

# **Amar Fashi Chai**

**Freedom Fighter Motiur Rahman Rentu**

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## INTRODUCTION

I feel that if one knows the facts of the past or history, a proper direction for the future will suggest itself.

Only those events with which I was directly associated or which I am personally aware of have been narrated in the book. However, I have additional information and knowledge beyond what is written. Indeed I have.

Ordinary mortals like us have to realize that those who run the country or do politics do not necessarily understand or know more than we do. We, the ordinary folks have perhaps more practical intelligence or realistic ideas regarding certain matters. It is absolutely true as far as it relates to politicians and administrators of Bangladesh.

My efforts at writing this book originated from my intention to disclose to the common people how mean, heinous, greedy and small minded some people at very high places are.

After a lot of thinking on the desirability of writing such a book for the present and future generations of citizens of Bangladesh, I decided to tell the people the unadulterated truth and realities behind the curtain of politics, so that this could be of benefit to them.

Some of the readers may sternly rebuke me and even may like to give me the harshest punishment. And some readers may on the country become more careful and in future proceed in their political career with caution and care.

What the readers would do is their business. But we thought that publishing the book is our responsibility.

In consideration of the grave danger that we may face, most people with whom we discussed the issue of publication advised that the book should be published when Sheikh Hasina would no longer remain the Prime Minister of Bangladesh. But we-my wife and I-could not agree with this point of view as we thought that there would be neither honour nor courage in divulging somebody's past secrets (of Sheikh Hasina) at a time when she had fallen from power.

That is why, in spite of the dangers and difficulties that may have to be faced in the future, we, depending on the Almighty Allah, decided to publish the book during Sheikh Hasina's rule. Life is a constant struggle; so why should one accept defeat! Who can cause harm, if the Almighty protects!

Readers may think that we (husband and wife) decided to write like this as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had officially declared us 'undesirable'. This line of thinking is quite correct. Perhaps we would not have begun writing this book if Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had not treacherously used the state apparatus and instructed the police, CID, DB, IB, NSI, DGFI and other Government agencies to enforce the declaration. Whatever we have written in this book are facts and correct. We sincerely thank Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for arousing such thoughts in us. We are grateful to her for the illegal order, for it triggered our efforts at revealing the truth. It is not only unconstitutional and illegal to officially declare a citizen 'undesirable', it is in gross violation of the oath that the Prime Minister (Sheikh Hasina) had taken.

On June 23, 1996 at 7-30 PM, in the Durbar hall of the Bangabhaban, while taking the oath for the office of the Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina said — "I solemnly declare that I will perform the responsibilities of the Prime Minister as per provisions of the Constitution and the laws of the land. I will have unflinching faith and loyalty towards Bangladesh. I shall protect and support the Constitution and provide security. Without fear or favour, love or hatred I will conduct the my duties."

Politics is for giving, not for taking from the people. On this issue, we fought with Sheikh Hasina for long sixteen years, from the day she returned home from exile on May 17, 1981 (during the presidency of Ziaur Rahman and a few days before his death) till January 15, 1997, when she threw us out. Our determination to speak out the truth rendered us dangerous to Sheikh Hasina and her family.

As a person, Sheikh Hasina is dishonest, unethical, hypocrite and without any scruples or conviction. How can she be honest and dependable in matters of state?

## **SHEIKH HASINA IN POLITICS**

Because of the leadership of unintelligent, compromising and unfit people with Malek Ukil at the helm of the Awami League and Obaidul Kader in charge of the Students League, dedicated workers were highly disappointed and angry. In this situation, character and role of Abdur Razzak came to be questioned. In the meantime, the 3rd Awami League convention was held and there was a sharp contest for leadership and posts of President and General Secretary between Razzak and Tofail Groups. In this competition, despite Malek's support to Razzak, Tofail decided not to give up the race for leadership. Consequently, Awami League faced disintegration. Already, under the leadership of Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury a small splinter group of the Awami League had formed a separate Awami League party. The Awami League conference was held in the midst of battle for leadership. Having perceived an unfavourable situation and in order to counter the opposition in the Party itself, Razzak brought in Sheikh Hasina, daughter of Sheikh Mujib, to be installed as the President of the Awami League. Razzak hoped that Shaikh Hasina, the non-political daughter of Shaikh Mujib, would always remain dependent upon him. During the lifetime of Shaikh Mujib, his son Shaikh Kamal, nephew Shaikh Moni, Shaikh Salim and sometimes Shaikh Jamal used to poke in or get involved in politics, but never did Shaikh Hasina tread her feet on politics. Though recently some claims have been made that Shaikh Hasina was a Vice-President. of the students body of the Eden Women's University. But she herself had never made any such claim. Rather, the fact that Shaikh Hasina was never a member of the Central Committee of the Students League used to be repeated by her at many functions of the Students League.

