



FROM MUJIB TO HASINA

AWAMI LEAGUE ON THE
INTERNATIONAL ARENA

From Mujib to Hasina
●
Awami League in the International Arena

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After centuries of colonial control, it is the Awami League that played the leading role in achieving the independence of Bangladesh. Hence, the foreign policy of Bangladesh during independence and after its birth was within the purview of AL's political leadership. Like every other country, Bangladesh had to consider the international political environment while implementing its foreign policies. "Given its leadership role in the birth of Bangladesh, AL's foreign policy and the official foreign policy of the state of Bangladesh are often indistinguishable.

Throughout its brief history, Bangladesh's foreign policy has been impacted by two individuals the most: First, the Father of the Nation and architect of Bangladesh's independence movement, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman; and Second, his daughter and the current Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina. This booklet will look at the foreign policy, diplomacy and international affairs under these two remarkable leaders. Throughout the political career of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, we saw him creating distinct policies to deal with external relations. Given the negative impact of centuries old colonial exploitation, Bangladesh was inherited with oversized population and lack of infrastructure structure coupled with the damages of Liberation war. But, there was this natural power of resilience in the Bangladesh's soil. Despite the periodical threats of natural disasters like cyclone, flood and over population, Bangladesh always found its way to survive, adopt, overcome and flourish.

Similarly, in the political careers of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Sheikh Hasina, we see their resilience as they successfully executed foreign policies at every level of politics in an ever-changing world order. During the bipolar world order of cold war, Bangabandhu carried out an independent foreign policy and successfully defended rights and privileges of Bangladesh. Similarly his daughter Sheikh Hasina successfully dealt challenges of socio- economic development in Post Cold War period during her first term in office. As of current post 9/11 period, she is tackling threats of terrorism as the most successful leader by upholding principles and values upon which Bangladesh's foreign policy was built.

EVOLUTION OF FOREIGN POLICY



The evolution of International political environment and Bangladesh Awami League's foreign policy went in parallel. As the global political landscape changed, Awami League also adopted necessary changes to deal with the issues. along with diplomatic successes can be described in three phases as follows:

01

Foreign Policy
Under Bangabandhu

The first phase of foreign policy commenced on April 10, 1971 after formation of the Mujibnagar Government which was then shaped and eloquently articulated after 16 December 1971

under the able leadership of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Following the assassination of Bangabandhu and most of his family members on 15 August 1975, the country's foreign policy lacked a coherent direction.

02

Foreign Policy
Under Sheikh Hasina

The second phase began after June 1996 once AL came back to power again and formed the government under the able leadership of Sheikh Hasina. Her regime was then engaged in resetting and balancing foreign policy with neighbors, including economic and military powers. However, the pragmatic direction of the policy was reversed again in 2001 after a rigged election whereby AL was kept out of power till 2008.

03

Foreign Policy
Under Sheikh Hasina

The third phase began thereafter under the statesmanship of Sheikh Hasina which followed the strategies adopted by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib and her pragmatic direction of policy has continued to date with some nuances and variations, depending on the changing global power structure. This era of diplomacy has been marked by a level of importance that was hitherto unknown to Bangladesh as a country, principally as a result of the bold leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

A portrait of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the first Prime Minister of Bangladesh, is shown in a circular frame. He is wearing a dark suit and has a mustache. The background behind him is a large, textured red circle. The overall background of the page is a dark green with a subtle pattern.

FOREIGN POLICY UNDER BANGABANDHU

During the Cold War, world order was divided into two camps. For the two super powers, it was “Zero Sum game”, which means when a state becomes ally with one camp, it automatically become an adversary to other. Pakistan was an important ally to the United States in its quest to stop spreading Socialism in South Asia. Although India was leading a third camp of Non Aligned Movements, but had friendly ties with Soviet Union. Bangabandhu calculated the situation with true wisdom. Holding the belief that Justice is best policy, he relied on the truth claim of Bangladeshi people suffering of brutality by West Pakistani military to be condemned by world population. Choosing to be with the true force later certainly paid off well.

His accuracy in understanding foreign policy revealed as Bangladesh successfully won the war and gained independence. Bangabandhu uniquely but justly refused to play according to the contentious bipolar global political order of enmity between Two camps and chose to facilitate a culture of peace. Bangladesh forwarded hand of friendship to the states which opposed our statehood and soon all recognized Bangladesh as a state. This was significant in the diplomatic history. Bangabandhu first assessed the global politics. Instead of seeking prior arrangements with superpowers, he acted independently and waited to see the response of world. Once Bangladesh succeeded then based on the principal of Balance of power, he created a distinguish position for Bangladesh. This indeed imitates Bangladesh’s resilience against odds, be it natural or political. Following chapter will discuss foreign policy established under the leadership of Bangabandhu with specific reference to the events in three timeline and levels. First, foreign policy assessment before the liberation war, Second, foreign policy impact during the liberation war, Thirdly, foreign policy adopted after the inception of Bangladesh in Global- inter regional and regional level.

After winning the election in 1970, Bangabandhu went on to try to understand the major external powers' potential responses to a unilateral declaration of independence, as it was becoming increasingly clear that the ruling Junta from West Pakistan led by Yahya Khan was not going to concede to the demand of autonomy and was likely to attempt to suppress it with military force instead. Bangabandhu had asked his confidantes to assess the stance of the major external powers in performing this task. Subsequently, he was advised that, given the existing global power situation the major external powers were not likely to support, and indeed were likely to oppose, the emergence of an independent Bangladesh. This assessment was based not only on the known positions of the powers but in some cases was confirmed in meetings with their diplomatic representatives. In fact, in March 1971 the US Ambassador, Joseph Farland, had conveyed to Bangabandhu in clear terms that USA was opposed to an independent Bangladesh.

