

January 2022

DIPLOMATS WORLD

The Only Diplomatic Magazine in Bangladesh

**The Diplomats World Publications:
Three Years of Steady Growth & Glorious Accolade**

**Bangabandhu's Home Coming:
An Ecstatic Moment for a Nation**

**Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant Project:
Recombination of Russia-Bangladesh Socio-cultural Connectivity**





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HEAD OFFICE & FACTORY:
Nowpara, Madhabdi,
Narsingdi-1604 Bangladesh
Phone : +88 09610 110 220-5
www.jajbhuiyangroup.com

CORPORATE OFFICE:
Gawsia Kashem Centre, 7th Floor,
10/2 Arambag, Motijheel, Dhaka-1000.
Phone : +88 02 41 070 208 -15
+88 09610 110 220-5

BARIDHARA DOHS OFFICE:
House no- 322 (Ground Floor).
Road no-5, Phone : +88 02 8416905

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Executive Editor

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Assistant Editor

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AKM Sayedad Hossain

Creative Editor

Lutfun Nahar Taposhi

Cultural Editor

Rucksana Rahman

Sr. Editing Assistant

K. M Mostak Ahmed

Co-ordinator

Sheikh Nazia Hasan

Contributors

Nazinur Rahim

Dr. Mohammed Faruque

Aminur Rahman

Abul Hasan Chowdhury

Syed Md. Atiqul Islam Atique

Rayhan Kawsar

Mohammad Shafiqul Islam

Mohammad Abdur Razzak

Lutfun Nahar Taposhi

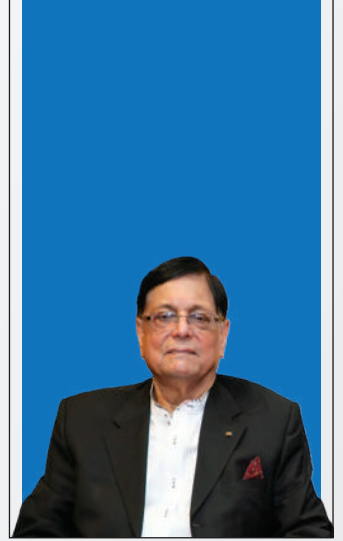
Design & Layout

Md. Moshir Rashid

Publisher

Nazinur Rahim

EDITOR'S NOTE



Diplomats wishes all its readers a joyous and rewarding year. This year will be a challenging year for Trade and Commerce. Recently ILO, International Labor Organization has forecasted a gloomy picture of the global job market as it will take longer to recover from the Covid-19 crisis than had been thought. The latest forecast estimates that there will be 52 m fewer jobs in 2022 compared Pre-Covid 2019 and a full recovery in 2023 also remains elusive.

Whereas, Bangladesh's new identity as a developing country will contribute significantly to branding Bangladesh with a new image. This will help to attract new investors. Global lending bodies will be reassured of the ability of Bangladesh to pay the loan. Moreover, the creditworthiness of the country will improve and rating will also improve. Further, Bangladesh would be able to avail of commercial loans at competitive rates. All in all, it will improve the brand image of Bangladesh and will help to mobilize resources from the global markets through Sovereign Bonds.

Bangladesh is the 41st largest economy in the world. The country is one of the fastest-growing economies in terms of GDP Growth and Per Capita Income Growth. Bangladesh has emerged as the second-largest exporter of Apparel in the world. There is potential for Leather and Leather Goods, Jute and Jute Products Pharmaceuticals etc. to meet growing demand.

The Trade Policy of Bangladesh constitutes an important source of Tax Revenue for Bangladesh. Over 95 percent of Tariff is Ad Valorem. The 3-year Export Policy focuses on Trade Regime in line with a global perspective. The export policy envisages export covering the US\$ 60 Billion with new markets and diversified products. The export policy has attracted 31 post-implementation strategies, including active Economic Diplomacy, Product Branding, and reducing the cost of doing business. To accelerate the pace of industrialization, the Government will soon announce the National Industrial Policy.

Despite the gloomy situation in Europe, Bangladesh is managing its economy well. Diplomats are hopeful of overcoming the challenges ahead.

Shahed Akhtar

Fmr. Ambassador & Secretary, GoB
and Editor, Diplomats Publication

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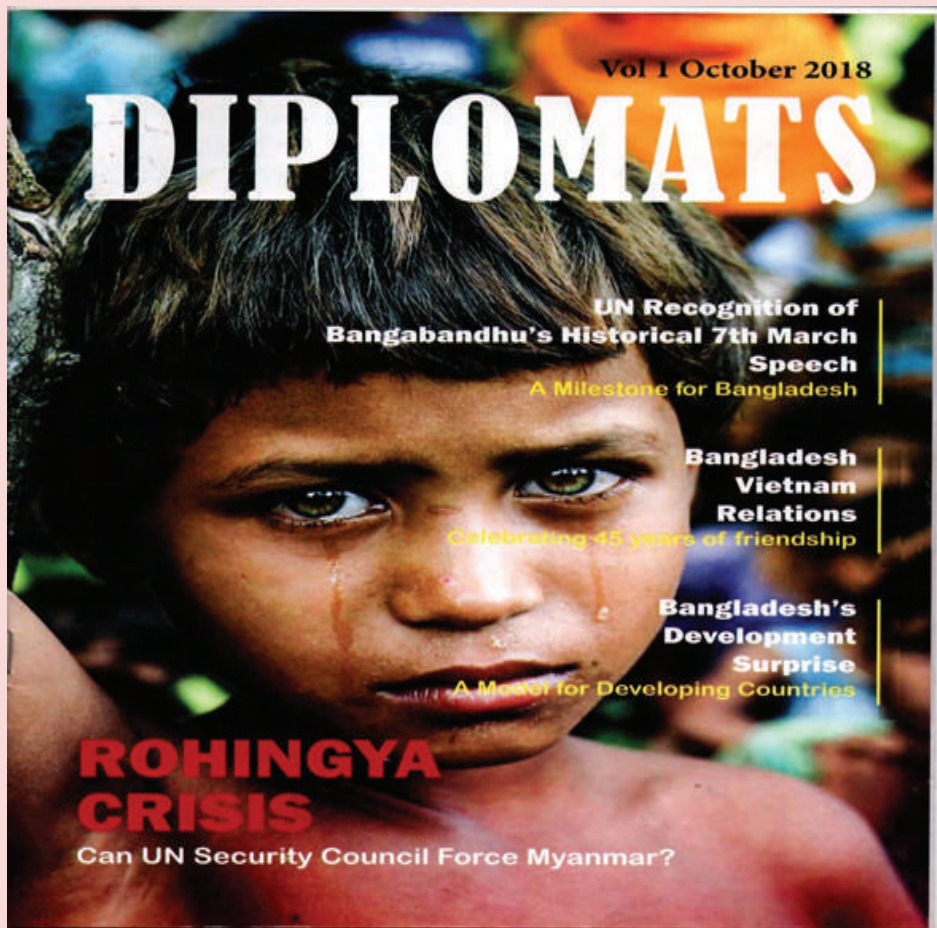
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THE DIPLOMATS WORLD PUBLICATIONS : THREE YEARS OF STEADY GROWTH & GLORIOUS ACCOLADE

-Nazinur Rahim



First issue of Diplomats Publication

The first diplomatic mission of present Bangladesh was established in Kolkata on April 18, 1971, after M Hossain Ali, Pakistan's deputy high commissioner, and other ethnic Bengali staff at the mission defected to the Bangladeshi provisional government during the Bangladesh Liberation War, amid a wave of similar defections around the world. Since then, Bangladesh has used

embassies, high commissions, consulates general, consulates, deputy high commissions, and assistant high commissions to highlight its presence in various nations throughout the world. These overseas missions are not only responsible for establishing diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and the host country, but also for promoting Bangladesh's values and culture in other countries. By addressing the sudden influx of

Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and calling for attention to the global platforms to solve this man made human disaster in its very first issue, the Diplomats had begun its journey as a sole diplomatic “spokespress” of Bangladesh to the Foreign Service offices and global communities around the world.

The Diplomats began its journey in 2018 as Bangladesh's first and sole publication of diplomatic news, intending to emphasize the country's democratization and economic success. The Diplomats have also been active through its publishing and convocation platforms. To keep the diplomatic community informed on the country's domestic and international development, as well as the government's different programs, and to create and expand relationships with diplomats and expatriates. In addition to that, the Diplomats is trying to highlight the achievements of the Bangladesh Government and all the Bangladesh Missions abroad, Diplomatic Mission plans and programs, and various achievements in Bangladesh and create and promote awareness of our government policies



Foreign Minister Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen MP addressing the audience in the Foreign Service Day.

relevant to the international community. Furthermore, the Diplomats is working to conduct a competitive analysis of development and initiatives on various global issues, highlight appreciation of Bangladesh by international media, reputed people & institutions and publish research-oriented articles on critical issues of Bangladesh. Emeritus Professor and Hon'ble Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh was the magazine's first editor. Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, who was also Bangladesh's Permanent Representative to the United Nations for seven years. Nazinur Rahim, Founding Director of Ireland Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries (IBCCI), is the co-founder of Diplomats. Since its inception, Nazinur Rahim has been the Publisher and Executive Editor. He is also involved in IT, Software development & digital transformation business at home and abroad. Currently, Shahed Akhtar, Former Ambassador & Secretary, GoB is the Editor of Diplomats and

Abul Hasan Chowdhury, Former State Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, GoB is the Executive Advisor of Diplomats.

Bangladesh's foreign policy is founded on values, according to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Despite the limited resources available, foreign policy and the Foreign Office have met the task. The Foreign Ministry used to be a rehab for killers of the Father of the Nation, but that is

no longer the case. Stabilization of the economy and poverty reduction remain our top priorities in the face of zero tolerance for terrorism.

Our foreign policy initiatives will help us achieve this goal by increasing the degree of our external trading, as well as increasing the inflow of overseas remittances. We anticipate obtaining equal market access, an increase in our export volume, prompt transfer of advanced technology, employment of our specialists, skilled and semi-skilled workers in other countries during the next few years. In the last 10 years, we've increased our global footprint by 1.4 times.

Bangladesh has 82 missions around the world as of 2022, including 59 embassies or high commissions, 21 consulates general, consulates, deputy high commissions, or assistant high commissions, and two permanent missions to the United Nations in New York City and Geneva.



Foreign Minister Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen MP, former Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhit and Executive Editor Nazinur Rahim visiting the Genocide Corner



Bruno Astorre, Member of Italian Chamber of Deputies speaking at the Diplomats Seminar in Italy

At present, the Diplomats are being regularly sent to embassies in 82 countries around the world. 46 foreign embassies and 26 Foreign Service offices in Bangladesh are regularly receiving 'Diplomats'. Subscriptions to the Diplomatic missions are available in print and online. It currently has between 25,000 and 30,000 regular subscribers who receive

it via email, WhatsApp, and Facebook, as well as around 2,500 regular readers who receive it in print. The Diplomats is Bangladesh's only publication of its sort. The primary goal of this magazine is to raise awareness about Bangladesh among foreign diplomats, ex-pats, and foreign nationals in Bangladesh and around the world.

Simultaneously, diplomats are working feverishly to promote Bangladesh as a brand name to the rest of the globe through the various seminars, symposiums, and conferences in Bangladesh and abroad covering numerous critical social, geopolitical, and foreign trade & economic issues.