Besides, Shaikh Hasina was a woman, inexperienced in politics and had been non-political. All these considerations prompted Abdur Razzak and others to make Shaikh Hasina the President of the Awami League so that she could be made to play a second fiddle to the wishes of Abdur Razzak and his friends. In the past, dedicated, idealist and self-sacrificing leaders and workers of the organization lost much confidence in the leadership of Abdur Razzak due to the latter's help to Malek Ukil to be President of the Awami League and to Obaidul Kader President of the Students League. There was a sigh of relief as Shaikh Hasina, the daughter of Shaikh Mujib, was being made President of the Awami League. As the Army Generals started unlawful and unwanted interference in politics and started to exercise influence over the public, we, the warriors of 71 and of 75, began to contemplate an alternative Force to the Army. During political

training of students they were taught that students were a stronger Force than the Army. Students were told that the Army is armed but uneducated, whereas students are unarmed and educated. The Army personnel live in the barracks in cantonment and the students live in the hostels of educational institutions. The Army opposes the people and work against the interests of the people. Students, on the other hand, support the people and are ready to sacrifice their lives for them. There would be a war in the future and in that war, uneducated Army would be defeated by the educated cadres of students.

After (retired) Major General Khalilur Rahman and (retired) Colonel Shawkat Ali joined the Awami League, Rezaul Baqi, Golam Mostafa Khan Miraj, Abdus Samad Pintu, the late Hedayetul Islam Kaja, Mobarak Hossain Selim and a few others discussed the situation and decided to form an organization of freedom fighters. Accordingly, Freedom Fighters Solidarity Organization composed of freedom fighters of 71 and 75 with Colonel Shawkat Ali as its Convener was formed. Our sight was fixed on the Cantonment.

Our aim was to occupy Dhaka Cantonment. In order to attain that objective, we had to expand our organizational activities and political training. We started to motivate the youth and the students to participate in the coming social revolution and to be prepared to make the supreme sacrifice, if needed. To bring about a revolution one may have to incur heavy personal loss. But one must not take into account that loss. Revolution through personal losses brings about good for the society and promotes a better life for the next generation. At this stage of our activities we were joined by a few freedom fighter military officers, who had participated in the abortive coup staged by General Khaled Mosharraf on 3 November 75. Among those who joined us were Lt. Col. A.H.M. Ghaffar Bir Bikram (dismissed from the Army following the abortive coup of 3 November and later became Minister of Commerce of President Hussain Muhammad Ershad), Major Nasir (newspaper columnist and husband of the distinguished artist Lutfun Nahar Lata) and Captain Hafizullah. Captain Ghaffar always used to take classes in English. In one class he taught, there is only enjoyment in consumption or acquisition but no satisfaction. In sacrifice, there are both happiness and satisfaction. On 17 May, '81 when Shaikh Hasina, the non-political daughter of Bangabandhu Shaikh Mujibur Rahman, returned home as the President of the Awami League the workers and people accorded unparalleled reception at the airport.

## **THIS ZIA IS NOT THAT ZIA**

Three or four days after her return we had a meeting with Shaikh Hasina. At the outset, Shaikh Hasina told student leaders and freedom fighters that from today onwards we would have to start the publicity campaign that this “Zia is not that Zia.” In other words, the present freedom fighter President Ziaur Rahman is not the same one, who had declared independence. Sheikh Hasina said, referring to Goebbels, the Information Adviser to Hitler, “if you can successfully publicize that this Zia is not that Zia who had declared independence, then one day people will come to believe it.” Someone from amongst us asked, in that case who shall we call this Zia? Shaikh Hasina replied, “there is no need to go into so much of talks; you will only say this Zia is not the same Zia.” At this, we all became surprised, whispered and laughed among ourselves. But we never propagated the lesson given by Shaikh Hasina, ‘this Zia is not that Zia.’