The stance of the then Soviet Union was not clear either. The only direct contact with a Soviet diplomat by the party leadership was when Popov, the Soviet Consul General in Dhaka, called on Bangabandhu on the night of 24 March to deliver a copy of the message the Soviet leadership had sent to Islamabad urging that a political solution be reached without any bloodshed. India's position had not been obvious either before 25 March, 1971. In fact, it took weeks after massive exodus of Bangladeshi people to India before the Indian government decided to extend political and military support to aid the objective of a sovereign and independent Bangladesh.

Bangabandhu's assessment, made in March 1971, that most of the foreign powers were against the emergence of an independent and sovereign Bangladesh at the time had proved to be substantially accurate. In reality, the exodus of ten million people to India and the brutality of the Pakistani army attracted external support and helped the Mujibnagar Government to inform the world that there was no alternative to an independent Bangladesh. Appeals had been made on behalf of the Bengali people to the UN and to the rest of the world, but the UN's response was minimal and focused mostly on the "rehabilitation of the refugees".



02

During Liberation War Foreign Policy

The first government, which was in exile in India at the time, strived to develop international opinion in Bangladesh's favor and this was augmented as many of the Bengali diplomats stationed in Pakistani missions switched their allegiance to the Mujibnagar Government. The provisional government placed the entire diplomatic efforts in the hands of Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury, a highly esteemed and well-respected personality, to mobilize the world opinion in Bangladesh's favor.

However, the global power politics was such that India and the Soviet Union with its allies lent their support to the people of Bangladesh in the Liberation War, while China and the Nixon administration in the US supported Pakistan. Naturally, the provisional government had no other option but to align with India and the Soviet Union and its allies in Eastern European countries. However, people across the globe, including their legislators and press, had expressed support even when their administrations tilted in favor of Pakistan, as was the case with the USA and its Western allies. The situation had an obvious impact on the foreign policy of the country that was emerging.

03

Post Independence Foreign Policy

The first principle, as devised by Bangabandhu, was that Bangladesh's foreign policy should be independent and non-aligned; in simple terms: friendship to all, malice to none. This was an ideology adopted by great leaders alike in different time and space. Turkey's father of Nation Mustafa Kemal Ataturk also had similar approach while setting up Turkish foreign policy.



8th January 1972, London, England
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

Bangabandhu had identified four main diplomatic goals under foreign policy for the newly independent Republic of Bangladesh: (a) the repatriation of the Bengali civilians and military officials held in Pakistani camps to Bangladesh (b) recognition of Bangladesh from foreign states (c) admission into the UN and (d) the trial of the 195 Pakistani military prisoners of war who had committed genocide and crimes against humanity on the Bengali population.

Except for the trial of Pakistani military officials, which could not take place as a result of Pakistan renegeing on its promise to try them in its own courts, Bangladesh under Bangabandhu's able leadership, steadily and patiently pursued pragmatic policies to integrate the country within the international community as an equal counterpart. With the admission of Bangladesh into the UN in September 1974, Bangabandhu had succeeded his goal of putting the country on the international stage. Pakistan eventually recognized Bangladesh in February, 1974.

04

At the Global Level

While Bangladesh's priority was to deal with the destruction caused in Bangladesh during the war, there was also an urgent need to establish Bangladesh in the comity of nations. This involved gaining recognition from states and establishing diplomatic relations with them. Simultaneously, it was pivotal for the country to complete the formalities of placing Bangladesh in different international organizations.

Given the opposition of USA and Middle Eastern nations and Indo-Soviet support during our liberation war. It had a significant impact on Bangladesh's foreign policy after independence. Relations with India and the Soviet Union became more consolidated with the passing of each day after independence. Immediately after

the birth of the country, Bangladesh sent its Ambassadors to India, the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) and Yugoslavia, reflecting Bangladesh's close ties to these countries.

Bangabandhu understood the importance of the balance of power and hence, was keen to develop friendly relations with the USA. In January 1972, he granted full diplomatic status to the US Consul General who was stationed in Dhaka even though the US had not recognized Bangladesh at that time. The USA recognized Bangladesh in April, 1972. His visit to Washington in September, 1974 sent a strong message to the world that Bangladesh was serious about its ties to the USA.

This master stroke to place Bangladesh into the International Relations milieu as an independent and firm state was well received. Even though readers of global politics would find it surprising, But Bangabandhu earned massive respect for taking unique position. This was recognized while from January 1972 to July 1975, Bangladesh received more than a hundred delegations including about fifty VVIPs. During this short time, Bangladesh signed more than seventy treaties, agreements, memorandums and contracts with countries all over the world. Many countries and organizations like India, USSR, Sweden, Germany, USA, IDA, Japan, Poland, UK, Canada, Denmark, Australia, France, UAE, Qatar, Bulgaria, Belgium, Algeria, Netherlands, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN, WFP and more, provided billions of dollars in credit, grant, aid, soft loan, assistance and donation.

05

At the Inter Regional Level

While dealing with the super powers for creating comfort zone for Bangladesh at global level, Bangabandhu then looked at the neighboring regions of South Asia. Namely Middle East which

was by and large opposing Bangladesh during liberation war was then turned into friends. This move gave Bangladesh an official recognition of Diplomatic success and feeling of acceptance to its people.