So far 14 seminars have been organized by the Diplomats in Bangladesh and abroad including Italy, France, USA, and the United Kingdom. In these seminars, Bangladesh's achievements and progress have been highlighted. Honorable Ministers, foreign diplomats' journalists, and senior officials of international organizations have participated in these seminars. The Diplomats presented Set-Top Box to all the Missions abroad to enable the viewers to watch Bangla TV



Diplomats family is handing over the Set-top-box to the Foreign Minister Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen



Foreign Minister Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud, at the Set-top-box handover ceremony

channels abroad. The initiative was taken to promote Bangladesh's art, culture, and various development activities. The set-top box is expected to enable showcasing Bangladesh in every corner of the globe.

Also, the first Genocide Corner was set up at the Bangladesh Foreign Service Academy with the help of Diplomats Publication to present the glorious history of Bangladesh's War of liberation and at the

same time, the horrific atrocities carried out by the occupation forces during the war in 1971.

In recent times a discussion meeting titled 'Fact and Impact of Digital Security Act-2018' was organized by 'Diplomats World Publication' at Radisson Blu Water Garden Dhaka on 30th November 2021; to ensure and protect national security and civil rights in digital platforms and to remove the widespread misconceptions among the people about the real purpose and proper implementation of the law titled 'Digital Security Act 2018' enacted by the Government of Bangladesh. Following this event, another seminar was held on December 20, 2021, by the 'DIPLOMATS world' Publications in Hotel



The Panel Discussion in Diplomats seminar



Diplomats Seminar on Rohingya Crisis & Repatriation: What is to be done

Radisson Blu, Dhaka, on the topic of 'Rohingya Crisis and Repatriation: What is to be done?' The guests and keynote speakers highlighted the ineffectiveness of the international community in dealing with the crisis and suggested that they could put pressure on Myanmar through the imposition of economic sanctions and an arms embargo to take the Rohingyas back to Myanmar as soon as possible. Bangladesh's foreign policy stems from a sincere desire for a peaceful co-existence with all of our

neighbors and partners. Bangladesh has already achieved the economic strength of a stable middle income country, as manifested by Bangladesh Awami League in its 2008 election. By 2041, we want to be a developed country, and we're working on the Delta Plan for 2100. Some of our preferred instruments are pragmatism, peace and stability, humanitarian obligations, innovation, and alliance building. At present, Diplomats Publication is being sent to all the foreign missions of Bangladesh around the world.

At the same time, all the Foreign Embassies, International organizations, Banks, media, Members of Parliament, and key decision-makers in Bangladesh are receiving copies of Diplomats publications on a regular basis. In addition to that, the Diplomats World Publication is going to start its monthly publications from London and New York in 2022. The Diplomats World Publication is poised to project true Bangladeshi nationalist spirit to its foreign counterparts and it is determined to keep its pace of advance in the coming years.

Nazinur Rahim

Executive Editor
Diplomats Publication

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ROOPPUR NUCLEAR POWER PLANT PROJECT: RECOMBINATION OF RUSSIA-BANGLADESH SOCIO-CULTURAL CONNECTIVITY

-Dr. Mohammed Faruque



Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant

Signs are written in Russian beside Bengali billboards, as well as Russians on the streets, in restaurants, and in shopping malls, all raise the question: "What does a rural village in Bangladesh's Pabna District's Ishwardi district have in common with the world's largest country?"

The answer is Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, a 2.4-gigawatt nuclear power facility being installed by the Russian Rosatom State Atomic Energy

Corporation. Rooppur's tremendous transformation has been mostly spurred by the project's rapid pace of construction, which began in 2016 and is supported by a few thousand Russian scientists and technical specialists, joined by a few other nationals.

During the last two and a half years, a lot has changed. The majority of the signboards in local saloons, superstores, malls, fruit shops, and fish and meat markets have Russian letters on them. In the cafés and

teahouses close to the residential sections, there is a spontaneous presence of Russians. There is also a cultural exchange taking place, with foreign workers attempting to communicate with shopkeepers in Bengali, and many shopkeepers acquiring Russian. Some of the locals have even picked up Russian writing.

Bangladesh and Russia have a long and illustrious history of bilateral relationships, both diplomatic and cultural fields. During the 1971 Liberation



Bangladesh, Russia friendship is historic

struggle, the Soviet Union (USSR) stood by the people of Bangladesh. In international diplomacy, the Soviet Union has extended its hand to help Bangladesh achieve independence. By exercising its veto power twice in the United Nations Security Council in support of Bangladesh's liberation war, the Soviet Union thwarted Pakistan's attempt to halt the liberation war. During the post-liberation period, the Soviet Union also extended hands of help to Bangladesh. The father of the nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, embarked on a historic state visit to the Soviet Union in 1972.

Bangladesh has a strong friendly relationship with Russia. Bangladesh and the Soviet Union established diplomatic relations back on January 25, 1972. The bilateral relationship will celebrate its 50th anniversary this year. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, Bangladesh has maintained bilateral relations with its successor, Russia. In Dhaka, Bangladesh's capital, and Chittagong, there is a Russian embassy and a consulate-general. Bangladesh,

on the other hand, has an embassy in Moscow, Russia's capital. Presently, Bangladesh and Russia have significant military, economic, and political ties. Bangladesh and Russia have a long history of cooperation. The development of politics, economy, and culture is aided by this interaction between the two countries.

Bangabandhu has traveled to Russia in the hopes of forging new bonds of friendship and collaboration between the two countries, as well as to show our gratitude for Russia's significant help to our liberation struggle. An inter-governmental

agreement on commercial and technical cooperation, trade representation, cultural, education, and scientific cooperation was inked during Bangabandhu's visit.

During his visit, Bangabandhu also requested assistance from the Soviet leadership in mines clearance operation of Chattogram port and clearing its sunken ships and vessels in the Kornofuli River. On April 26, 1972, the first Soviet minesweeper arrived in Chittagong. In 26 months, the minesweeping and ship recovery work was completed. A senior sailor, Yuri.V.Rodkin, died as a hero during the mission. His burial is located on the grounds of the Bangladesh Naval Academy. The two-year demining operation began in 1972, and for the duration of the operation, 800 naval soldiers, largely from the Pacific Fleet, lived in Chittagong. Scaffolds' and divers labored nonstop, putting their lives in danger.

After the liberation war, the Soviet Union provided extraordinary support and



Russian Prime Minister Kosygin greeted Bangabandhu



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Meets President Vladimir Putin

collaboration in the reconstruction of the newly independent Bangladesh. The Soviet Union aided Bangladesh in rejuvenating its economy in the 1970s and beyond. The power plants at 'Ghorashal' and 'Siddirganj,' as well as an electrical equipment factory in Chittagong and other projects, were created with financial and technical aid from the Soviet Union during the time.

Russia, a former member of the Soviet Union and one of the world's most powerful powers during the Cold War, is still a major player in global eco-politics. But even though the Soviet Union played a vital role in our liberation war, we have kept a certain distance from that country. However, following the devastating political loss of 1975, relations between the two countries decayed. Towards the end of the twentieth century, a revolution in world politics occurred. Not only the Soviet Union's socialist system but the entire country was disintegrated, putting an end to the cold war in world politics. Despite the fact that the situation was set up to enhance

relations with the Soviet Union, none of the governments appeared to be taking the necessary steps. It is incomprehensible that Russia, the country that supported us the most after India during our historic war of liberation, remained ignored by our political leaders and heads of state for more than 40 years.

In January 2013, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina; revived and strengthened this long hibernated relationship between the two countries. That was the first visit of such a high level in the last 40 years. President Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina met for

several hours to discuss a variety of bilateral and international topics. Three intergovernmental agreements involving credit cooperation were inked, as well as six memorandums of understanding covering nuclear energy, military hardware supply, agriculture, education, health, culture, justice, and counter-terrorism.

Bangladesh has signed a number of agreements with Russia on a variety of topics, including nuclear power plant building, trade, investment, education, and culture, among others. For a long time, Russia has been collaborating with Bangladesh on the construction of a nuclear power plant in Rooppur, Bangladesh.

In addition, Russia has agreed to provide Bangladesh with \$12 billion in financial help for the development of this power plant.

Bangladesh gains international prominence and respect as a result of Russia's aid. Bangladesh has reached an agreement with Russia to purchase weaponry worth approximately one billion dollars. During her visit to



The 2.4 GW nuclear power plant is under construction at Rooppur



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the construction of the main nuclear power reactor at Rooppur of Pabna district.

Moscow, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Russian President Vladimir Putin signed the pact.

Russia is one of the countries that supply the Bangladesh Armed Forces with guns and military equipment. Bangladesh received the Russian Metis-Mtank-destroyer missile in 2013. Bangladesh purchased 17 Yak-130 training aircraft from Russia in 2015 and 2016. Bangladesh ordered six Russian MI-171 SH helicopters in 2016. These weapons are being purchased to modernize Bangladesh's military. Furthermore, the country collaborates with Bangladesh in several areas. Russia will be interested in investing in ICT, power and energy, pharmaceuticals, and military technology in the future. The progress of these investment operations would be complemented by excellent relations between the two countries.

Bangladeshi students are receiving scholarships from the Russian government. Many students from this country are studying in Russia for higher

education, and they are becoming experts in a variety of fields, including nuclear physics. Hopefully, in the future, the Russian government will expand this chance. The Russian ambassador recently stated that Russia will provide necessary support in resolving the Rohingya situation in Bangladesh. As a result, Russia can play a significant role in assisting Bangladesh in the repatriation of Rohingya Muslims. It is critical to preserve strong relations with Russia in the interests of the country's development.

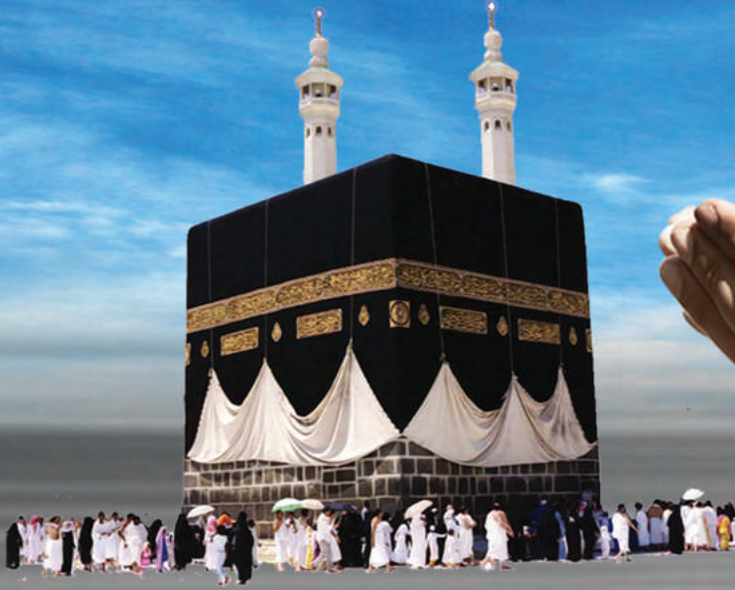
Bangladesh has finished preparing to sign an MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) with Russia on the potential of a Free Trade Agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), which comprises Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. The official Memorandum of Understanding is anticipated to be signed at the end of March 2022, and it will simplify trade. This will be used to develop bilateral banking and maybe e-Commerce networks. Bangladesh has agreed to receive and manufacture

Russia's Sputnik Covid-19 vaccine, paving the way for pharmaceutical and other medical research collaboration.

