 100 Most Influential People of 2025, reports said on April 16.

This recognition follows his pivotal role in steering Bangladesh toward democracy following last year’s student-led uprising that toppled the reigning government.

In a tribute published in the Time, former US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton praised the Nobel Peace Prize laureate for stepping into leadership during a critical juncture in the nation’s history.

‘After a student-led uprising toppled Bangladesh’s authoritarian Prime Minister last year, a known leader stepped up to guide the nation toward democracy: Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus,’ Clinton writes.

Highlighting Yunus’ legacy, Clinton recalled his work in founding Grameen Bank, which revolutionised microfinance by extending small loans to impoverished communities-97% of them women-enabling millions to start businesses, support their families, and reclaim their dignity.

‘I first met Yunus when he travelled to Arkansas to help then Governor Bill Clinton and me set up similar programs in the US,’ she said. ‘Since then, wherever I’ve travelled in the world, I have witnessed the extraordinary impact of his work-lives transformed, communities lifted, and hope reborn.’

Clinton notes that Yunus has once again responded to his country's call by leading the post-uprising transitional government as Chief Adviser.

‘As he shepherds Bangladesh out of the shadows of oppression, he is restoring human rights, demanding accountability, and laying the foundations for a just and free society,’ she adds.

The Time 100 list honours influential figures worldwide for their impact and leadership. *Source: The Financial Express*

17 April, 2025

US delegation discusses reform, trade, Rohingya with CA

A visiting US delegation called on the Chief Adviser (CA) on April 17 and expressed support for the reform agenda of the interim government.

They discussed regional issues of peace, security, and development, said a spokesman for the CA Office.

Deputy Assistant Secretaries of State Nicole A. Chulick and Andrew Herrup were



US Deputy Assistant Secretaries of State Nicole A. Chulick and Andrew Herrup call on Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus at State Guest House Jamuna in Dhaka on April 17

among the members of the delegation. Bangladesh's National Security Adviser Dr. Khalilur Rahman and the Charge d'affaires of the US Embassy in Dhaka, Tracey Ann Jacobson, were present at the meeting.

The US officials expressed deep appreciation for Bangladesh for hosting 1.2 million Rohingyas and thanked the leadership of CA Professor Muhammad Yunus for making progress on this issue.

The US delegation expressed appreciation for the approach of Bangladesh to address the issue. *Source: The Financial Express*

20 April, 2025

ECNEC nods Bay Terminal support, 15 other projects worth Tk 242.47b

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) on April 20 approved 16 development projects, including the Marine Infrastructure Development at the Bay Terminal.

Of those, 13 are new initiatives, while the remaining three are revised proposals.

The ECNEC approved two projects - one for drilling two deep exploration wells at Titus and Bakhrabad gas fields and the other for strengthening the drilling capacity of Geological Survey of Bangladesh (GSB) proposed by the Energy and Mineral Resources Division (EMRD) - with a cost of Tk 9.11 billion.

He shared the details during a press briefing at the NEC auditorium in the capital following the ECNEC meeting chaired by Chief Adviser Dr Muhammad Yunus in the same place.

Wahiduddin stated that the support project for the Bay Terminal, with an estimated cost of Tk 135.26 billion, including Tk 93.33 billion in loans from the World Bank, will facilitate the development of infrastructure for four container terminals under Chittagong Port Authority (CPA).

The ECNEC approved three projects under the title ‘Bangladesh Sustainable Recovery, Emergency Preparedness and Response Project (B-STRONG)’ to support recovery efforts from the damage caused by floods that affected the country’s southern region in August and September last year. *Source: The Financial Express*

22 April, 2025

Earthna Summit

CA places six proposals to build sustainable future

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus emphasised the need to explore the role of social business, financial inclusion, and microfinance in fostering sustainable development and economic opportunities for marginalised communities.

He stated that poverty is created due to a flawed economic system and presented six proposals at the Earthna Summit, highlighting that the path to a sustainable and equitable future requires collective action.



Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus delivers a speech at the Earthna Summit in Doha, Qatar, on April 22

Dr. Yunus emphasised that the world is transforming at a faster pace than previously thought, driven by a variety of complex factors.

The head of Bangladesh’s interim government made the observation during his keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the Earthna Summit in Qatar’s Doha on April 22.

‘We live in a time of profound uncertainty, where multilateralism is under serious threat, climate change is accelerating, geopolitical tensions are rising, and humanitarian crises are deepening,’ he is quoted as saying by state news agency.

‘Emerging norms, technologies, and governance models are rapidly reshaping our world, rendering many past assumptions obsolete.’