Non Aligned Movement and OIC: His attendance at the Non-Aligned Conference in September 1973 in Algiers and his participation in the Islamic Conference in Lahore (Pakistan) in March 1974 was motivated by his desire to widen and broaden relationships with other developing countries including Islamic nations.

East Asia: The construction of a 3-mile long bridge over Jamuna was also agreed upon as selected by Japan and Bangladesh during his tenure and Bangladesh enjoyed all of these successes because of the political and economic diplomacy of Bangladesh led by Bangabandhu.

06

At the Regional Level

Bangladesh is located in South Asia, so Bangabandhu recognised the importance of focusing his diplomatic relations to create an environment friendly to Bangladesh in its immediate vicinity. That's why he has taken some steps which later proved to be very successful.

Setting up a culture of Peace: Bangabandhu, at his first press conference in London on January 8, 1972, thanked all the states and the people who supported the liberation of Bangladesh and provided an orientation which would seek balanced relations with all the countries. In his first press conference in Dhaka, on 13 January 1972, he declared that Bangladesh would be the "Switzerland of the East" and by this declaration he meant that Bangladesh would steer clear from the Cold War and would remain non-partisan in the tug of war between the US and the Soviet Union. Given the diplomatic background of pre Independence, there were speculation that



Bangladesh might join Socialist camp and thus Cold war might enter the ground of South Asia. Bangabandhu rejected such binary choice and opted to set up a culture of Peace for the region.

Withdrawal of Indian Army: When Bangabandhu went to Kolkata on 6 February of 1972, the then Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi received him at the Domdom Airport. During his visit, it was decided that India would withdraw its army from Bangladesh by March, 1972. Accordingly, on 1st March, India declared withdrawal of its army from Bangladesh and the withdrawal was completed on 15 March 1972. This was the first time in history that repatriation of an army from a second country was possible and this was only made possible because of Bangabandhu's prudent diplomacy.

Diplomatic recognition: For the emergence of a state, there are several criteria needed to meet but the most important is Diplomatic recognition. There are many states who couldn't receive diplomatic recognition many years after independence. But Bangladesh, under the leadership of Bangabandhu and his justice based foreign policy proved to be a unique case. We gained world recognition from members of different political ideologies influences by the Cold War within a short period of time.

Bhutan was the first country to recognize Bangladesh on December 6, 1971 and India followed suit on the same day. By September 1973, more than 100 countries had recognized Bangladesh. It had become a full member of the Commonwealth, the Non-Aligned Movement and of most of the organizations within the UN family. This had only been made possible under the leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Indo Bangladesh Friendship Treaty: After the demolition of Federation of Pakistan, South Asian

regional political stability was under threat of new enmity. In order to calm down the tension and blocking chances of spreading new conflict, Bangabandhu entered into a treaty with India in a manner which was similarly adopted by several other South Asian states. Also known as the Indira-Mujib Treaty, the Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi signed the Indo-Bangladesh Friendship Treaty upon her visit to Bangladesh on 17 March, 1972. The two Prime Ministers signed a 25-year Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Peace on 19 March in a show of commitment to provide mutual defense consultations for both the countries.



JUSTICE IN FOREIGN POLICY

Justice was an integral consideration for Bangabandhu when delineating foreign policy for Bangladesh. He never stood silent if there was any injustice and exploitation at any place against any person irrespective of caste or creed. He was a world leader by birth who always spoke for the oppressed people. Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro compared Bangabandhu to the Himalayas. He stood against the apartheid in Africa, the foreign occupation in Asia, Africa and Latin America and expressed his solidarity with the people of Palestine. He also condemned the overthrowing of the democratically elected Government of Cyprus and in July 1973, Bangabandhu condemned Portugal's atrocities in Mozambique.

03 Awards and accolades

Among the many accolades recognizing the efforts and sacrifices made by Bangabandhu in empowering a nation of people emerging from the ashes of war during his short-lived tenure ending in his brutal murder, a few of the notable ones include the Peace Medal to Bangabandhu on 23 November 1972 by the Patrice Lumumba University of USSR, the Vietnam Peace Accord hailed by Bangabandhu on 24 January, 1973 and the Juliet Curie Gold Medal for Peace given by the World Peace Council during its 3-day Asian Conference in May in Dhaka.



FOREIGN POLICY UNDER SHEIKH HASINA



Sheikh Hasina has continued to implement the same foreign policy developed by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and built it upon as per the demands of the changing times. If her three premierships between 1996 and 2018 are analysed, it becomes clear that Sheikh Hasina's diplomatic and international attention has focused on resolving long standing bilateral disputes amicably through negotiated settlements and alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms such as international arbitration, bringing about peace at home, working for peace abroad both through leadership and via the Bangladeshi peacekeepers, bringing the country's legal and political culture within the ambit of international human rights mechanisms, providing leadership on such crucial issues of our time as terrorism and violent extremism, migration, climate change, water, women empowerment, education, information technology, bolstering regional cooperation and connectivity, bringing national plans and policies in line with global development goals and achieving them and so on.