Ready-made clothing, seafood, and leather items account for more than 90% of Bangladeshi imports to Russia. However, Russia exports metal rolls, textileraw materials, machinery, fertilizers, and crops, especially high-quality milling wheat. It's worth mentioning that our bilateral commerce is normally balanced, with Russian exports about equalling Bangladesh imports. Russia is an example of a country with which all of the countries in the region are inextricably tied through various forms of regional and sub-regional cooperation. It should be emphasized that Russia has been watching the recent geo-economic and geo-political shifts in South Asia for quite some time. Russia has given Bangladesh significant weight in its geopolitical and economic calculations. Bangladesh-Russian ties have a lot of promise. Russia has shown an interest in commemorating the '50th anniversary of Diplomatic Ties'. Bangladesh has reacted positively to this. The geo-political and socio-cultural bond between Bangladesh & Russia is unbreakable. Hopefully, Russia and Bangladesh will collaborate for the welfare of their respective peoples, as well as establish an exemplary international fraternity in the coming years.

Dr. Mohammed Faruque

CEO & Chairman, Orchard Group
& Advisor, Diplomats Publication



কষ্টের সঞ্চয়ে কামিয়াব হোক আজন্মসঞ্চিত হজের নিয়ত

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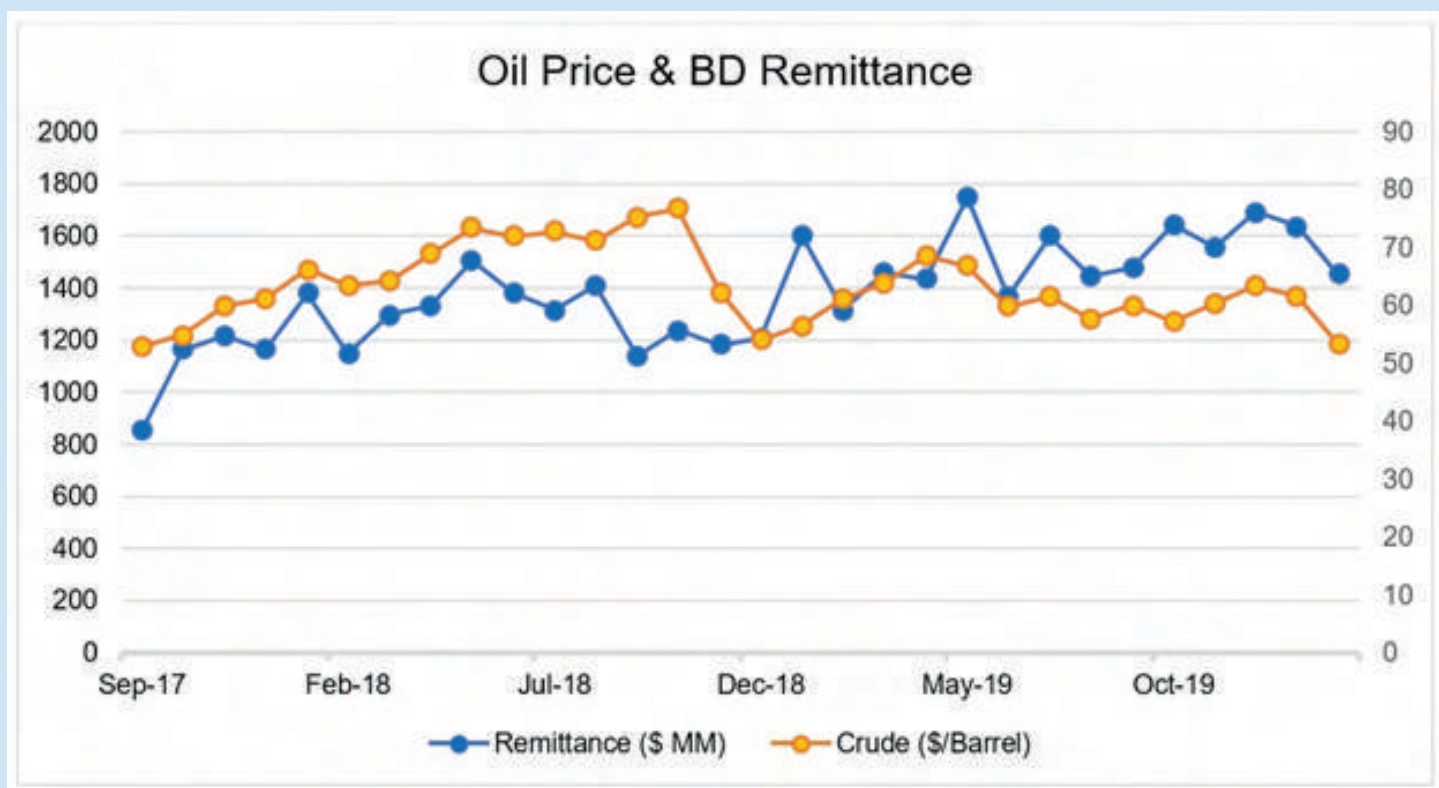
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THE OPEN MARKET FOR REMITTANCE EARNING

-Aminur Rahman



The most immediate and well-known relationship between migration and development is remittances, which are money or products that migrants send back to their relatives and friends in their home countries. Official development aid is outstripped by remittances, which are private contributions. Remittances are defined as a portion of migrant workers' income that is sent back to their home country from their place of employment. Employees'

remittances, as defined by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), are the value of money transfers sent by workers who have lived abroad for more than a year to their home country and are documented in various parts of the balance of payments. In today's growing economy, remittances have become a major and dependable source of foreign finance and wealth accumulation. Remittances are a major source of family income in underdeveloped nations, and they are seen as a reliable

source. Because the statistical definition used to gather data on remittances is broader, global estimates of financial transfers by migrants include transactions beyond what are typically thought to be remittances (Orozco, M., 2002). Remittances can help family members who have been left behind as well as strengthen the economies of receiving countries. They can also foster a culture of reliance in the recipient nation, resulting in decreased labor force participation, more conspicuous consumerism, and slowed

economic progress. Remittances are monies sent home by citizens who live outside of their native country. Remittances are calculated in billions of dollars in many poor nations, and they may account for a significant

remittances are primarily used to pay necessities, the expected decline in remittances will be felt most acutely by migrants and their families, who may no longer be able to afford school fees, medical expenditures,



Workers going in abroad

fraction of the gross domestic product in some circumstances (GDP)(Eckstein, S, 2004). Individual family earnings are significantly increased, and local economies rely on this money to function. Remittances totaled US\$689 billion in 2018, with US\$ 529 billion going to low and middle-income nations. India received more than \$79 billion, Mexico \$36 billion, and the Philippines \$34 billion. Tongan households received \$190 million in remittances, accounting for more than 38% of the country's GDP.

The most apparent form of migrants' economic contributions to their home nations is remittances. Remittances account for a significant portion of numerous nations' GDP and assist to shore up foreign reserves on a global scale. However, because

housing, or even food.

The COVID19 lockdown hampered the operations of money transfer operators (MTOs), which rely on migration, underscoring the necessity of digitization in service delivery. According to the latest projections released in the World Bank's Migration and Development Brief, as the COVID-19 epidemic and economic crisis spread, the amount of money migrant workers return home is expected to drop 14 percent by 2021 compared to pre-COVID-19 levels in 2019. Remittances to low and middle-income countries (LMICs) are expected to drop by 7% in 2020, to \$508 billion, and then by another 7.5 percent in 2021, to \$470 billion(Azam, J.P., and Gubert, F., 2006). Weak economic development and job levels in

migrant-hosting countries, low oil prices, and devaluation of remittance-source nations' currencies versus the US dollar are the main causes driving the drop in remittances. Even with the anticipated drop, the importance of remittances as a source of external funding for LMICs is expected to increase in 2020. In 2019, remittances to LMICs reached a new high of \$548 billion, surpassing both foreign direct investment (\$534 billion) and overseas development aid (\$166 billion). The gap between remittance flows and FDI is projected to expand much further as FDI is expected to fall even more. The global average cost of sending \$200, according to the World Bank's Remittance Prices Worldwide Database, was 6.8% in the third quarter of 2020, essentially constant from the first quarter of 2019. This is more than double the 3 percent objective for the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. South Asia had the lowest cost (5%), while Sub-Saharan Africa had the highest (8.5 percent). Banks charge the most for sending remittances (10.9 percent on average), followed by post offices (8.6%), money transfer companies (5.8%), and mobile carriers (2.8 percent). COVID-19-related limitations affect a considerable fraction of the estimated 164 million migratory workers, both in terms of immediate job loss and their ability to engage in economic activity abroad even once the restrictions are eased. Strict lockdowns have disproportionately damaged industries that rely heavily on migrant labor. Over 52 thousand



Bangladeshi migrant workers holding passports

extreme mobility limitations have been imposed in the transportation industry throughout the world (Gamage, S., 2006). The United Nations World Tourism Organization forecasts a 45–70% fall in the worldwide tourism business in the next few years. Producers in the agriculture sector are experiencing acute labor shortages as a result of mobility restrictions, causing interruptions in harvesting, processing, and distribution, as well as affecting the agro-food system as a whole.

As companies and sectors adjust and restructure in response to the COVID 19 pandemic, labor mobility is expected to change, with certain positions becoming outdated either by design or by default. Good data collection and analysis linked to migrant movement and concerns, the banking sector, economy-wide changes, and national policy measures will be required for effective responses at each stage of the COVID-19 issue.

- Immigrant businesses and

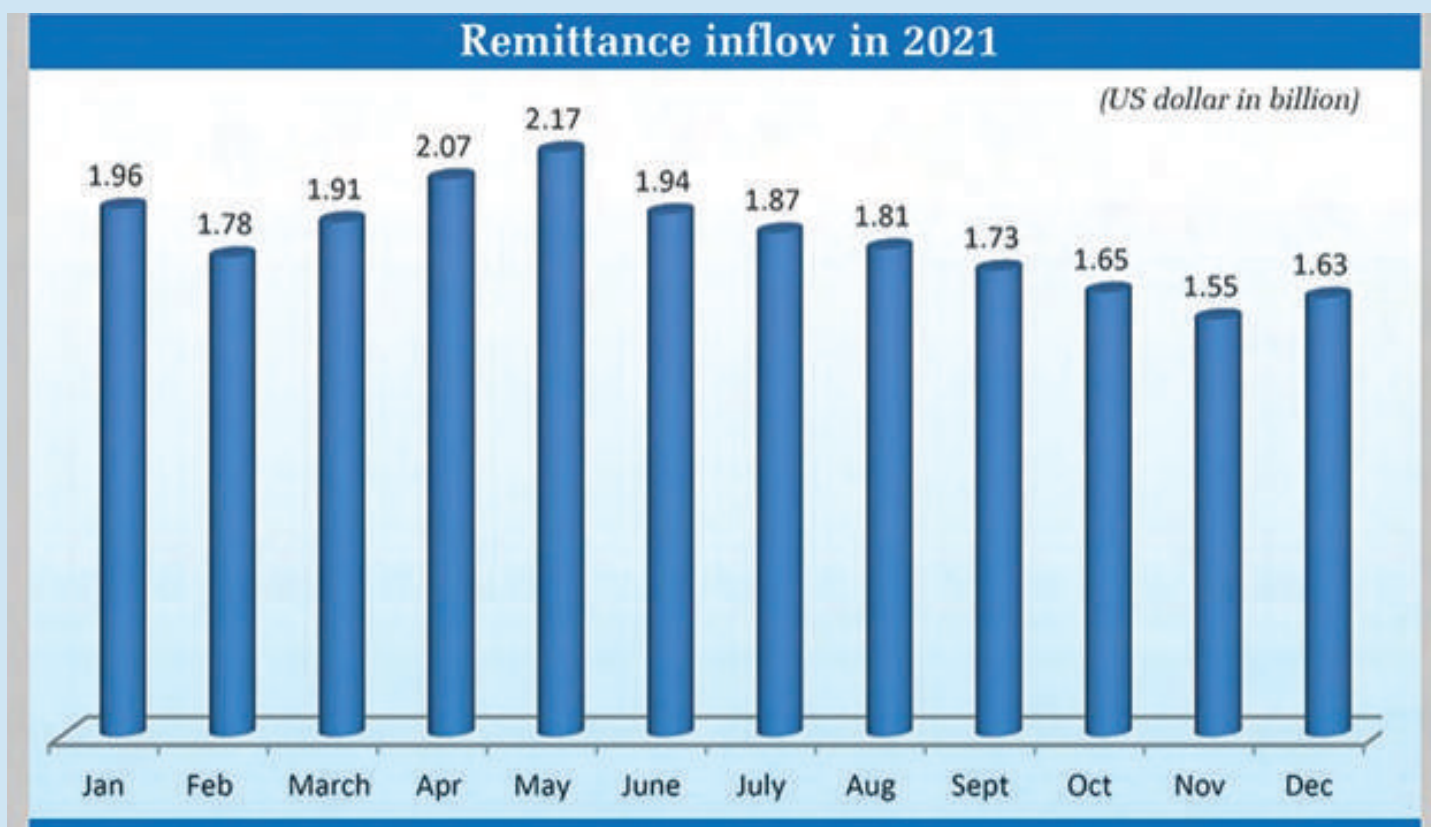
access to markets: Migrant systems lack access to capital and are the least likely to gain from COVID-19-related fiscal stimulus measures. Financial stimulus packages and other plans to access loans, loan guarantees, and microfinance might be considered by migrant entrepreneurship and trade. Returning migrants would benefit from access to such programs since it would allow them to plan for a longer-term future. In addition, creating work possibilities in rural areas is both an opportunity and a requirement in the context of internal migration.

- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and micro-businesses are the most common forms of migrant and diaspora entrepreneurship. COVID-19 has had a particularly negative impact on microbusinesses and small businesses. According to the ILO, about 81 percent of employers and 66 percent of own-account workers are in countries where workplace closures are suggested or

enforced, posing a serious threat to present operations and solvency. Migrants and diasporas engage in cross-border commerce. Due to disruption of value chains, border restrictions, and trade policy shocks like commodity prices, commerce in goods and services is slowing in the COVID-19 pandemic period. The global and regional supply chains have been disclosed by COVID-19.

- Finally, even before the COVID epidemic, the world of work was changing owing to technological advancements and globalization. COVID-19 might lead to new modes of working, such as digital vs physical, changes in business models, such as 3d modeling versus production, shifts in worker attitudes, such as remote versus on-site working, and perhaps both employment destruction and creation. If innovative solutions can be developed, developments in the future of the work arena can operate as both a driver of migration (if there is large unemployment) and a decreasing migration pressure (if there is massive unemployment). These developments are expected to have an impact on migration flows, culminating in a "period of uncertain and fast-changing migrant flows," as some analysts refer to it. Managing these transitions will thus be a major issue.

Although the exact impact of COVID 19 will be determined by the kind, shape, and duration of the economic downturn, it does offer us a chance to reset certain aspects of the migration



continuum, such as migrant and diaspora economic contributions, for the better. Any way we look at the post-COVID-19 world and how it will affect migration, we are at a tipping point that has the potential to change this phenomenon into something that benefits all nations and people.

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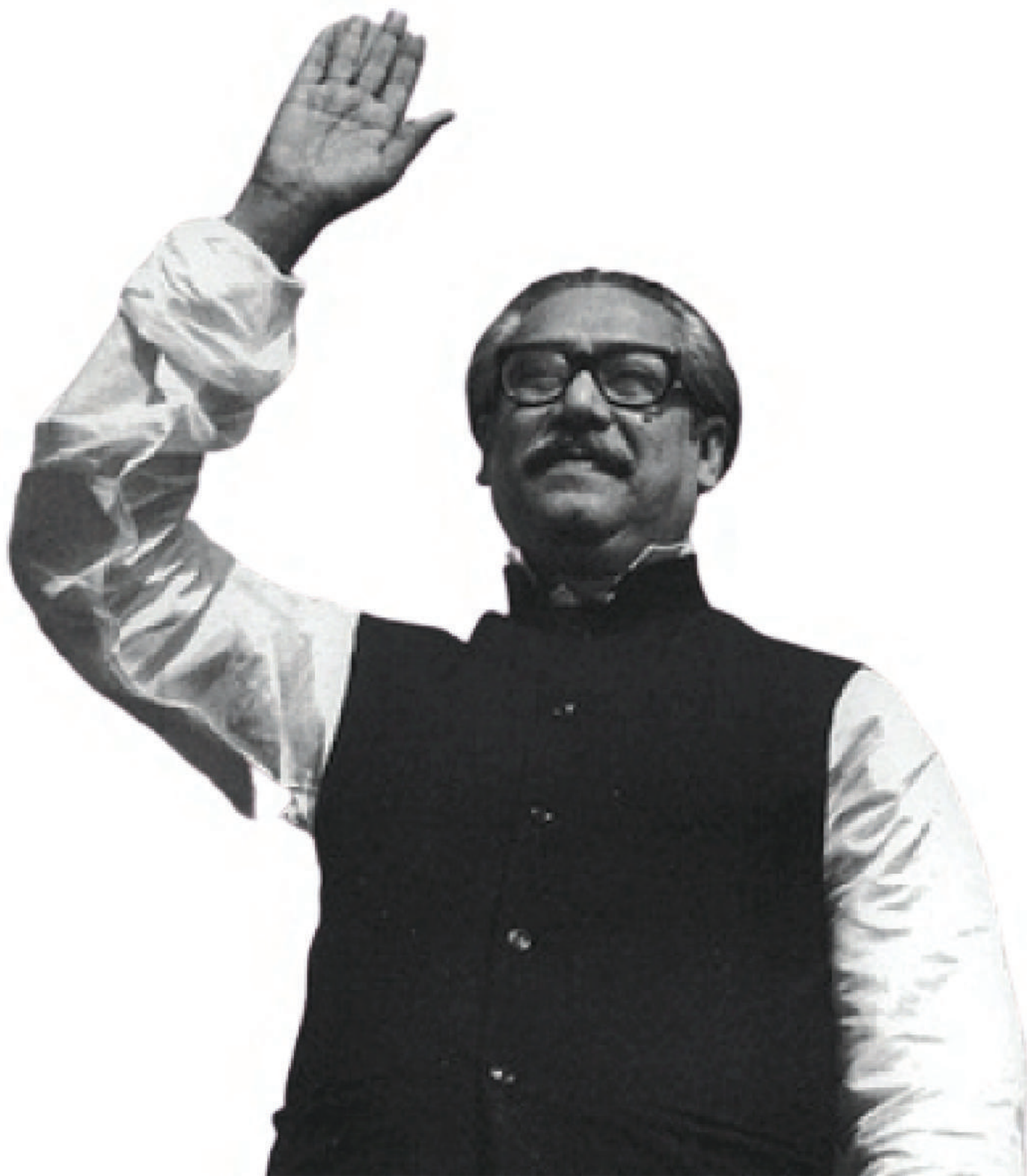
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***BANGABANDHU'S HOME COMING:
AN ECSTATIC MOMENT
FOR A NATION***

-Abul Hasan Chowdhury





Bangabandhu's Homecoming on 10th January 1972. The father of the nation receives a Tumultuous welcome by the liberated nation

It was an ecstatic moment, a euphoric time, and a perfect finale of a traumatic nine months. Breaking through the early morning fog of a wintry day in January 1972 Bangabandhu arrived in London.

Bengali people were united like never before upon the Clarion call of Bangabandhu. His speech of 7th March 1971 galvanized the whole nation, this classic appeal which in effect declared the substance of independence yet holding back only to the extent that the barbaric hordes are denied an excuse to launch a savage attack. On the night of 26th March when the bestial attack was launched, Bangabandhu the father of the nation formally declared the independence of Bangladesh.

A newspaper in England carried his picture with the heading "Symbol of Bengali resistance".

A brief recapitulation of the years leading to 1971 would set the significance of the homecoming of Bangabandhu in context.

In 1947 when the British left the Indian Subcontinent it was carved into two sovereign entities, India and Pakistan.

Pakistan was split into two halves separated by nearly a thousand miles of India. This peculiar experiment was hinged on the hope of building a nation where justice would prevail under a democratic dispensation.

The premise on which Pakistan was created rested on the firm belief that the people of Pakistan will have an equal share in its assets and enjoy full rights as its citizens.

A blow was struck soon after when Bengalis were denied their

right to language. This assault led to severely hurting Bengali sentiment. Young Sheikh Mujib was one of the first to retaliate by starting an agitation to gain the recognition of Bangla as a state language.

This move of his soon landed him in jail, but the high walls of the prison did not prevent Bangabandhu from directing the movement from his incarceration. Ultimately in 1952, the agitation reached its peak, and blood was shed. This was similar to the 1857 first war of independence and the beginning of the Bengali struggle.

The years that followed saw the unequal treatment of the Bengalis. Although Bangalees were in the majority, the Army, Bureaucrats and feudal clique in Pakistan snubbed every rightful aspiration of the people of East Bengal later changed to East Pakistan.



Bangabandhu's Homecoming on 10th January 1972. The father of the nation receives a Tumultuous welcome by the liberated nation

The major export earning was from jute. Grown entirely in the then East Pakistan but more than 70% was utilized in West Pakistan. Bengalis were severely restricted from joining the Armed Forces and impediments were put in their way from joining the civil service.

At every stage the Leader of Bengal, Bangabandhu was at the forefront both as a Member of Parliament and as a leader of the masses. This led him into long spells in prison. Our Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, her brother Sheikh Kamal, Sheikh Jamal, her sister Sheikh Rehana and their youngest brother Sheikh Russell was denied the company of their beloved father as a prison was his second home. After the demise of Bangabandhu's legendary mentor Mr. Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy the responsibility fell entirely on him to champion the cause of the Bengali people.

Looking from today's vantage point it is indeed difficult to

grasp the harsh conditions in which Bangabandhu had to wage his relentless struggle. He could feel the heartbeat of the people and emerge as a representative of their dreams and desires.

Pakistan which was wielding as a brutal colonial power soon realized the inherent strength of Bangabandhu. His courage and willingness to endure persecution drew him close to the people. In Bangabandhu, they had a leader they could trust and imbibed the confidence that their salvation would come under his leadership. A baffled and indignant Pakistan tried every trick it could muster.

They indulged in viciously attacking the personality of Bangabandhu. Bangabandhu offered a six-point formula that would ensure the rights of the Bengalis within the framework of Pakistan. Unable to counter it with logic or reject it as irrational, the authorities indulged in fiction.

They started proceedings against Bangabandhu on a false and fabricated conspiracy case.

The people of Bengal were outraged. They took it as a massive insult and erupted like a volcano. The Agartala conspiracy case was abandoned and the entire legal process fell like a house of cards. The Chief Presiding Judge fled donning the uniform of a cleaner.

Bangabandhu was released and the people lovingly embraced him with the title of Bangabandhu "Friend of Bengal".

The martial law authorities promulgated legal framework order in the mistaken belief that Bangabandhu would refuse to join the elections under the legal fetters. A leader of deep insight and confidence of his people support Bangabandhu asked the leaders and workers of his party to prepare for the election.

Bangabandhu was clear in his mind that the people of Bangladesh would be with him. He knew them and the bonding was exceedingly strong. Defying all hesitation and ambivalence of some of his close associates Bangabandhu went for the polls. His confidence was confirmed. Awami League won with a landslide. Out of 169 seats his party, Awami League bagged 167. This unprecedented victory ensured that Bangabandhu should be invited to form the Government.