He stressed the need for ‘renewed regional and global cooperation’ to keep step with the changing world. *Source: The Financial Express*

23 April, 2025

CA seeks urgent global action to end multi-pronged crisis

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus on April 23 made a passionate call from a Doha meet for urgent action from international communities for an immediate sustainable solution to the multidimensional Rohingya crisis.

At the high-level roundtable discussion held in the capital of Qatar, Bangladesh also proposed hosting ‘High-Level Conference on the Situation of Rohingya Muslims and Other Minorities in Myanmar’ in New York this September under UN auspices and sought Qatar’s active participation.

The event, organised by the Qatar Foundation, brought together government officials, international organisations, NGOs, and private- sector representatives to address the deepening humanitarian, social, and environmental challenges facing the refugees flushed out of Myanmar. *Source: The Financial Express*

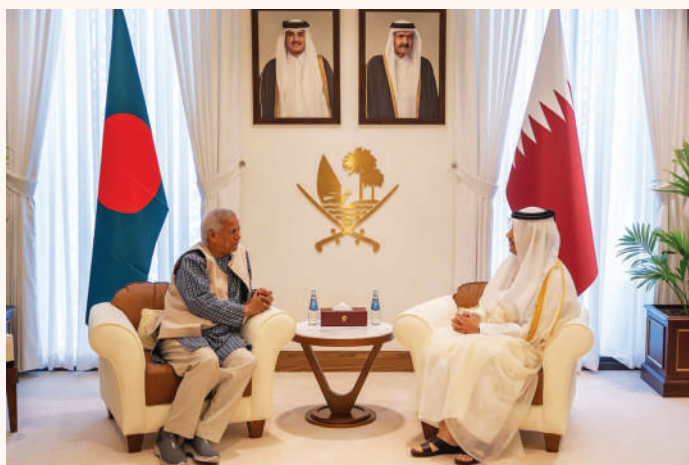
24 April, 2025

Host nods as CA seeks support for building new Bangladesh

Qatar extended unqualified support as Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus sought full diplomatic, financial and investment support of the wealthy Gulf state for building a ‘new Bangladesh’ to unlock opportunities for nearly 180 million people.

The assurances came from Prime Minister of Qatar Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani when the Head of interim government of Bangladesh met the host at his office in Doha on April 24, discussing matters of bilateral cooperation and international issues of mutual interest.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, also the Foreign Minister of Qatar, extended his



Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus holds a meeting with Qatar Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani at his office in Doha, Qatar, on April 24

full support for the leadership of the Chief Adviser and assured him of all possible help in rebuilding Bangladesh, said a spokesman for the CA Office.

‘We need your support to build the country of the dream of our youth,’ Professor Yunus said.

The Qatari Prime Minister also urged the Bangladesh leader to send a technical team to Qatar to hold discussions on wide-ranging cooperation. *Source: The Financial Express*

28 April, 2025

CA opens app to guide pilgrims as Hajj flights begin

Chief Adviser Prof. Muhammad Yunus inaugurated the mobile app ‘Labbaik’ on April 28 to facilitate services for pilgrims, as this year’s Hajj flights will begin in the early hours.

Inaugurating the app, the Chief Adviser stated that this app will play an important



Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus inaugurates the Hajj app ‘Labbaik’ at the State Guest House Jamuna in the capital on April 28

role in ensuring that the Hajj pilgrims can perform their religious duties without any difficulty, according to reports from agencies.

Earlier on the day, Prof Yunus returned home, wrapping up his week-long engagements in Rome, Italy and Doha, Qatar.

The first batch of pilgrims will depart from the Shahjalal International Airport at 2:15 am.

As usual, the national flag carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines will transport half of the pilgrims, while Saudia Airlines and Flynas will carry the other half.

The Chief Adviser inaugurated the app, developed for the first time under

government management, at the State Guest House Jamuna and urged the Hajj pilgrims to use this app.

‘As it is helpful in performing religious duties and has various features including health services, this app will make a great contribution to the Hajj pilgrims in performing Hajj smoothly,’ Prof Yunus said. *Source: The Financial Express*

29 April 2025

Don’t get used by anyone as polls approaching

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus on April 29 urged the police to make sure that they are not used by anyone in the next national elections as the interim government is committed to holding a free, fair and peaceful polls in the country.

‘Remember, if a person is elected through irregularities, it is not possible to establish



Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus exchanges greetings with police officials at the inauguration of the Police Week-2025 at the auditorium of Rajarbagh Police Lines in the capital on April 29

justice by that person. Therefore, do not be used by anyone. Dedicate yourselves to the elections as a vow to establish truth and justice,’ he said highlighting the role of police.