Sheikh Hasina first served as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh from 1996 to 2001. During this time, apart from overseeing an era of unprecedented economic, social and human development domestically, Sheikh Hasina struck a number of diplomatic breakthroughs in complex and unresolved issues and brought Bangladesh into a positive international limelight through demonstrating her strong statesmanship in a number of areas. She continued this trend and further elevated her and the party's international profile in her second and third terms as Prime Minister of Bangladesh from 2009 and onwards. Some of her major diplomatic and international efforts and successes include:

Land Boundary Agreement with India



Due to the determined focus of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, one of the most perplex and longstanding border issues in the world was brought to a successful resolution in 2015 through the signing and implementation of the 'Land Boundary Agreement' (LBA) between Bangladesh and India. Although originally signed in 1974, it was during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bangladesh during June 6-7, 2015 that the 2011 Protocol and Instruments of ratification were exchanged. As a result, residents of 111 Indian enclaves in Bangladesh and 51 Bangladeshi enclaves in India have been exchanged and enclave residents on both sides of the border can now, for the first time, enjoy the benefits of nationality of India or Bangladesh, as the case may be. It was a watershed moment on the morning of 1 August, 2015 as the 68 years of stateless existence for over 51,000 enclave dwellers ended with hopes of a new beginning.

"Zero Tolerance" to Terrorism and Militancy



Sheikh Hasina and Bangladesh Awami League are now recognized worldwide for their 'zero tolerance' towards terrorism, violent extremism and militancy. As a result, she herself has been the target of multiple assassination attempts by these groups, the most notable of which was the 21st August, 2004 grenade attack on an Awami League rally by the banned terrorist group Harkat-ul-Jihad. But such attempts have not deterred her.

Determined not to let Bangladeshi soil be used for launching militant attacks on neighbouring countries, or the country become a safe haven for domestic, regional and international terrorist groups, since 2009, strict security, legal and administrative measures by the Awami League Government have resulted in continued success in the war against terrorism and violent extremism. Following the July 1, 2016 terrorist

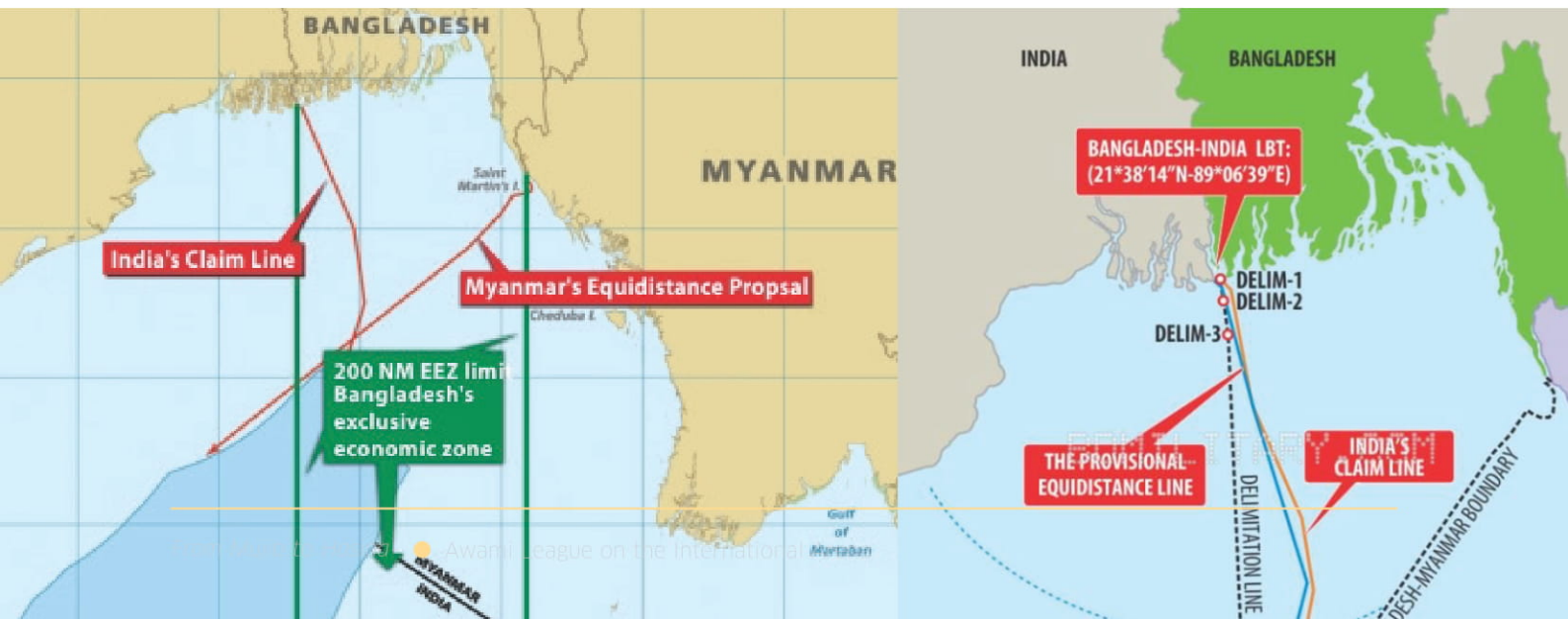
attack in Dhaka, existing efforts to counter and prevent terrorism and violent extremism were amplified. As a result, since then, multiple new terrorist groups have been banned, their networks dismantled, numerous prosecutions have been launched and convictions secured, several major raids resulted in the death or apprehension of high profile targets, and there has not been any recurrence of any major terrorist attack or activity.

The comprehensive annual US State Department Country Reports on Terrorism has consistently praised Sheikh Hasina's Government in Bangladesh for its successes and efforts in combatting the fight against terrorists and violent extremists. Due to the global nature of the threat, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Government has been working with its partners abroad on an international, regional as well as at bilateral levels, including in areas such as legal and judicial frameworks, intelligence sharing and capacity enhancing. Bangladesh's successes in tackling terrorism financing and money laundering have also received international applaud.