Pakistan authorities were unnerved. The prospect of having a just and equitable solution was far removed from



10th January 1972, Bangabandhu returned to his beloved motherland Bangladesh

their psyche. A decadent, degenerate bunch of military rulers suspended the holding of Parliament. Bangabandhu was now armed with the people's mandate and no force can be stronger than that.

A period of civil disobedience ensued. But it was not allowed to go out of control and Bangabandhu, exhorted the people of Bangladesh to stay united but poised to face any eventuality.

East Pakistan had virtually snapped its ties with the other wing of Pakistan. Under these turbulent circumstances, the Pakistan army was looking for a pretext to strike- in fact, they were expecting a unilateral declaration of independence. Under the near anarchic situation, Bangabandhu's 7th March speech was simply unparalleled. Indeed now after so many decades recognized by UNESCO and is indeed a classic.

In that not too long speech Bangabandhu gave clear directions both for the prevailing scenario as well as how the people must respond should Pakistan strike.

An extempore speech covered all crucial elements of Bengali emancipation. The language was such that it confounded the army while confidently concluding "The struggle this time is for freedom, the struggle this time is for independence."

The treacherous Pakistan Army was biding their time and they launched the attack in the early hours of 25th March. Bangabandhu's recorded declaration of Independence was immediately aired by his trusted lieutenants. They arrested Bangabandhu and flew him to Pakistan. Under his inspiration and guidance, the war of independence was led

by his colleagues who formed the Mujibnagar Government. The four leaders who were at the helm were acting President Mr. Syed Nazrul Islam, Prime Minister Mr. Tajuddin Ahmed, Mr. Mansur Ali, and Mr. Quamruzzaman.

Ten Million refugees took shelter in India. India's contribution to our Liberation War was simply unique. The Government of Mrs. Indira Gandhi and the people of India rendered all-out support to our struggle. Although our victory was achieved in nine months, it came at a huge cost. Three Million Bangladeshis were killed and nearly three hundred thousand women folks of our country were dishonored. Our valiant Muktiyoddha freedom fighters were prepared every moment to sacrifice their lives. In the annals of human conflict, their bravery will be written in letters of gold.

It will continue to engage the interest of scholars and observers at the significant support Bangladesh received from both sides of the polarized world at the inception of



10th January 1972, Bangabandhu returned to his beloved motherland Bangladesh



10th January 1972, Bangabandhu returned to his beloved motherland Bangladesh

Bangladesh. On the one hand, was the erstwhile Soviet Bloc and on the other the American Bloc. Despite Nixon/Kissinger's unfriendly attitude towards Bangladesh, there was tremendous support from the common folks, the artists, and the corporate world along with the bipartisan support of the US congress.

London was the biggest rallying point in the west. Next to India, and surely the gap was huge, the UK played a very constructive role.

I have considered this phenomenon as the universal acceptance of Bangabandhu's vision and philosophy. It was for humanity and not confined to national boundaries.

Let us remember that when Bangabandhu flew into London.

The Govt. of the United Kingdom had not recognized Bangladesh. In that situation Bangabandhu was received with warmth and protocol accorded to Heads of State and Government Prime Minister Heath received him at Downing Street and Former Prime Minister Harold Wilson called on him at Coleridge's. It seemed London stood still to salute him and we as his people stood tall.

This was the very metropolis from where high powered delegations were sent to butcher Yahiya to caution him about the consequences of entertaining any evil designs about the life of Bangabandhu.

Although victory was achieved on the 16th of December everything seemed hollow and meaningless until Bangabandhu was in our midst. The nation

was getting ready for another battle until its beloved son had returned to a newly independent country. Bangladesh stood firm by the grace of Almighty Allah upon the return of Bangabandhu. 10th January 1972, Bangabandhu returned to his beloved motherland Bangladesh. His homecoming was the inauguration of the new age in our history.

We witness the spectacular continuation of that process under the dynamic Leadership of Sheikh Hasina, our Honorable Prime Minister.

Abul Hasan Chowdhury

Fmr. State Minister
Ministry of Foreign Affairs &
Executive Advisor, Diplomats Publication



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2022 IS A MILESTONE YEAR FOR BANGLADESH

-Syed Md. Atiqul Islam Atique



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, addressing the nation on the 3rd anniversary of her taking charge of the Governments.

There are few instances of the veterans, who keep trust in the country's youth segment. The young people have no experience with the glorious War of Liberation in 1971. They learned about it from textbooks and history books, many of which carry distorted lessons. Despite this, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's conviction is that they can play a major

role in propelling the country towards a prosperous and developed Nation by 2041. She said the young generation is full of potential and they can overcome all hurdles, and build a progressive and secular Bangladesh, fulfilling the dream of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. "The power of the youth can materialize the spirit

of the Liberation War. My strong belief is that our next generations will move forward towards the future with their heads high."

By the beginning of the year, 2022 when the Awami League celebrates its 3rd anniversary of taking charge to serve the nation, the Government successfully fulfills most of its



Padma Multipurpose Bridge

pledges on infrastructural development and is visible as stated by the Prime Minister. The Nation's dream Padma Multipurpose Bridge is opening to traffic by June of this year. This construction work was done with the nation's funds and by overcoming the traps and obstacles of many conspiracies. The bridge will directly connect the southern part of the country with other regions including the capital. Economists expected it to contribute 1.2 percent to the country's GDP.

A 14-kilometer-long metro rail from Uttara to Agargaon is set to open by the end of this year. For this, the trial operation of the train has already started. The Metrorail aspires to bring a

revolutionary change in the transport sector in the capital city.

The country's first tunnel through the bottom of the river Karnaphuli is set to be opened in Chattogram by October this year. She elaborated in her speech on the progress of work on large projects.

The largest development project in the history of the country is the first unit of 1,200 MW capacity of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant costing about 1 lakh 13 thousand crore taka is set to begin operation by April 2023.

The leadership of the present Government for thirteen years steered the Nation to the leading

position in South Asia in various socio-economic indicators including poverty alleviation, development of health system, reduction of maternal and child mortality rate, increase in life expectancy, empowerment of women, increase in education rate. It is the confidence that people place in the current Government by electing it three times in a row that makes such achievement possible. The Government expects that if this pace continues then Bangladesh can join the ranks of developed countries by 2041.

Prime Minister warns of anti-Bangladesh and anti-liberation forces who are trying to confuse people in social media with false,



A14-Kilometer-long metro rail from Uttara to Agargaon is set to open by the end of this year.

fabricated, and imaginary information and to misguide the development partners abroad. There are many people and institutions both at home and abroad who cannot tolerate the progress of the nation so they are hatching various conspiracies to stop this progress. Prime Minister urged to keep vigilance all around so that no one can play with the fate of the people and stop the country's remarkable journey to economic development.

Prime Minister emphasized her commitment to eradicating corruption. She said in her speech "The corrupt people are not spared and won't be spared either, no matter what their political affiliation and strength are. The Anti-Corruption Commission is discharging its duties independently in this connection. But to eradicate this disease, social awareness is to be generated.

The government has restated her success in resisting the emergence of militancy with an iron fist. "Bangladesh is a country of communal harmony. The people of all religions and creeds are living here maintaining mutual tolerance and will do so in the future, too."

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina urges people to exercise extra

caution against quick-spreading new coronavirus variants, warning that the crisis was yet to be over, and urging all eligible people to be vaccinated in the quickest possible time. She emphasized stricter maintenance and enforcement of health guidelines as a new surge of coronavirus was quickly grasping the globe again, even after exposing Bangladesh and



Karnafuli Tunnel project is nearing completion

other countries to a 'deep crisis' in 2020 and 2021. "I urge the people who are yet to get the jabs to take the vaccine immediately maintaining strict health protocols" she added. No other third-world leader dared to take up challenges,

overcoming enormous hurdles as that of Sheikh Hasina. For the greater development of the country, Prime Minister would never care about intimidations from the developed countries. Inspired by Father of the Nation and her father Bangabandhu

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's principle "Friendship to all malice to none" Sheikh Hasina along with popular support can take the nation towards the zenith of prosperity.

"Friendship to all malice to none"
Sheikh Hasina

Syed Md. Atiqul Islam Atique
Entrepreneur & Media Specialist



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4TH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION: MANY SMALL STEPS ARE NEEDED FOR ONE GIANT LEAP

-Rayhan Kawsar



The transition from age-old use of muscle power (human & animal) to the 1st Industrial Revolution had first occurred mostly in Great Britain, continental Europe, and the United States between about 1760 and 1840. The shift from hand to machine production, new chemical and iron manufacturing techniques, increased use of steam and water power, the development of

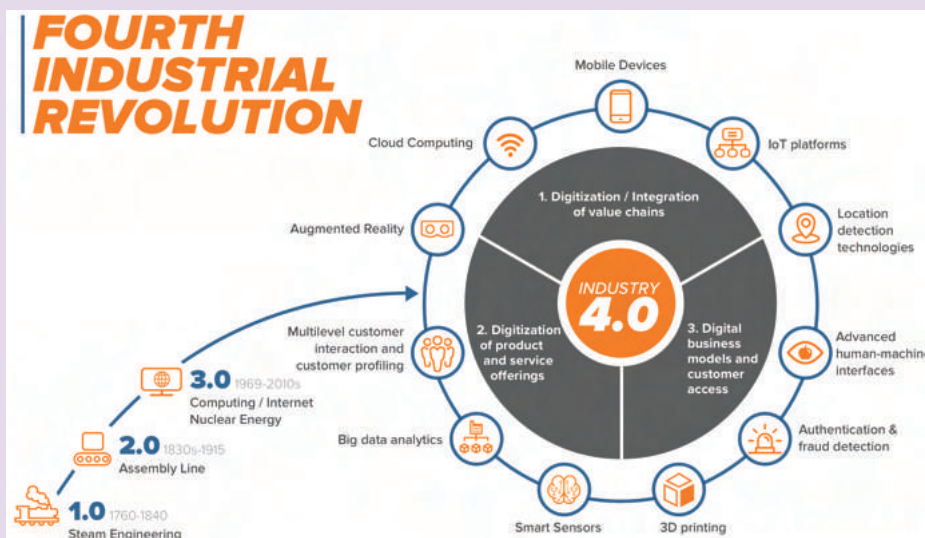
machine tools, and the rise of the mechanized factory system were all part of this transformation. The Second Industrial Revolution, often known as the Technological Revolution, was a period of the wider Industrial Revolution that lasted from the late 18th century through World War I. It is thought to have started with Bessemer steel in the 1860s and progressed to mass production

and the assembly line. The Second Industrial Revolution is generally considered to have occurred between the 1860s and the 1920s. The primary distinction between the first and second industrial revolutions is that the first one was focused on textiles, steam power, and iron, whilst the second one was focused on steel, railroads, petroleum, chemicals, and mass & diversified use of electricity.