The Chief Adviser was speaking at a function marking the Police Week 2025.

‘The role of police members is very important in ensuring that the election is held in a fair and peaceful manner,’ he said.

Prof Yunus urged the police to ensure equal treatment to all the candidates in the election and create an environment where voters can exercise their right to vote without fear or hindrance. A fair and impartial election is very important so that the police force is never used as a party force or for wrongdoing in the future, he said. *Source: The Financial Express*



Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus speaks at a programme marking the historic May Day in the city on May 1

1 May, 2025

Labour reform implementation key to starting a new journey

Highlighting the importance of workers' welfare through joint efforts, Chief Adviser professor Muhammad Yunus on May 1 said the mass desire to build New Bangladesh would remain unfulfilled if the workers' conditions remain unchanged like in the past.

'It's a shared responsibility (to ensure better conditions for workers) and it's a big opportunity for us,' he said, emphasising on the implementations of the labour reform commission.

The Chief Adviser was addressing as the chief guest at a discussion marking the Great May Day 2025 and National Occupational Health and Safety Day at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre.

Referring to the Labour Reform Commission's report, Prof Yunus said he is personally very impressed to see the recommendations placed by the commission.

'Our responsibility is to begin the journey with the recommendations which can be implemented immediately,' he said, adding that the implementation of recommendations will help create the solid base of the New Bangladesh. *Source:*

The Financial Express



Canada's Indo-Pacific Trade Representative Paul Thoppil calls on Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus at the State Guest House Jamuna in Dhaka on May 6

6 May, 2025

CA for stronger investment ties with Canada

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus on May 6 welcomed Canada's Indo-Pacific Trade Representative Paul Thoppil at the State Guesthouse Jamuna, where the two sides discussed ways to deepen bilateral economic cooperation and expand investment opportunities.

Mr Thoppil, on his second official visit to Bangladesh, is leading a high-level business delegation comprising senior executives from some of Canada's most recognisable companies, including Bell Helicopter, Black Berry, Gildan Activewear, JCM Power, and Advantech Wireless Communications, said a spokesperson for the CA Office.

'We believe in Bangladesh's economic potential,' said Thoppil. 'That's why I've brought business delegates with me - because we want to build stronger commercial ties.'

He commended the reform initiatives taken under Professor Yunus' leadership, describing them as bold and necessary.

'You've assembled an impressive advisory team,' he said.

'We see clear signs of progress. The reforms your government has initiated are laying the groundwork for sustained economic growth, and Canada values its relationship with Bangladesh.' *Source: The Financial Express*



Sheikh Nahyan Bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Cabinet Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence of the UAE, called on Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus at the State Guest House Jamuna in the capital on May 7

7 May, 2025

UAE delegation discusses trade, visa issues with CA

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus on May 7 discussed trade and visa issues with the visiting UAE delegation and thanked the UAE government for significant progress towards resuming visas for Bangladeshi nationals.

He also welcomed investment proposals from the country in various sectors.

The delegation led by Sheikh Nahyan Bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Cabinet Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence of the UAE, met the Chief Adviser at the State Guest House Jamuna, said a spokesperson of the CA Office.

The UAE delegates led by Al Nahyan, also a former minister for higher education, arrived on a short visit in Dhaka on Wednesday afternoon and were received by Chief Adviser's Special Envoy Lutfey Siddiqi at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

UAE Ambassador to Dhaka Abdullah Ali AlHmodi and Bangladesh Ambassador to UAE Mr. Tareq Ahmed were also present at the meeting. *Source: The Financial Express*

12 May, 2025

CA stresses economic, hydro power links between BD, Nepal, Bhutan, Indian NE states

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus has called for an integrated economic strategy between Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and the Seven Northeastern States



Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of Nepal Indira Ranamagar paid a courtesy call on Chief Adviser Dr Muhammad Yunus at his Tejgaon office in the capital on May 12

of India, emphasising the potential of cross-border collaboration in hydropower, healthcare, and road connectivity.

The Chief Adviser made these remarks on May 12 during a courtesy call, paid by Ms. Indira Rana, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Federal Parliament of Nepal. Rana is currently visiting Bangladesh to attend an event organized by the Embassy of Nepal in Dhaka.

The Chief Adviser also reiterated Bangladesh's commitment to expanding healthcare access across the region. "Our upcoming 1,000-bed hospital in Rangpur will be open to patients from Nepal and Bhutan as well. We believe in regional health security and shared prosperity," he said.