Maritime Boundary Victories

By successfully arguing its case in the Hague-based Permanent Court of Arbitration in 2015, Bangladesh settled its longstanding maritime boundary dispute with India, and in the process secured 19,467 square kilometres out of 25,602 sq. km of disputed area in the Bay of Bengal. In 2012, Bangladesh successfully argued its case in the International Tribunal for the Law of the Seas (ITLOS) in Hamburg, Germany, which gave its judgment on the maritime boundary dispute between Bangladesh and Myanmar. As a result, Bangladesh received an additional 111,000 square kilometres of new marine area. This successful strategy of using international institutions for resolving bilateral disputes was the brainchild of Sheikh Hasina.

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Ganges Water Sharing Treaty



On December 12, 1996 in the Indian capital of New Delhi, a comprehensive bilateral treaty was signed by the then Indian Prime Minister H. D. Deve Gowda and the Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina regarding the sharing of the Ganges River water. The treaty established a 30-year water-sharing arrangement and recognized Bangladesh's rights as a lower-level riparian country. This was a successful bilateral diplomatic move as the issue had been in limbo since 1982 for almost 14 years.

Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord

Sheikh Hasina's leadership made possible a peace agreement in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, thereby solving the 23-year old insurgency in the hill districts of Bangladesh. This peace accord brought an area inhabited by nearly 5 million people out of violence and into a time of peace and development, following the complete surrender of arms by the insurgents. What was amazing about this feat was that it was brought about by the sole efforts of the Awami League Government of that time and the insurgent groups without any foreign or outside mediation or intervention.



Human Rights



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has, all through her life, defended human rights. Her active promotion of the rights of women and children has drawn appreciation by foreign governments and NGOs as well as international organizations. She has promoted the right to development as having centrality in the human rights regime. After coming back to power in 2009, she enacted the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Act 2009 and reconstituted the NHRC which has been working to promote human rights in Bangladesh ever since. During her tenure as Prime Minister from 1996-2001, she headed Bangladesh's accession to six major human rights instruments including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In 1999, under her leadership Bangladesh became the first South Asian country to sign the Rome Statute, the International Criminal Court's founding treaty. Bangladesh also actively took part in drafting the ICC treaty. Furthermore, under Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's leadership, Bangladesh ratified the Anti-Landmines Treaty before any other South Asian nation had done so.

Culture of Peace



Sheikh Hasina has been a strong advocate for the Culture of Peace at global, regional and national levels both as a politician and as a statesman. In many major conferences, she espoused the concept of the Culture of Peace. Her initiative resulted in the first-ever resolution by the Plenary of the United Nations General Assembly on the Culture of Peace in 1999. After Bangladesh introduced the resolution on "Culture of Peace" in 1999, 2001-2010 was observed across the world as a "The International Decade for Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World". Since then, every year, the United Nations adopts this resolution almost unanimously. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's emphasis on peace resulted in the hosting of the first-ever conference of the Asian Parliamentarians devoted to peace and cooperation in Dhaka in September 1999, which elected her the first President of the Association of Asian Parliamentarians for Peace established at the conference.

UN Peacekeeping



Under Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's leadership, which is focused on ensuring peace and stability, not only at home but also elsewhere around the world, the Bangladeshi Armed Forces have become one of the leading troops contributing country to the United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping Missions. As of 31 March 2018, Bangladesh is the second highest contributing country to such missions with 7,007 police, troops and military experts. Under the Awami League Government, Bangladesh is also breaking new grounds in peacekeeping by contributing the highest number of female police officials, sending the first women-only contingent to a conflict ridden part of the world and also being the first country to appoint a woman as a commander of a peacekeeping contingent. In recent times, the Government has also invested heavily in upgrading arms, ammunitions, equipment and other logistics for the Bangladeshi peacekeepers.

Regional Cooperation



Under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh has in recent years, given special importance to enhancing regional connectivity and cooperation. Bangladesh is actively helping in the realization of the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) Economic Corridor, part of what is known as the "New Silk Route", which promises multifaceted economic gains for all four countries involved. During the landmark visit of President Xi Jinping to Dhaka in October, 2016 Bangladesh formally joined this initiative. To ensure uninterrupted flow of development finance, Bangladesh also officially became a founding member of the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) in March, 2015.

With Japan, Bangladesh is actively exploring the prospects of the Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt (BIG-B) initiative which aims to shape a value chain hub for South and Southeast Asia. Bangladesh is also playing a leading role in the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC),

which groups together Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan in a forum for multilateral cooperation. Since 2014, the secretariat for this group has been hosted in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is also continuing to play an active role in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and in 2014, played a key role in the finalization of the SAARC Framework Agreement for Energy Cooperation during the 18th Summit held in Kathmandu, Nepal. Sheikh Hasina played a crucial role in the signing of the landmark Motor Vehicle Agreement (MVA) between Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal

(BBIN) in June 2015 to ensure free movement of goods and vehicles between these four countries.

Bangladesh is closely working to 'intensify' its political, economic and cultural connectivity to the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and has expressed its interest to be a 'dialogue partner' to this multi-national cooperation initiative. Bangladesh is also working closely with the multinational bloc BRICS (made up of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Asia) and the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina attended the BRIC-BIMSTEC Leaders' Outreach Summit held at Goa, India in October, 2016.