The third Industrial Revolution, often known as the Digital Revolution, began in the 1930s and refers to the transition from mechanical and analog electronic technology to the digital electronics that we use today. Although the flow of invention began with the Second World War and the development of nuclear power, it flourished enormously during its recent ages. The usage of digital computers has become main stream during the last four decades, and the development of the Internet has united the world. The primary factors of this period are space travel, nuclear-based power plants, the shift to renewable energy, Smart Grid Technologies, plug-in electric and fuel cell-based transportation and

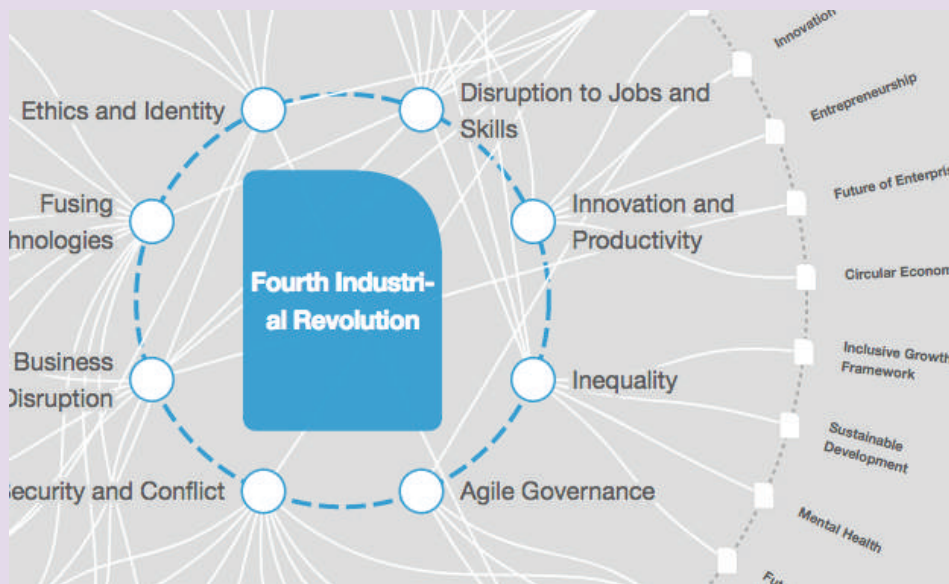
communication devices, and, last but not least, the widespread reach of the Internet and smartphone-based technology.

With the influence of the 3rd industrial revolution still covering a vast majority of the world, the 4th Industrial Revolution or “Industry 4.0” has already begun its journey. Klaus Schwab, the World Economic Forum's Founder and Executive Chairman, came up with the term "Fourth Industrial Revolution" (4IR) in 2016. (WEF). Nanotechnology, biotechnology, innovative materials, and advanced digital production (ADP) technologies are among the developing technology disciplines that have converged and complemented. In other words, the merging of



The unique way in which hardware, software, and connectivity are reconfigured and integrated to achieve ever-more lofty goals, the collection, and analysis of huge volumes of data, the cohesive interaction between intelligent

intelligence insights (AI). These data points might also be fed into the system in real-time to adapt and optimize downstream manufacturing steps, reducing downtime and freeing up resources.



distinctions between the physical, digital, and biological worlds is referred to as the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Artificial intelligence (AI), Robots, the Internet of Things (IoT), 3D Printing, Genetic Engineering, Quantum Computing, Social Media, Virtual Reality, Crypto Currency, and other technologies have all been combined to create it.

automation, and the assimilation of the physical and virtual dimensions of production are what truly distinguishes Industry 4.0 technologies. Sensors, for example, might detect specific activities or process durations, as well as environmental factors like temperature, enabling for independent self-correction based on 'big data' and artificial

The ramifications of 4-IR are not only complex but also difficult to grasp. Automation, for example, is frequently viewed as a way to close the gender gap in the workplace; however, studies suggest that this is contingent on bridging the long-standing gender imbalance in areas such as STEM education, digital access, and family obligations. ADP technologies have the potential to contribute to environmental sustainability by making more efficient use of energy and materials, resulting in lower carbon emissions and reduced particle pollution. However, the scope of this potential is up for debate, and the fulfillment of this promise has yet to be verified.

Another interesting line of inquiry is the impact of 4-IR on Global Value Chains (GVCs). On the one hand, the 4-IR's advances can improve trade logistics and cut transaction

Fig 1: Impact of 4IR on a range of industries



costs, making certain areas of production cheaper and easier to 'offshore.' ADP technologies, on the other hand, allow for higher productivity and capacity utilization at home, diminishing the benefits of large-scale manufacturing previously associated with fragmented GVCs. This has already resulted in a minor but growing trend of 'outsourcing' production tasks.

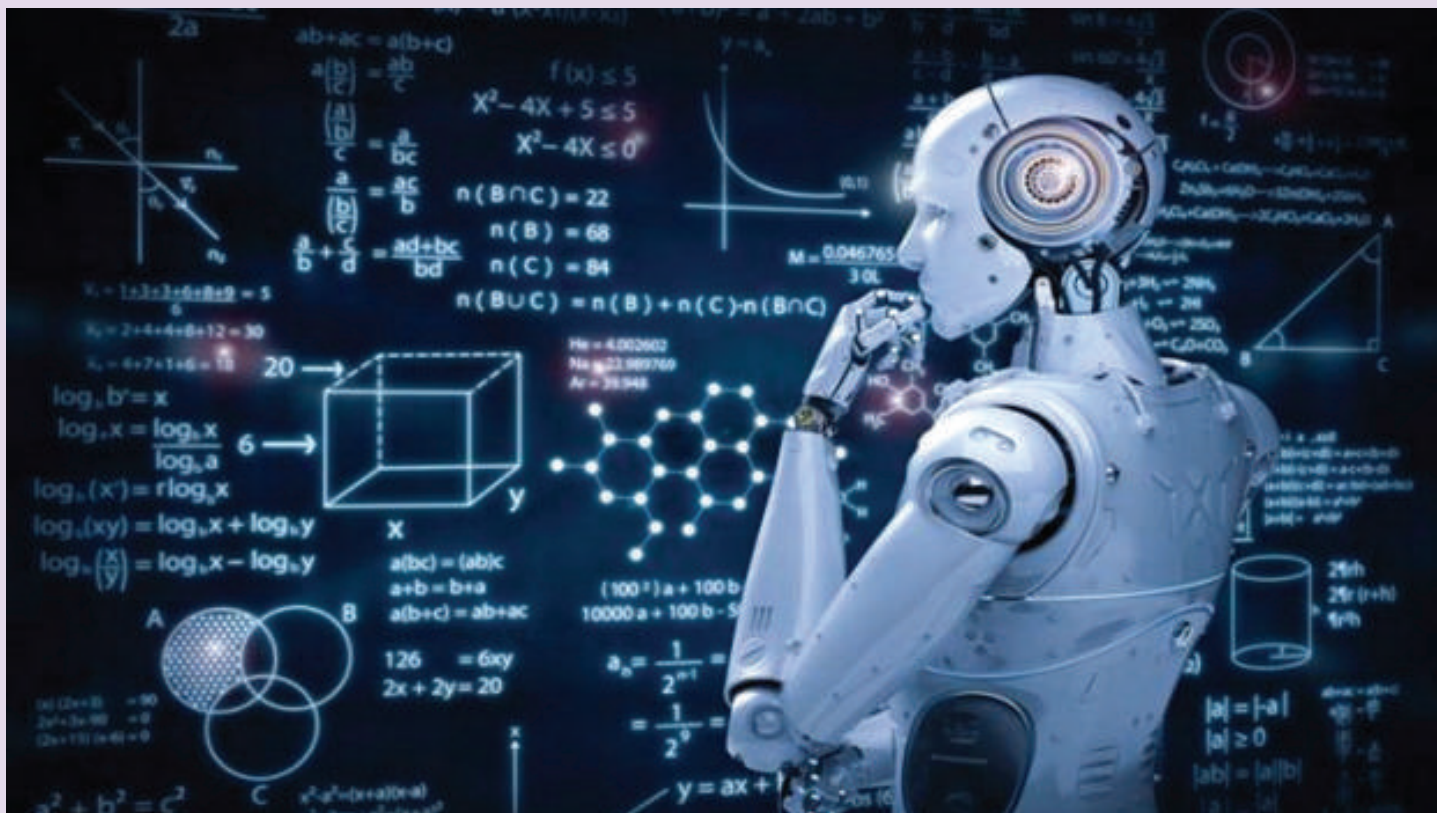
Bangladesh has taken all necessary steps to ensure that it would be ready for digital integration during or after the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Very recently Bangladesh has released a 5G network. In 2023, the third submarine cable will be installed, bringing superfast internet to even the most isolated places. To accommodate the first impact of 4-IR, the government of Bangladesh has built 39 high-tech parks and is pursuing and implementing some ground-breaking activities. Bangladesh has already earned the title of "Asian Tiger" thanks to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's foresight. The government's key services, such as land registration, birth registration, university admissions, and employment applications, are all delivered digitally to people's doorsteps. Bangladesh's mobile banking system has evolved dramatically

as a result of bKash. Now marginalized people can effortlessly transact money without even opening a bank account. Bangladesh's increasing digitalization, which includes simple internet access in urban areas and government and non-government programs to promote freelancing, has aided the recent expansion of this mode of labor. As a result, according to the Oxford Internet Institute (OII), Bangladesh has already surpassed India as the second-largest source of online labor. According to the ICT Division of Bangladesh, out of 650,000 registered freelancers in the country, about 500,000 active

freelancers work monthly, producing \$100 million annually. Computer programming, site design, tax preparation, and search engine optimization are all examples of freelancing jobs. This has resulted in a plethora of previously unknown options for people in emerging markets.

Bangladesh has numerous challenges as 4-IR becomes more integrated into our daily lives. The RMG industry, which is the country's largest source of foreign exchange, could face a major downturn. This entire industry has grown over the country's ability to provide cheap labor. As a result, clothing merchants and retailers all over the world outsourced their merchandise to Bangladeshi RMG facilities to be cut, sewn, folded, and packed before being delivered to their stores. Imagine a plant equipped with industrial robots capable of performing all of these activities without error or waste, at ten times the pace, and without the





need for human intervention. And RMG is not the only sector that's going to suffer due to the 4-IR, every industrial sector that the 4-IR, every industrial sector that depends largely on human intervention could suffer the same fate.

All of these cutting-edge technologies constitute a significant danger to the sector's massive unemployment. According to a study conducted by a2i, 60 percent of garment workers will be out of work by 2030. Not only will 4-IR technologies be able to replace manual labor, but they will also be able to replace many intellectual employees. Clerks, loan officers, insurance underwriters, paralegals, retail salespeople, and others may lose their jobs to clever robots, according to a Bloomberg article. Now the question is, whether our society is prepared to deal with the possibility of

mass unemployment? Do we have the appropriate practical strategies in place ahead of time?

The first step should be to retrain human resources, with superfluous personnel being taught new technology and capabilities. Factory owners may be subject to a sequenced transformation policy that prevents them from replacing their whole workforce with industrial robots all at once. The difficulty will be alleviated by a timely and reasonable phased automation policy. Regular and constant cooperation between academics and business will bridge the gap between knowledge and talent, allowing us to reap the demographic dividend, as the demands of 4IR's frontier technologies change rapidly.

Bangladeshi businesses can increase the value of their

products and services, create new revenue streams, reduce labor costs, and expand both local and global markets by using automated production, predictive, maintenance, connected machines, Big Data and AI, smart transportation systems, networked supply chains, production simulation, and other technologies. Bangladesh is one of the few Asian countries with a large population of young people. Nearly 65 percent of the 163 million inhabitants in the country are under the age of 25. This enormous, young, and strong human resource could be a huge asset if they are well equipped with the knowledge and skills they'll need to succeed in the fourth industrial revolution's competitive global market.