Deputy Speaker Indira Rana conveyed Nepal's interest in deepening bilateral ties across sectors. "All our parliamentarians want to work closely with Bangladesh," she said. "We're serious about strengthening our economic partnership and boosting people-to-people connections." The Deputy Speaker highlighted the significant presence of Nepali students in Bangladesh, noting that over 2,700 are currently studying in Bangladeshi institutions, primarily in medical colleges.

Source: The Financial Express

14 May, 2025

World-class firms to operate Ctg port: CA

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus said on May 14, the Interim Government had taken initiatives to turn Chittagong Port into a world-class one



Chittagong University (CU) confers an honorary Doctorate of Literature degree on Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus during its fifth convocation on the campus on May 14. CU Vice-chancellor Dr. Muhammad Yeahia Akhter hands over the certificate.

by entrusting its management to global operators.

He said this while speaking at the New Mooring Container Terminal of the seaport.

The Chief Adviser arrived in Chattogram in the morning on a day-long tour and in the first event of his busy schedule he was briefed about the port capacity.

‘This heart has to be connected with neighbours- that’s why I have said about Nepal, Seven Sisters (seven northeastern states of India). If they are connected to it, they will be benefited and so will be of us. Those who will not be connected will be the losers,’ Prof. Yunus, a renowned economist, also said.

Recalling his childhood memories with Chittagong Port, the Chief Adviser said, he was waiting for this visit.

The Chief Adviser asked to hand over the charge of port handling to world’s top operators saying ‘I hope everyone will realise its reality.’

He said that the construction of several terminals surrounding the Chittagong port would ease container congestion.

In another event of the day he spoke at the 5th Convocation Ceremony of Chittagong University (CU) on the university’s central playground in the afternoon.

In his convocation speech, he urged the students to dream of building a new world.

‘We have the capacity to build the new world that we want,’ he said. ‘We will be able to build the world the way we want to build’.

At the function, the CU authorities conferred honorary Doctorate of Literature (D. Litt) degree on Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus for his outstanding

contributions to poverty alleviation through microcredit and establishing peace across the globe.

CU Vice-Chancellor Dr Muhammad Yeahia Akhter handed over the certificate of D. Litt degree to Prof Yunus.

In another event on the day the Chief Adviser also unveiled the foundation stone of the Kalurghat Bridge over the Karnaphuli River.

He unveiled the foundation stone virtually from Chattogram Circuit House. *Source: The Financial Express*

17 May, 2025

CA for establishing Microcredit Bank

Claiming that microcredit is the ‘real banking’, Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus on May 17 stressed establishing a ‘Microcredit Bank’ to create more entrepreneurs by disbursing collateral-free small credit among young people. ‘Microcredit has reached such a stage...we have to think it anew - establishment of Microcredit Bank. This is NGO now, it must be graduated from NGO now,’ he said.

The Chief Adviser said this while inaugurating the Microcredit Regulatory Authority (MRA) building at the city’s Argaoon area.

Speaking on the occasion as the chief guest, Professor Yunus, also known as the founder of microcredit, said, a new and separate ‘Microcredit Bank Act’ would be framed to set up the microcredit bank.

About the limitations of microcredit organisations, he said now the lenders can receive savings from their members but not the deposits of the common people.

The Chief Adviser said time has come to set up the Microcredit Bank. Once license is given to the Microcredit Bank, it must be a social business bank, not conventional one, he added. *Source: The Financial Express*

18 May, 2025

NEC approves Tk 2.3t ADP for FY’26

The National Economic Council (NEC) on May 18 approved Tk 2.3 trillion worth of Annual Development Programme (ADP) for the upcoming 2025-26 fiscal year (FY).

The amount is 13.2 per cent lower than the original outlay worth Tk 2.65 trillion for the current fiscal year (2024-25) while it is 6.48 per cent higher than the revised ADP (RADP) of Tk 2.16 trillion.

Of the total, the government will provide Tk 1.44 trillion from its own exchequer while another Tk 860 billion would be available from external sources as loans and grants.

With the spending of Tk 86 billion from the own funds of autonomous bodies and state-owned corporations, the total size of the ADP for the next fiscal year stands at Tk 2.39 trillion.

The NEC meeting was chaired by Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus at the NEC auditorium in the capital, Planning Adviser Dr Wahiduddin Mahmud briefed newsmen after the meeting. *Source: The Financial Express*

24 May , 2025

ECNEC clears nine projects worth Tk 11,851cr

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) on May 24 approved nine development projects with a total estimated cost of Tk 11,851.29 crore.