SHEIKH HASINA'S GLOBAL LEADERSHIP



Humanitarian Role for Rohingyas

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been widely praised internationally in recent times for the strong humanitarian leadership she has demonstrated in sheltering more than a million forcibly displaced Rohingyas who fled violence in Myanmar. While the burden to provide refuge to a million people continues to pose a great challenge to a developing country like Bangladesh, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's humanitarian response has been to stand by these persecuted people. Since August 2017, the Awami League Government has been providing food, shelter, healthcare, clean water, basic education and other necessary services to the million Rohingyas in the camps of Cox's Bazaar. Currently, the Awami League Government is continuing to advocate for safe, dignified and sustainable return of the Rohingyas to their homeland in Myanmar, both through bilateral diplomatic efforts with Myanmar as well as in partnership with other countries and relevant international organizations, such as the United Nations.

Global Development Goals

Bangladesh was one of the few countries which demonstrated outstanding success in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Unsurprisingly, the country and its leader Sheikh Hasina have won a number of international awards in recognition of such successes. By the end of 2015, when the 15-years deadline for the MDGs came to an end, Bangladesh was on the right track in achieving most of the MDGs targets. Bangladesh met six out of eight global aspirations under the MDGs and made significant progress in respect of the other two. Bangladesh met several targets of the MDGs like reducing headcount poverty and poverty gap ratio, attaining gender parity at primary and secondary education, reducing under five mortality rate, containing HIV infection, children under five sleeping under insecticide treated bed nets, detection and cure rate of TB and others.

The country also saw remarkable progress in reducing the prevalence of underweight children, increasing enrolment at primary schools,



THE GLOBAL GOALS For Sustainable Development



lowering the infant mortality rate and maternal mortality ratio, improving immunization coverage and reducing the incidence of communicable diseases. Bangladesh is also progressing fast in regard to hunger-poverty reduction, employment generation, increasing primary school completion and adult literacy rates, creation of decent wage employment for women, increasing presence of skilled health professionals at delivery, increase in correct and comprehensive knowledge on HIV/AIDS, increase in forest coverage, and coverage of ICT.

As a result of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's experience with setting and achieving development goals, she was personally consulted by the UN Secretary General BanKi-moon in the formulation of the next set of goals, that is, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) for the 2015-2030 era. Prime Minister Hasina is one of the few world leaders in power who was present during the meeting that finalized the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Presently, Bangladesh is working towards achieving the next set of global development goals, the SDGs. To that end, Bangladesh's current five-year development plan, the Seventh Five Year Plan 2016-2020, has been drafted to bring the domestic development targets in line with the global development goals.

Climate Change

Bangladesh is a country which stands to lose the most due to the adverse impacts of climate change. Keeping this in mind, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in recent years has been a vociferous proponent of taking concrete international actions to guard against such effects. In the international arena, she has been advocating on behalf of the most vulnerable countries to the developed nations for extending the help and resources promised, including technological assistance. Bangladesh was also instrumental in the international negotiations leading up to the climate change agreement during COP21 in Paris in 2015. In September 2016, Bangladesh became one of the first countries in the world to ratify the Paris climate change agreement.

Previously, Bangladesh played a prominent role in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 adopted at the Third UN World Conference in Sendai, Japan, in March of 2015. Under Sheikh Hasina's leadership, Bangladesh became part of the "Vulnerable 20" or "V20", which is a group of 20 countries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The aim of the group is to ensure greater cooperation to foster increase in public and private finance for climate action. In September of 2016, Bangladesh became the chairman of a new coalition named "Delta Coalition", bringing some low-lying countries together aimed at preventing floods and making urban deltas resilient against climate change.

ICT for Development

Since 2009, Sheikh Hasina has been spearheading the 'Digital Bangladesh' initiative in Bangladesh. The aim is to harness the power of technology to enable the people of her country to turn their lives around. Pursuant to that, her office, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) established the Access to Information (a2i) programme with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). She has helped set up over 5,000 Union Digital Centers (UDCs) which are providing 200 types of services to people across the country, especially

in the rural areas. In order to make public services and information more accessible to the people, she has helped set up the largest government website in the world, which hosts 25,000 websites under one platform for instant information dissemination among the people. These, along with other initiatives, which are helping the country's development through harnessing the power of ICT, have won Bangladesh and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina a number of international awards in recent times including from the United Nations. In fact, other countries too are now trying to replicate the vision of Bangladesh. In 2015, Bangladesh signed a deal with its South Asian neighbour, Maldives, to help it build a 'Digital Maldives' in the style of the concept of 'Digital Bangladesh'.



Migration



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is playing a vocal and active role on the international stage addressing the topics of migration and refugees. In the international arena, Sheikh Hasina is a relentless advocate for safe, orderly, regular, and responsible migration. With the country's limited resources, Sheikh Hasina's Government is continuing to bear its responsibilities towards a large number of refugees and displaced people from Myanmar stranded in Bangladesh for years. Her government is investing in their security, health, education and skills. Recently a census was carried out on these refugees and the Government has decided to give them an identity document titled 'information card' which will help them access justice, health, education and other services. Sheikh Hasina's Government has also taken a number of steps to ensure safe and lawful migration abroad from Bangladesh. This active role in safeguarding the interests of its overseas and migrant workers has resulted in Bangladesh being elected the Chair of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) in 2015 and hosting the 9th GFMD Summit in Dhaka in December of 2016.