Rayhan Kawsar

Manager, Communications and Branding
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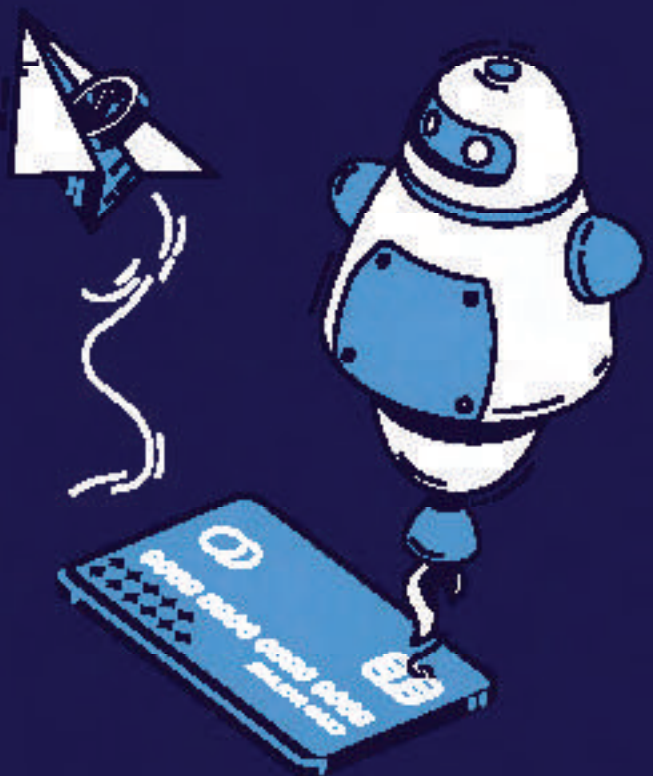


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TATMADAW'S RAPID EXPANSION: SHOULD BANGLADESH BE CONCERNED?

-Mohammad Shafiqul Islam

Myanmar military, known as the Tatmadaw, is quantitatively one of the biggest armed forces in Southeast Asia and has significant political influence in the country. But its capabilities have significantly lagged behind those of some of its neighbors. Till the late 1990s, Myanmar Navy was a riverine force with the principal role of transporting logistics in support of the Army in the counter-insurgency operations. Likewise, the Myanmar air force had a handful of Yugoslav Soko Galeb subsonic light attack jets.

Myanmar's army is battle-hardened through fighting



Jugoslav Soko Galeb

insurgencies over the past few decades. Under the leadership of Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, the military has sought

to further develop and modernize the institution. The services have seen advances in areas such as acquiring new weapons and building relationships with foreign militaries like Russia, China, and India.

The air force was supporting the land forces in its perennial counter-insurgency operations against half a dozen insurgent groups. It was around the mid-nineties that the Myanmar air force started receiving the supersonic fighters from China. But, within the last two decades, the Myanmar air force inducted a huge number of A-5 Fantan,



Mig - 29



Su - 30 SME

Changdou F-7 M Airguard and Pakistan-China jointly manufactured K-8 advance jet trainer from China and Squadrons of Mig-29s from Russia along with its maintenance and overhaul facilities set up in Myanmar. Lately, state of the art Russian Su-30 has been added to its fleet.

Myanmar air force capabilities are in the headlines with the commemoration of the MAF anniversary. The MAF held its 72nd-anniversary celebrations in a ceremony on December 15 at Meiktila Air Base. Myanmar AF commissioned new aircraft as part of the commemoration. Though the development was just the latest in a series of routine anniversaries held in the country, it nonetheless put the spotlight on developments within the service as well as the wider modernization underway.

As with some previous iterations, several top Myanmar military figures were present at the ceremony, including Myanmar military commander in chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing. And, notably, the ceremony also saw the

commissioning of a new batch of aircraft into the Myanmar air force. Min Aung Hlaing presided over the commissioning of aircraft that included JF-17 Thunder multirole fighter, Yakolev Yak-130 Mitten, advanced trainers/light attack aircraft, and Mil Mi-35P Hind helicopter gunships.

In terms of quantity, though, this represented one of the larger inductions of combat aircraft in the service over the past few years, similar to the number last reached in 2017. And in terms of type, the fact

that the sorts of equipment being inducted focused only on a narrower set of countries reflects the challenges that the Myanmar military has faced in broadening out its alignments amid issues it has faced on various counts including on human rights. In terms of significance, the development should be understood within the context of the Myanmar military's continued effort to boost its capabilities in the face of internal and external challenges and relative to other regional countries. Military spokesman Zaw Min Tun reflected this sense rather candidly when he framed the induction of aircraft in terms of being at par with international standards for a modern air force and as part of Naypyidaw effort to compete not with India or China, but with our three other neighbors Thailand, Laos, and Bangladesh in terms of aspects such as combat experience and assisting ground troops, according to The Irrawaddy.

To be sure, this event is just one of many that periodically spotlight Myanmar's ongoing



JF-17 Thunder Induction ceremony



Yak - 130 Mitten

military modernization and the development of its air force capabilities. Nonetheless, the commemoration of the 72nd anniversary was a reminder of the changes underway and the opportunities and challenges that remain for the Tatmadaw moving forward.

Since 2000, Myanmar Navy has been on a fast track with its expansion program. After the third Taiwan Strait crisis in 1996, China gave massive impetus to the PLA Navy's expansion program which coincidentally benefited the expansion program of the Myanmar navy.

Myanmar navy's expansion program initiated with Chinese funded 1.2 billion dollar Naval Shipyard project in 1999. China also provided technical support in building the shipyard and subsequent indigenous warship construction programs. A 400x120 meter dry dock having a 10-meter basin depth is being built on 60 acres of land beside

the shipyard. China is investing over USD 200 million in its construction. The dry dock will have the capacity to dock vessels of 20,000 DWT. It will be able to undertake the construction or repair four frigates simultaneously. The projected capacity of the dry dock seems to be far greater than Myanmar Navy's requirements. The maximum war shipbuilding capacity of the shipyard is 4,000 tons (135 meters long) ship. One 400 ton frigate (135 meters) is under construction in the shipyard. The frigate will have sixteen cells Vertical Launch Systems SAM besides advanced surface and sub-surface weapon systems. Myanmar Navy has plans to build six such ships by 2035. The first ship is likely to enter service in 2025. According to the media report, two newly built Russian submarines are likely to join the Myanmar navy by 2025, completing a fleet of four submarines. Myanmar's naval programs are much in excess compared to its

geo-maritime necessity.

Myanmar's maritime neighbors are Bangladesh, India, and Thailand. All three neighbors have delimited their respective maritime boundary with her. Myanmar also has land borders with all three of them and there is no dispute over land borders. It is contemplated that none of the neighbors are likely to pull Myanmar into armed conflict. On the contrary, Myanmar attempted to pull Bangladesh into a conflict while it was perpetrating genocidal crimes against Rohingyas in 2017.

Despite the burden of 1.1 million Rohingyas fleeing the atrocities inflicted by Myanmar, Bangladesh exercised maximum restraints and at the same time vigorously pursued their peaceful and dignified repatriation. Given the context, as of now, there is little scope of an armed conflict between Myanmar and its maritime neighbors but Bangladesh may not be able to hold on to such a stance for long into the future and an armed conflict may be the only discourse. Myanmar seemed to be advancing towards meeting that contingency. She embarked on the massive naval build-up in the guise of the China factor. Myanmar is the third-largest export market of Chinese weapons. Since 2013 Myanmar has imported USD 720 million worth of weapons from China.

China confronts powerful competitors from the Pacific and the Indian Ocean region as Chinese economic and military outreach widens beyond the South China Sea region. India's geophysical location offers a



Induction of MING class Submarine-Myanmar Navy

huge challenge to Chinese shipping passing over the Indian Ocean and the narrow waters of the Andaman Sea, the Malacca Strait, six-degree channel, and adjoining waters. To keep the 'Sea lines of national logistics' moving at a reduced dependence on narrow waters under Indian naval influence, China has opened China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC) to access the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean.

China-Myanmar political and military engagements seem to be shaping up into a kind of military alliance, much to the detriment of Bangladesh's security interests. A China seems to be readying a naval proxy in the Bay of Bengal for potential naval engagements in the event of wider conflict occurring at an uncertain point in time. Last but not the least,

the employment of 'proxy naval diplomacy' cannot be ignored to control geopolitical deviations occurring on the Bay of Bengal.

China sold two submarines to Bangladesh. Indian naval leadership was perturbed at Chinese submarine to sell to Bangladesh. Bangladesh is one of the top export markets of Chinese weapons. Between 2008 and 2018 China exported USD 1.93 billion worth of weapons to Bangladesh which was 72% of total military acquisition during that period. As a counter move, India sold a Kilo Class submarine to Myanmar. India is pursuing for some time to sell military hardware to Bangladesh under its USD 500 million credit line. It is not clear whether the addition of large quantities of Indian origin weapon inventory alongside Chinese inventory will make it an inventory balancing

the two rival powers. One point appears quite clear that both China and India view Bangladesh as a weapon export market, not a geostrategic partner or neighbor. Facts and figures reveal Indian and Chinese preferences for Myanmar over Bangladesh in their tactical and strategic play. Bangladesh is caught between the tides of a geostrategic power-play by her giant regional neighbors and gradually drifting into Geopolitical isolation. Rohingya crisis serves as an eye-opener for Bangladesh. She has no other option but to go it alone and look beyond the horizon in defending her national interest.

Air Commodore M Shafiqul Islam
ndc, AWC, psc, GD(p), (Retd)
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ROHINGYA REPATRIATION : SHROUDED IN GEOPOLITICAL OBSCURITY

-Mohammad Abdur Razzak



Rohingya Refugee

One week after the ouster of the NLD government, the media quoted the Myanmar military junta and the chief architect of the Rohingya massacre, saying, “Rohingya refugees who fled to Bangladesh during a 2017 crisis will continue to be repatriated to Rakhine state.” Approximately four months later, in an interview with Hong Kong-based Chinese language broadcaster Phoenix television, the military regime outright rejected the return of Rohingyas to their homeland. The interviewer asked the regime chief, whether the

Muslims [Rohingyas] could be allowed back to Rakhine State - from where most fled an army crackdown in 2017 that UN investigators said had genocidal intent. The coup leader replied, “If it doesn't comply with Myanmar's laws, what else is there to consider?” He also nodded to the interviewer’s comment that international appeals on behalf of the Rohingya were to no avail.

In the early stages of the crisis, China warned not to ‘complicate, expand or internationalize the Rohingya

issue’. China strongly advocated a bilateral solution to the crisis between Bangladesh and Myanmar and offered mediation. China as the patron of the Myanmar junta has the scope to play a great role in facilitating the repatriation of about a million world’s worst persecuted human beings and the initiative was laudable. However, on 10 May 2021, China’s ambassador in Dhaka told a press conference that he did not see any possibility of holding a tripartite meeting (Bangladesh-China-Myanmar) in the “foreseeable future” and has

no plan to hold such a meeting. Statements of both the Myanmar junta and China's ambassador in two weeks sound like ceasing the political solution to refugee repatriation.

Myanmar is divided. On one side is the military regime and on the other is the National Unity Government (NUG), Myanmar's parallel government in hiding. In the conundrum of refugee repatriation, the military coup on 1 February 2021 has given Myanmar politics a new shape further complicating the scope of repatriation. Myanmar is divided. On one side is the military regime and on the other is the National Unity Government (NUG), Myanmar's parallel government in hiding. They are fighting each other.

NUG's "Policy Position on the Rohingya in Rakhine State" clarifies its understanding of "the violence and gross human rights violations inflicted upon Rohingyas by the thuggish military....the entire people of Burma is sympathetic to the plight of the Rohingya as all now experience atrocities and



Rohingya Refugee

violence perpetrated by the military. Repatriation and Justice will be ensured in the future Federal Democratic Union Constitution". The NUG also commits to actively seek justice and accountability for all crimes against Rohingyas and other communities. The NUG also commits to change the controversial Citizenship Law 1982. "The new Citizenship Act must base citizenship on birth in Myanmar or birth anywhere as a child of Myanmar citizen." The NUG reaffirming to respect the agreement of repatriation process called upon Rohingyas to join hands with NUG and

"participate in the Spring Revolution against the military regime in all possible ways".