Of the total amount, Tk 8,046.09 crore will come from government funding, Tk 2,988.95 crore as project loans, and Tk 816.25 crore from the implementing agencies' own funds.

The approval came at an Ecneec meeting held at the NEC Conference Room in the Planning Commission chaired by Chief Adviser and Ecneec Chairperson Professor Muhammad Yunus.

The approved projects are construction of academic buildings of eight government polytechnic institutes with Tk 451.07 crore, enhancing capacity of 15 government polytechnic institutes with Tk 1,513.95 crore, development of selected private colleges for improvement in education through use of ICT, 3rd revised with a reduced cost of Tk 184.46 crore.

Besides, mosque-based children and mass education programme to promote ethics and religious values, 8th phase with Tk 4,645.58 crore, Recovery and Advancement of Informal Sector Employment (RAISE): Reintegration of returning migrants, (1st revised) with an additional cost of Tk 91 crore, GRID Power Evacuation System Development for West Zone Power Distribution Company Limited with Tk 539.71 crore, *Source: The New Age*

26 May, 2025

‘We’re committed to religious freedom’

Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus has reiterated the interim government’s



Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus meet Stephen Schneck, Chair of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) at the State Guest House Jamuna in Dhaka on May 26

commitment to upholding religious freedom and protecting the rights of all citizens in Bangladesh.

He made the remark on May 26 while meeting Stephen Schneck, chair of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) at the State Guest House Jamuna.

The meeting covered a range of topics, including the current state of religious freedom in Bangladesh, the July 2024 uprising, the reform agenda, proposed constitutional amendments, and the ongoing Rohingya crisis, according to the CA press wing.

The Chief Adviser also urged the USCIRF to advocate globally for the resolution of the Rohingya crisis, noting that the UN is expected to hold a special session in September following his request.

“We need to resolve the crisis. The sooner, the better. An angry young generation is growing up in the Rohingya camps. We need to provide them hope,” Yunus said.

Source: The Daily Star

30 May 2025

Soka University confers honorary doctorate on Yunus

Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus has received an Honorary Doctorate Degree from Soka University.

He was conferred the honorary degree in recognition of his contributions to social innovation and global development on May 30.

Prof Yunus also delivered an address to a distinguished audience at Soka University in Tokyo. President of Soka University Suzuki also spoke on the occasion. *Source: The Financial Express*

30 May, 2025

Yunus urges Japanese firms to invest in Bangladesh

Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus on May 30 called upon Japanese companies to invest in Bangladesh and help its economic recovery and rebuilding efforts.

‘Today, we are in a situation when we need your support most. We have come a long way. The rest of the journey should be of doing things together with fun and enjoyment,’ he told a roundtable in Tokyo.



Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus was conferred an Honorary Doctorate Degree by Japan's renowned Soka University on May 30

Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) arranged the meeting at its headquarters.

Top executives of Japanese companies in Bangladesh were present at the meeting with significant business interests. *Source: The New Age*

30 May, 2025

Prof Yunus urges Japan, entrepreneurs to help build ‘New Bangladesh’

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus urged the Japanese government and entrepreneurs to extend their full support in building ‘New Bangladesh’, translating the dreams of millions of youths into reality, ‘I came here to thank you and design the next steps,’ he told the ‘Bangladesh Business Seminar in Tokyo’ hosted by the Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) and JICA at JETRO headquarters in Tokyo On May 30.



Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus poses with Japanese entrepreneurs at JETRO Headquarters in Tokyo On May 30

‘We are in a big trouble. Literally, Bangladesh has gone through a 16-year earthquake. Everything fell apart... we are trying to pick up pieces,’ Prof Yunus said.

Describing Japan as a friend of Bangladesh, he said, ‘A good friend comes out in hard time and that friend is Japan. I came here to thank you,’ he said. *Source: The Financial Express*