## **ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT ZIA**

On 23 and 24 May 81, an urgent secret meeting of freedom fighters of 71 and 75 and some former members of the Army was held in the seminar room of the T.S.C. of Dhaka University. In that meeting, Colonel Shawkat Ali (at present Awami League M.P. and an accused in the Agartala Conspiracy case) informed the meeting of the plan to assassinate freedom fighter President Ziaur Rahman and told what to do during and after the killing. Colonel Shawkat Ali said that under the leadership of the G.O.C. Chittagong Major General Manzur Bir Uttam Zia would be killed and that our leader Shaikh Hasina had the knowledge of this plan for assassination. Our leader had instructed us to help and play a role in this plan.

Awami League President Shaikh Hasina had returned home only a few days ago; how could she give a directive of this nature? When asked, Colonel Shawkat replied that Shaikh Hasina had been informed while she had been out of the country in India. When asked as to what we were to do during and after the killing, Colonel Shawkat said that we would have to stay in Chittagong and Dhaka; those who would be in Chittagong should take the responsibility of coming to Dhaka after collecting arms from General Manzur; and those who could be in Dhaka should establish control over important places like radio and television centers with these weapons. In reply to a question from one of us, he said that anytime from now the assassination could take place.

As soon as Ziaur Rahman would visit Chittagong, he would be killed. Colonel Shawkat also said that until Zia was killed, Chief of Staff of the Army General H.M. Ershad and other Generals in Dhaka as well as Colonel Mahfuzur Rahman of the President's Guard Regiment would remain with the leader of the uprising, General Manzur. After the assassination, they would be divided. The Generals of Dhaka and the repatriated officers and troops from Pakistan would remain with the chief of staff. On the other side, General Manzur would give leadership to the freedom fighter officers and troops of Chittagong. After the killing of General Zia, there would be a fight between the troops loyal to General Ershad and those loyal to General Manzur. In this battle, one side would be totally defeated by the other, though the victor would be very weak. At this moment, we should attack the weak victors and defeat them. This was our task during and after the assassination.

In this secret and urgent meeting were present about 70 or 75 people, including Colonel Ghaffar, Major Nasir, Captain Hafiz and a few others, who had a role in the uprising on 3 November 75. In this meeting we were divided into three groups. One group was given the responsibility of going to Chittagong to collect weapons from General Manzur. The second group of about 30 or 35 persons was entrusted with the work of travelling all over the country to inform the plan and to prepare all anti-Zia freedom fighters to take any type of action. The rest belonging to the third group would stay in Dhaka, and make preparation for action.

After President Ziaur Rahman arrived Chittagong a few Army officers under the leadership of General Manzur organized the uprising and at the dawn of 30th November killed freedom fighter Ziaur Rahman in the Chittagong Circuit House with little opposition. Yet, the troops and the general public rejected this killing. Officers obedient to General Manzur occupied Chittagong Radio and Television centers and kept these under their control. On this side in Dhaka, Chief of the Army General Ershad, General Mir Shawkat Bir Uttam, General Rahman and other officers and troops took position against General Manzur.

To counter General Manzur, GOC of Comilla Mainamati Cantonment Brigadier Mabmudul Hasan was sent towards Chittagong in Brigade strength. Brigadier Hasan took position on the Dhaka side of Shuwapur Bridge on Chittagong road. On the other side of the bridge Captain Dost Mohammad, loyal to General Manzur, took position with his troops in order to oppose Brigadier Mabmudul Hasan's advance. In Dhaka there was widespread agitation, processions and meetings in protest of the killing of President Ziaur Rahman. On hearing about the

assassination of President Zia, Vice President Justice Sattar out of fear got himself admitted into the Combined Military Hospital. A signboard hanging on the door of his cabin read, Patients critical; no one to visit.” Later, Ziaur Rahman’s Prime Minister Shah Azizur Rahman and Communications Minister Abdul Alim went to the CMH and informed the Vice President Sattar that he was now the President. This was the message from General Ershad. In reply, Justice Sattar asked them to bring the Army Chief Ershad to him.