Women Empowerment



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been a long-standing advocate of women's rights and empowerment both at home and on the international stage. At home, she has been credited with incredible successes in recent years with regards to women's education, women's economic empowerment, women's political empowerment, tackling child and early marriages, preventing violence against women, eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and extending various social security allowances for women. As a result, countries which are still struggling on these issues look up to Bangladesh and its leader Sheikh Hasina for guidance. Due to her contribution to women's multi-faceted development, empowerment and securing of their rights, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Government have won a number of prestigious international awards in recent years.

Leading Developing Nations

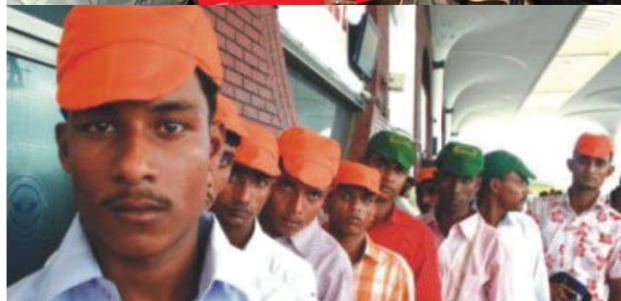


Bangladesh has always been a prominent spokesperson on behalf of the developing world in international forums. An important role was played by Bangladesh in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in July, 2015. In October of 2015, Bangladesh was unanimously elected the new Chairman of the Global Coordination Bureau of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). This Bureau works with the UN Office of the High Representative for the LDCs, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, coordinating programmes for the LDCs. Since becoming a member of the LDCs back in 1974, Bangladesh has always remained an active member promoting and protecting the interests of the member countries. Recently, the LDCs and their friends praised Bangladesh's Presidency at their Annual Ministerial Meeting in September, 2016 at New York.



SUCCESSFUL LABOUR DIPLOMACY

As a result of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's successful labour diplomacy, in the last nine years, Bangladesh has seen expanded labour markets and substantially rising remittance earnings. More than 5.1 million Bangladeshi workers were sent abroad with jobs in this period. A total of 51,98,914 male and female Bangladeshi workers were sent abroad from 2009 to 2017. As a result of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's various initiatives to create new job markets along with the existing ones, the government has successfully increased the number of overseas job markets to 165 during the last nine years, which were only 97 during the tenure of the last alliance government. As a result, Bangladesh's remittance earnings also increased manifold during this period. Bangladesh takes the 8th position among the top 10 remittance-earning countries in the world. According to the World Bank's Migration and Development Brief 2016, Bangladesh has ranked 8th in the world with around \$13.7 billion remittance earnings in 2016, and \$14.93 billion in the 2015-16 fiscal year.



ENDING IMPUNITY FOR INT'L CRIMES



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has made justice for serious and international crimes a cornerstone of her leadership. In ending impunity for crimes, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina first initiated the trials of the killers of Bangabandhu in 1996 when she first became the Premier. Following the repeal of the notorious black law, the Indemnity Ordinance, and without making any special law or tribunal, Sheikh Hasina started the process of one of the most important trials in the history of Bangladesh, and following a decade long legal process, which remained suspended between 2001-06 by the BNP-Jamaat Government, on 28 January 2010, five of the killers of Bangabandhu were executed. The fight for bringing the rest to the book goes on.

In order to ensure justice for the crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes committed by the Pakistan Army and their local collaborators in 1971 during the War of Liberation, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina set up the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT), which has so far tried or is trying 229 people. 31 cases have already had their verdicts pronounced. 68 criminals have been convicted and sentenced. 161 accused face various charges in 31 cases currently pending with the ICT. 3,503 more persons are currently under investigation in 607 separate complaints under investigation (information updated till March 2018).

INTERNATIONAL AWARDS TO SHEIKH HASINA



Over the years, Sheikh Hasina has received a number of awards, accolades and recognition for various aspects of her leadership. The following are some, but not all, of such awards.

2018

Global Women's Leadership Award for "Outstanding Leadership in Advancing Women Education and Women Entrepreneurs in Bangladesh, Asia and the Asia-Pac Region" at the Global Summit of Women 2018, Sydney, Australia.

UN Office for South South Cooperation and UNESCO award for building social innovation partnership through South-South Network for public service innovation

2017-2014

For four consecutive years, the a2i programme under the Prime Minister's Office has won the world's most prestigious award for excellence in information technology, the "World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)" Award for its various IT related initiatives which have significantly contributed to uplifting the lives of the people of Bangladesh.



2016

The “Planet 50-50 Champion” and “Agent of Change” Awards from Global Forum for Development and the United Nations (UN) Women for outstanding contribution to women empowerment.

2015

ICT in Sustainable Development Award from the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) for contributions towards harnessing the potential of ICT for sustainable development.

2015

“Champion of the Earth” Award from United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for her far-reaching initiatives to address the adverse impacts of climate change.

2015

The Women in Parliament (WIP) Global Forum Award for her leading role in reducing gender gap in the political sphere in South and South East Asia.

2014

United Nations ‘South South Cooperation Visionary’ Award for contribution towards expanding information technology, ensuring healthcare at grassroots levels, improving the living standard of marginalised people of society through social safety net programmes and alleviating poverty.



2014

Special “Tree of Peace” memento from UNESCO in recognition of outstanding contribution to promotion of girls’ and women’s education.

2013

United Nations South-South Award for performance in poverty reduction and attainment of self-reliance on food.

2012

The “Cultural Diversity Award” by UNESCO for preserving cultural diversity and advancing cultural activities.