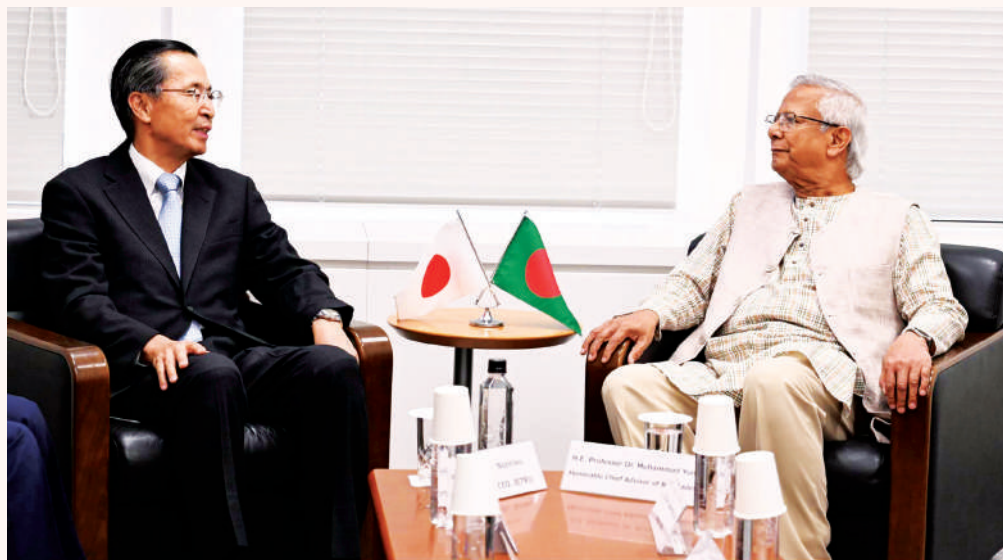
30 May, 2025

Japan provides \$1.063b for budget support, railways upgrade

Japan agrees to lend Bangladesh US\$1.063 billion mainly for bankrolling budget and railway upgrade, summit talks in Tokyo on May 30 yielded several accords of cooperation in various fields.

Of the total amount, as agreed, \$418 million will come as a budget-support credit, \$641 million for upgrading the Joydevpur-Ishwardi section into a dual-gauge double-track railway and another \$4.2 million as grants for scholarships.

The aid pledges were carried in exchange of notes following the meeting between the two countries. The visiting head of interim government of Bangladesh, Chief



Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus and Japanese Prime Minister Ishiba Shigeru holds a bilateral meeting in Tokyo on May 30

Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, and his Japanese counterpart, Prime Minister Ishiba Shigeru, led their respective sides at the talks.

The amount of 418 million dollars is being provided as Development Policy Loan for Bangladesh's economic reforms and climate resilience, said a spokesperson for the CA Office.

During the bilateral meeting, both sides reaffirmed their commitments to the Strategic Partnership between the two Asian nations.

They also renewed their shared vision of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) to ensure peace, stability and shared prosperity for all. *Source: The Financial Express*

1 June, 2025

CA urges Chinese investors to build production hubs in BD

Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus called upon Chinese investors to help transform Bangladesh into a 'production hub' as a big band of entrepreneurs from Beijing, led by their



Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus presents a photograph to visiting Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao at the China-Bangladesh Conference on Investment and Trade, held at the BIDA office in Dhaka's Agargaon on June 1

Commerce Minister, exploring business prospects.

Speaking at a business meet June 1 in Dhaka, Yunus noted that half of Bangladesh's total workforce is under the age of 26, and this demographic is ready to get engaged in productive work, according to state news agency Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS).

'I urge Chinese investors to make Bangladesh their home and their production hub...the young people are ready to accept that challenge,' the Head of Interim Government told his business audience. *Source: The Financial Express*

2 June, 2025

Interim government announced the National Budget FY 2025-2026 Tk 7.9 Trillion

The interim government on June 2 announced the new national budget at Tk 7.9 lakh crore, projecting ambitious revenue-earning measures.



Finance Adviser Dr Salehuddin Ahmed went to BTV to announce National Budget of this fiscal year 2025-2026 on June 2

Finance Adviser Dr Salehuddin Ahmed, while unveiling the new measures for the financial year 2025-26 in a televised presentation in the absence of Jatiya Sangsad, projected an overall income of Tk 5.64 lakh crore, of which some 88.4 per cent is expected to come via the National Board of Revenue through direct tax, duty and value added tax.

The Finance Adviser also announced cancelling exemption of corporate tax and value added tax for industries.

Out of the projected Tk 5.44 lakh crore non-development budget, the highest 22.4 per cent has to be set aside for payment

of interest on internal and external borrowings and 19.1 per cent for subsidy and incentives.

The allocation to the public administration will account for 10.2 per cent of the budget, some one percentage point higher than the allocation made in the outgoing budget.

The Finance Adviser proposed to increase special benefit for the government employees in the new budget to meet the demand for dearness allowance. *Source : The New Age*

4 June, 2025

British envoy meets Chief Adviser

British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Sarah Cooke met Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus at the State Guest House Jamuna in the capital on June 4, ahead of his official visit to the United Kingdom.