NUG's policy on Rohingya has angered the military regime and the Rakhine Buddhist community. After the NUG's call to participate in the Spring Revolution, the regime suspects Rohingya of possible collusion with NUG.

The All Arakanese Solidarity Committee (AASC), community leaders and politicians, and Arakan Liberation Party (ALP) mentioned in a statement that the NUG's policy does not represent the Rakhine people. Reactions to NUG's policy statement reflect Rakhine people's persistent hostile attitude toward Rohingya. However, UK-based Myanmar Rohingya Association Chairman U Tun Khin said, "I think Rakhine brothers have a little misunderstanding. We would like to hold talks with our Rakhine brothers as well as the NUG. This problem can be solved through negotiations between the NUG, Rakhine, and Rohingya. I think Rakhine people will understand when the time comes."



Rohingya refugees fleeing conflict and persecution in Myanmar



Slain Rohingya leader Mohib Ullah was buried in Lambashia camp-1 in Kutupalong refugee camp in Ukhiya Upazila on 30 September, 2021, UNB

Four years after the Tatmadaw's (Myanmar military) genocidal crimes against Rohingyas, ARSA (Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army) is again in the media after the killing of Rohingya leader Mohib Ullah on 29 September 2021. He was hoping for the refugees to return to their homeland. Mohib Ullah collected evidence of abuses against Rohingyas in Myanmar, including mass killings and gang rapes. He shared this with international investigators.

While the whole of Myanmar has risen against the military's coup, the Rakhine has been quiet. The military regime has signed a ceasefire agreement with Arakan Army (AA) and delisted it from the list of terrorist groups. The military regime on 9 June 2021 also acquitted ten people including the brother, sister, and brother-in-law of AA Chief of terrorism charges. Rakhine Buddhist community welcomed the decision to drop AA from the terror list.

Myanmar's deposed State Counsellor presented the ARSA story in the International Court of Justice in Hague, "several thousand ARSA fighters attacking more than 30 police posts and villages, and an army base in northern Rakhine was to seize Maungdaw township was responsible for the situation [Myanmar military's genocidal crimes]". I mentioned in an article: "The story of "several thousand ARSA fighters" is not convincing by any assessment. If "several thousand ARSA fighters" had taken part in the attack then its actual force strength should have been far more and it should have been a well-organized and strong insurgent group like those on Myanmar's eastern and northeastern borders. And such a large insurgent group would not 'bob up and disappear' overnight. What she could not tell the court in fear of 'guns smoking at home' that the ARSA drama was an enactment of the Tatmadaw to prevent



Rohingya Muslim refugees from Myanmar arriving at the Kutupalong refugee camp in southeastern Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar district



Rohingya refugee coming from Myanmar

communal reconciliation in Rakhine."

The ARSA incident of 25 August 2021 coincided with Kofi Anan Commission's final report released on 24 August 2021. Myanmar's Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) Senior General Min Aung Hlaing snubbed the

Commission during the meeting on 24 August 2021 for its "factually flawed and deficient report" and advised to re-examine the report for "factual errors and unfair.

The quadrilateral alignment between China, the military regime, the Rakhine

Buddhist community, and the AA has obscured refugee repatriation, at least in the near term. Lack of initiative from international communities in the East or West deepens the obscurity further.

Commodore Md. Abdur Razzak (Retd)
Security Analyst

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ANNE DE HENNING: THE LENSED LANCER OF 1971

-Lutfun Nahar Taposhi

Bangladesh's glorious liberation war in 1971 was a godsend for us, but our freedom came at a huge cost in terms of lives lost and untold misery. We gained our independence as a result of many sacrifices made by people from all walks of life in our country. It is the consequence of three million lives and an incalculable number of events. Apart from our indigenous freedom fighters, many peace-loving citizens from all over the world participated in Bangladesh's glorious war of independence, directly or indirectly. The news of the defenseless Bangladeshis' facing genocide, torture, and unilateral war was propagated through their pens, cameras, and through singing songs to inform people all over the world.

Photography is a universal language to depict the exact scenario of a certain moment. During the war of 1971, many young and aspiring international photographers, like their Bengali counterparts, documented the unseen agonies of the innocent Bengali people via their lenses. These brave souls were resolved to educate the rest of the world



Anne De Henning

about the Pakistani atrocities by going into the dangerous war zones thousands of kilometers away from their own homes. Raghu Rai, Kishor Parekh, and Bal Krishnan (Indians), Abbas (Iranian), Don McCullin and Marilyn Silverstone (English), Michel Laurent, Raymond Depardon, Marc Riboud, and Bruno Barbey (French), Horst Faas and Otto Bettmann (German), Mary Ellen Mark, David Burnett, and Mark Godfrey (American) were among the photojournalists who later

became internationally acclaimed photographers. But today we are going to focus on a particular brave French young photojournalist whose involvement in the war of 1971 was so intense and memorable. This is a tribute to Mademoiselle Anne De Henning, the lensed lancer of 1971.

In 1945, Anne de Henning was born in France. She began traveling in Europe and the United States as a child and grew up in a household that was quite open-minded, believing that the world was bigger than France. Many of her ancestors and relatives had immigrated to France from different European countries, including her Polish father. Reading books and publications allowed her to expand her knowledge of the world. In her autobiography, she said that she still possesses rip pages of Paris Match, the French version of LIFE magazine, which includes comprehensive color coverage on world sites and key political events. A double spread of a massive gathering of Soviet apparatchiks watching a mammoth march file on the Red Square from the Kremlin to



Anne De Henning with the Freedom seeking people at Kustia, April, 1971.

commemorate the October Revolution was one feature she vividly remembered. Images of the horrific Soviet repression of the 1956 Hungarian uprising were even more startling. "This is how I first became interested in photography," she remarked.

She worked as a press attaché for Madame Grès, a leading French fashion designer known for her elegantly draped evening gowns, in 1967 and 1968. But she couldn't stand being in such a relaxing environment. This is when she determined to pursue a career as a photographer, travel to Asia, and document the Vietnam War. She spent three months in a studio learning processing and printing after studying photography books and periodicals to refine her eye. She bought two cameras, one for color and the other for black and white photography, and took a train to Moscow in late February 1969. She traveled to the eastern shore of Siberia via the Trans-Mongolian and Trans-Siberian railways from Moscow.

She started as a photojournalist

in the late 60's. She left Paris in 1968 to join the US Army's coverage of the Vietnam War and, subsequently, the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971. Henning covered the war zones in Asia, as well as the lives of many tribes in Thailand, Laos, and Borneo, as a solitary wanderer. She's traveled extensively around the Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East. Foreign journalists were denied entry into what was then East Pakistan by Pakistani soldiers during the Liberation War. The goal was to keep the journalist from

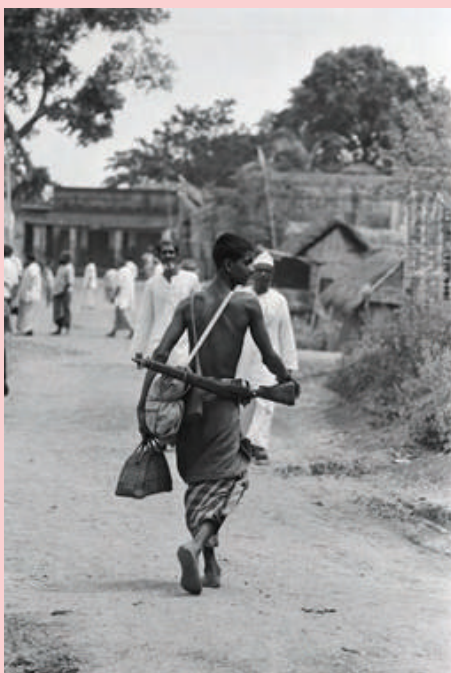
reporting on the systematic genocide perpetrated by Pakistani forces against freedom-seeking Bengalis. That wasn't enough to deter Anne from traveling to Bangladesh and capturing the truth through her lenses.

Henning visited Bangladesh in secret and documented life in the conflict zone, from independence fighters to men, women, and children boarding refugee trains and fleeing communities. With the harshness of traditional photography, she vividly caught the subjects' humanity as well. Remembering her first encounter with the freedom fighters, she said, "I saw a handful of young MuktiBahinis stepping out of their makeshift observation post flanked by a tall bamboo pole flying the green, red and yellow Bangladesh flag. They greeted me by saying with a broad smile: 'You are now in free Bangladesh!'" It was indeed a truly remarkable moment of her entire life, she added.

In 1972, Henning made her



A mother and children prepare to board a refugee train in Kumarkhali, 1971 (Photograph by Anne De Henning)



A member of the Mukti Bahini, a Bangladesh guerrilla resistance movement, with a 303 Lee-Enfield rifle slung over his shoulder in Kushtia, April 1971 (Photograph by Anne De Henning)

second trip to Bangladesh. During her tour, she followed Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Bangladesh's founding father, who dedicated his life to freeing Bengalis from British and Pakistani rule. Henning recorded Bangabandhu giving a speech at the Awami League's first council meeting following independence. While recalling her first impression of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Anne said, **"The first time I was there was in April 1971. I later returned to the country in April 1972. I watched Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I couldn't understand the language but I was struck by the intensity of his speech."** Following the 1975 coup, many photographs of Bangabandhu were systematically destroyed. The color images by Henning are among the few known to still exist.

The Samdani Art Foundation

and the Centre for Research and Information (CRI) held a one-of-a-kind solo photographic exhibition titled "Witnessing History in the Making: Photographs by Anne de Henning" at the National Art Gallery, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, from December 10 to 31, 2021. The exhibition, curated by Ruxmini Reckvana Q Choudhury, features Henning's historical photographs taken between the 1971 Liberation War when she witnessed the liberation of East Pakistan and the birth of Bangladesh – and her second visit in 1972, when she photographed Bangabandhu giving a speech at the first Awami League Council Meeting after Bangladesh's independence.



Anne De Henning, a French Photographer, showcases Bangladesh's freedom struggle

KM Khalid, State Minister for the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, launched the exhibition as the primary guest at the inaugural and said, "Through the historic work of renowned photographer Anne de Henning, this one-of-a-kind exhibition in the month of victory has highlighted our magnificent Liberation War. Her incredible trove of

previously unseen images is a one-of-a-kind chronicle of the key years that saw East Pakistan change into Bangladesh, as well as a fresh perspective on Bangabandhu and the people of Bangladesh, which we are pleased to witness today."

Nasrul Hamid, State Minister for the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources and also a Trustee of CRI, reinforced the statement, saying that Anna de Henning's heroism in collecting images during Bangladesh's Liberation War is unparalleled. "During that critical time, she put her life on the line to bring attention to our Liberation War and to chronicle our freedom via her lens. Her brave and humanitarian efforts must be

remembered and maintained for future generations through endeavors like this. "According to Nadia Samdani, President of the Samdani Art Foundation, this show is not only a tribute to the great photographer, but it also aims to enthuse future generations about the birth of Bangladesh through the heroic



Civilians and members of the provincial assembly of Rajbari stand ready to fight with bows and arrows in Pangsha, 9 April 1971 (Photograph by Anne De Henning)

1971 Liberation War, which Henning had skillfully captured.

We salute you from the deepest corner of our heart, Anne De Henning, the Parisian

photo warrior for standing beside us in the time of needs.

Lutfun Nahar Taposhi

Creative Editor
Diplomats Publication

*“The first time I was there was in April 1971.
I later returned to the country in April 1972.
I watched Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
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