2011

ICT Award for using technology to improve the health of women and children by the UN Economic Commission for Africa, Permanent Mission of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Nations, International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and South-South News.

2010

Awarded the Indira Gandhi Peace Prize for role in promoting peace, disarmament and development.

2000

The “Pearl S Buck” Award from the Randolph Mason Women’s College, USA in recognition of her vision, courage and achievements in political, economic and humanitarian fields.





2000

The “Person of the Year” Award by the Afro-Asian Lawyers Federation.

1999

The Ceres Medal by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for her leadership in agricultural development and the fight against hunger.

1998

The “Mother Teresa Medal” from the India Nikhil Parishad.

1998

UNESCO's Houphouet-Boigny Peace Prize for efforts in signing of the CHT Peace Treaty

1998

The “MK Gandhi Medal” by the Mahatma Gandhi Foundation.

1997

Rotary Foundation Medal and “Paul Harris Fellowship”.

1997

Awarded the “Netaji Subash Chandra Bose Memorial Award-1997” for establishing peace and democracy in South Asia.

LEADERSHIP PROFILE

Forbes

World's Greatest
Leaders by Forbes



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was named in the Fortune Magazine's 2016 annual list of the World's Greatest Leaders. The magazine published the list of 50 top leaders in politics, business and activism in March this year. Sheikh Hasina is No. 10 in the annual ranking. The magazine states: "As the only female leader among the Organization of Islamic Cooperation member states, Hasina has deftly navigated the competing demands of Islamic tradition and

women's rights. She has committed Bangladesh, the nation with the world's fourth-largest Muslim population, to securing legal protections for women and helping them attain more education, financial freedom, and political power. About 30% of adult women in Bangladesh now have at least a secondary education—and the nation scores better on the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index than any other South Asian country".



Leading Global
Thinker by
Foreign Policy



In December 2015, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina made it to the exclusive club of 100 leading global thinkers of the world as determined by the influential Washington-based journal Foreign Policy. She was named among the 13 top global thinkers under the category "Decision-Makers" for her outstanding contribution to addressing the issue of climate change. The publication states: "Although Bangladesh produces just 0.3% of global emissions, rising oceans could displace more than 18 million of its citizens by 2050. Refusing to sit idly by, and despite the economic limitations of a nation with a 30% poverty rate, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has made environmental protection a national priority which won her a UN Champion of the Earth prize this fall..."


Forbes

Forbes' Most Powerful Women

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina features regularly on the annual Forbes' Magazine's list of "The World's Most Powerful 100 Women". In the latest such edition of 2017, Sheikh Hasina was listed as the 30th most powerful woman in the world.



Women Who Rule the World: The 25 Most Powerful Female Political Leaders 2017

 **Caroline Howard** Forbes Staff
Nov 1, 2017, 07:45am • 48,762 Views • #LikeABoss



WORLD LEADERS ON SHEIKH HASINA



Sheikh Hasina's leadership in socioeconomic development and ensuring gender equality is unmatched and also an example for the world to



Bangabandhu founded Bangladesh and his daughter Sheikh Hasina saved it

Narendra Modi



Sheikh Hasina is a pillar for women's rights in South Asia

Marie Claude Bibeau



Sheikh Hasina is the symbol of liberal progressive global leadership and her government's steps to protect child rights, especially the girl child, are praiseworthy

Anthony Lake



Sheikh Hasina is a woman of courage and is a strong voice on the globe in women empowerment. It is her able leadership that made Bangladesh a champion in the field of global education first initiative.

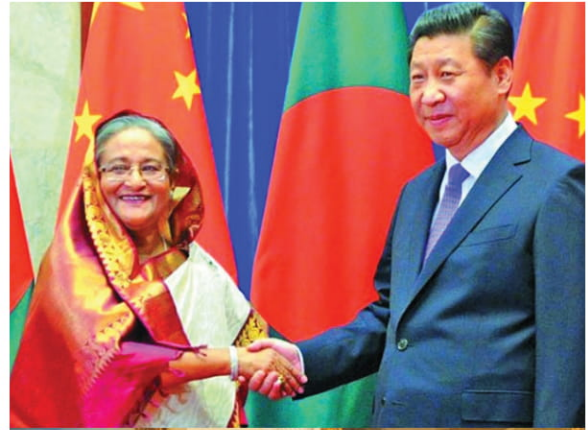
Irina Bokova



Under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh has the potential to emerge as a key player in addressing the climate change and disaster risk reduction issues at the international level.

Ban Ki Moon

SHEIKH HASINA WITH WORLD LEADERS







Bangladesh Awami League

International Affairs Sub Committee

The members of Bangladesh Awami League International Affairs Sub-Committee

- Shahab Ahmed
- Tarun Kanti Das (Kanti)
- Imranul Hye Sajib
- Rayhan Shakib
- Sharmin Sultana Lily
- Shahreen Tilottoma Srabon
- Mafruha Murphy
- Niaz Elite
- Imranul Kabir
- Nehrín Mustofa
- Shaikh Momin
- Suman Kundu
- Jasim Uddin Akanda Rony
- Abdul Majid
- Ahtasamaul Hasan Rumi
- Qantara K Khan
- Md. Jafor Sadiq Biplob
- Suruz Alam
- Shilu Tahmina
- Narayan Saha Moni
- Mizanur Rahman Mizan
- Sheikh Mamun
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- Asaduzzaman Nadim
- Ayub Ali
- Syed Monir



International Affairs Sub-Committee
Bangladesh Awami League

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