Prof Yunus is set to depart Dhaka on June 9 and return on June 13. During the

visit, he is expected to hold meetings with senior British officials.

The discussions between the CA and the British envoy encompassed a range of mutual interests, including trade and investment, aviation cooperation, migration, and the interim government's efforts in asset recovery.

They also discussed the reform initiatives undertaken by the interim government and the latest political developments in Bangladesh.

Prof Yunus informed her that the second round of talks between the National Consensus Commission and political parties began this week and is expected to conclude soon.

He expressed interest in receiving technical support from the UK, including training by British researchers, to bolster Bangladesh's ocean research efforts.

The UK envoy extended her congratulations to Prof Yunus on his forthcoming receipt of the prestigious King Charles Harmony Award. *Source: The Financial Express*

7 June, 2025

Eid-ul-Azha celebrated across Bangladesh

Eid-ul-Azha, one of the biggest religious festivals of Muslims, was celebrated across Bangladesh on June 7 with due solemnity and religious fervour.

Eid-ul-Azha is celebrated on the 10th day of Zilhajj, the final month of the Hijri calendar, commemorating the event that took place around 4,500 years ago when Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) offered to sacrifice his beloved son Hazrat Ismail (AS), who willingly submitted to his father's will in devotion to Allah.

But the Almighty Allah, in His benign mercy, spared Hazrat Ismail (AS) and instead sent a ram to be sacrificed.

To commemorate this historic event, Muslims across the globe offer prayers in congregations and sacrifice animals in the name of Almighty Allah.



British High Commissioner Sarah Cooke met Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus at the State Guest House Jamuna in the capital on June 4



Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus exchanges Eid Greetings at National Eidgah on June 7

Marking the festival, the Muslims of the country on June, 7 offered Eid prayers at Eidgahs, mosques and residences across the country and later offered munajat, seeking divine blessings for peace, progress and prosperity of the country as well as the welfare of the Muslim Ummah.

After offering prayers, devotees sacrificed cattle on the first day of Eid according to their ability in the hope of attaining infinite grace from Almighty Allah. Some devotees will also slaughter cattle tomorrow, the second day of the Eid.

The main congregation of Eid-ul-Azha was held at the Jatiya Eidgah on the High Court premises at 7:30am.

Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus, Chief Justice, judges of the Supreme Court and High Court divisions, members of the Council of Advisers, leaders of various political parties, senior government officials and diplomats of various Muslim countries stationed in Dhaka, along with thousands of Muslim devotees, offered prayers.

The Chief Adviser greeted the people of Bangladesh, the Muslims of the country and all over the world on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha.

State-run Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar as well as private TV channels and radio stations have been broadcasting special programmes on the occasion and it will continue for several days. *Source: The New Age*

12 June, 2025

Prof Yunus honoured with prestigious Harmony Award by King Charles III

King Charles III on June 12 conferred the prestigious 'Harmony Award 2025' on Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus, recognising his lifelong efforts to promote peace, sustainability and harmony between people and the environment.

In June 2024, King Charles launched a new set of awards celebrating living in harmony with nature.

Before the award ceremony, King Charles III welcomed Chief Adviser Professor Yunus for a private audience at the Buckingham Palace.

The British monarch is an admirer of Professor Yunus' work including his pioneering microcredit bank, his championing social businesses to combat poverty and his campaign for Three Zeroes to save civilisation from self-destruction.

The inaugural winner of the King Charles III Harmony Award was former UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon.

The awards from the King's Foundation are a cause close to the King's heart. He's spoken about the almost spiritual concept of humanity living in harmony with the natural world.

It is based on the King's principle: 'We should work with nature, not against it.'

Source: Prothom Alo (English Version)

20 June, 2025

Govt, ADB sign \$1.3b loan deals for 4 key projects

The government has signed loan agreements worth \$1.3 billion with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to implement four major development projects in Bangladesh, covering climate resilience, renewable energy, transport infrastructure, and banking-sector reforms.

Economic Relations Division (ERD) Secretary Md Shahriar Kader Siddiky and ADB Country Director Hoe Yun Jeong signed the agreements on behalf of their respective sides on June 20, according to ADB press statements.

Of the total, a \$500 million loan will support the 'Stabilizing and Reforming the Banking Sector Program, Subprogram 1,' which aims to improve regulatory



King Charles III is conferring the prestigious 'Harmony Award 2025' to Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus at Buckingham Palace on June 12



Economic Relations Division (ERD) Secretary Md Shahriar Kader Siddiky and ADB Country Director Hoe Yun Jeong signed the agreements on behalf of their respective sides on June 20

Source: The Financial Express

22 June, 2025

Tk 7.9 lakh crore budget passed

The national budget worth Tk 7.9 lakh crore for the 2025-26 financial year was passed on June 22.

The interim government's advisory council at a meeting, which was presided over by Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus, at the Chief Adviser's Office at Tejgoan in the capital Dhaka on June 22 morning passed the FY26 budget, endorsing changes in the fiscal measures.

Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed who announced the proposed budget in a televised address in the absence of Jatiya Sangsad on June 2 disclosed the changes at a press briefing at his office at the secretariat in the capital in the afternoon on June 22.

The government has aimed at achieving the growth in gross domestic product at 5.5 per cent and the inflation rate at 6.54 per cent in FY26. *Source: The New Age*

24 June, 2025

ECNEC also okays 16 other new, revised projects

The interim government on June 24 approved a project worth Tk 1,009.20 crore, aiming at the capacity building of tax officials against the backdrop of falling revenue collection in terms of the country's gross domestic product.

The project titled 'Strengthening domestic revenue mobilisation project' was approved by a meeting of the executive committee of the National Economic Council at the Planning Commission in the capital's Agargaon area.

Interim government's chief adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus presided over the meeting.

oversight, corporate governance, asset quality, and overall financial sector stability in Bangladesh.

The programme focuses on policy reforms to strengthen the resilience of the financial system by enhancing banking sector governance, improving Bangladesh Bank's liquidity management framework, and implementing urgent measures to address non-performing loans.

The ECNEC at the meeting also approved 16 others projects involving Tk 8,974.28 crore, of which Tk 3,410.85 crore will come from local sources and Tk 5,563.43 crore from foreign sources. *Source: The New Age*

25 June, 2025

Don't use 'one-time plastic' products, CA urges people

Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus has urged the citizens to refrain from using 'one-time plastic' products.

He made the call while inaugurating a tree plantation drive at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre on June 25. CA highlighted the horrid



Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus and Environment, Forest and Climate Change Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan holding aloft a sapling before planting it, as he inaugurated the National Tree Plantation Drive and Tree Fair 2025 at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the capital on June 25

environmental impact of plastic at the event as he planted a Sonalu tree as part of the inauguration of National Tree Plantation Drive and Tree Fair 2025.

The Chief Adviser said, 'Today, the world is suffering from various crises, wars, widespread use of technology and its misuse, which have created various challenges for us.' He added that currently, the people are at fault for the destruction of nature.

Source The Financial Express

27 June, 2025

Social business can drive lasting positive changes

Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus on June 27 stated that transformative power of social business could make real and lasting positive changes to create 'a beautiful and better world' for everyone, not just for Bangladesh.



Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus poses for a photo with attendees of the 15th Social Business Day at Samajik Convention Centre at Zirabo, Savar in Dhaka on June 27

The Nobel laureate said that social business was the only right way to ensure healthcare for everyone in the world and through this, it was quite possible to address the challenges of the healthcare sector.

He was speaking at inaugural session of the 15th Social Business Day at Samajik Convention Centre at Zirabo, Savar on the outskirts of Dhaka.

The theme for this year is ‘Social Business is the Most Effective Way to Ensure Healthcare for All.’ *Source: The New Age*

29 June, 2025

Record annual remittance fetches \$31.31b

Bangladesh sees on 29th June a record in yearly remittance receipt with the accumulated volume of foreign currencies sent by remitters having already crossed \$31 billion this outgoing fiscal year 2024-2025 -- first in its history.

Such record inflow of remittance plays a significant role in bolstering the country’s foreign-exchange reserves, giving some respite to the economy that has been passing through multi-pronged macroeconomic strains amid forex dearth.

According to the latest data with Bangladesh Bank (BB), the country’s central bank, Bangladeshis working abroad sent in remittances equivalent to \$2.54 billion in the first 28 days of this month, 7.1 percent higher than that of the corresponding period in the last fiscal year.

With the latest statistics, the country had received \$30.05 billion until June 28 of this current fiscal year. And this yearly remittance receipt is \$5.28 billion higher than the previous record of \$24.77 billion registered in FY’21.

According to the BB data, the gross forex reserves rose to \$31.31 billion and \$26.32 billion in BB and IMF’s BPM6 calculations respectively as on June 29, 2025. *Source: The Financial Express*

Report Compilation: Mazharul Hoque, Mamun Hossain



The nests of Baya Weaver (*Babui*) at the Palm Tree (Jhenaidah)



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