Under the patronage of the Army Chief General Ershad, Vice President Sattar became the Acting President. Though outwardly the Army was split into two groups and took opposing positions at the Shuvapur Bridge and there was the possibility of bloodshed among brothers, General Manzur lost real control of Chittagong Cantonment. The troops in general did not support the killing of President Ziaur Rahman and refused to show obedience to General Manzur. Troops under Captain Dost Mohammad also refused to fight against Brigadier Mahmudul Hasan and his troops who had taken position on the other side of the bridge. Non-commissioned officers and soldiers told Captain Dost Mohammad clearly that ‘General Manzur had killed President Ziaur Rahman; now General Manzur would become the President. We the Subedars, Havildars, Sepoys would remain in the same positions. We will not sacrifice our lives. You officers do the lighting yourselves; we will not fight.’

Captain Dost Mohammad having found an unfavourable situation decided to surrender to Brigadier Mahmudul Hasan. Meanwhile, when General Manzur came out of the Cantonment to deliver an address over Chittagong Radio and Television and also to meet journalists, eminent persons and freedom fighters, the Cantonment went completely out of his control. The Army, specially noncommissioned officers and soldiers were so loyal to President Ziaur Rahman that at the very first opportunity they revolted against General Manzur. As a result, General Manzur and his officers could not go back to the Cantonment, nor even escape successfully. While escaping from the troops apparently loyal to Acting President Abdus Sattar but in fact loyal to the late President Ziaur Rahman some of the supporters of Manzur got killed. But Major Khaled and Major Mozaffar instead of going towards Indian frontiers were able to go to Dhaka and remained under the protection of Colonel (retired) Shawkat Ali. On the other hand, though General Manzur and some of his supporters were arrested by the officers loyal to General Zia, General Ershad who had been playing his game from a safe distance, got General Manzur killed in order to avoid exposure of his complicity in Zia’s killing.

We did not get arms following the arrest and death of General Manzur. Our companions came back to Dhaka and helped Major Khaled and Major Muzaffar cross into India through Murshidabad borders. When twelve accomplices of General Manzur were arrested and tried under court martial, Freedom Fighters Solidarity Parishad under the leadership of Colonel Shawkat, Freedom Fighters Struggle Parishad under Major Ziauddin and Freedom Fighters Shangshad under Deputy Sector Commander of the liberation war Lt. Colonel Kazi Nuruzzaman called out for movement against that trial and demanded release of those arrested freedom fighter officers. Those three Freedom Fighters related organizations continued their program of staging demonstrations, processions and meetings etc. and made sustained efforts for all other freedom fighter organizations to support and participate in that movement. But except for Abdur Razzak no other political leader was at hand. Despite all these protest and movement, the death sentence of the twelve officers implicated in Zia's murder was carried out. At the same time, the acting President Abdus Sattar announced holding of Presidential election and himself became a candidate.

From the Awami League side, though Dr. Kamal Hossain had been nominated as the candidate against Justice Sattar, Sheikh Hasina demanded postponement of election. But the Army supported the government of Justice Sattar, which rejected the demand for postponement. At the Presidential election in 1981 the largest number of candidates in the history of Bangladesh contested. Government's secret service, the National Security Intelligence, persuaded many candidates to withdraw their candidature by way of heavy bribing. On the other side, Awami League chief Shaikh Hasina issued secret instructions to kill any one of the Presidential candidates in order to ensure postponement of the election. It may be mentioned that if a candidate is killed, according to election rules, election will be postponed for three months. Because of non-realization of the secret instructions of Shaikh Hasina to kill a candidate and the refusal of Sattar government to postpone election, election was held as scheduled. Justice Sattar defeated Dr. Kamal Hossain by a wide margin of votes and was elected President. However, the main power rested with the Army Chief Hussain Muhammad Ershad. General Ershad used to manipulate Justice Sattar in any manner he wanted. Thus in reality, the elected President Justice Sattar became a toy in the hands of Army Chief General Ershad.

## TRAINING IN LEBANON

Some of those who started a war under the leadership of Kader (Bagha) Siddiqui in protest against the killing of Bangabandhu Shaikh Mujibur Rahman on August 15, 1975 met Shaikh Hasina, daughter of Bangabandhu, at her house at Road 32 in Dhanmandi sometime in the first week of January 1982. They proposed a plan to capture Dhaka Cantonment, which was accepted with great pleasure by Shaikh Hasina. The plan was: "A group of 25 to 30 thousand committed persons are to be given political education and military training. They would capture Dhaka Cantonment by launching a commando type attack." The capture of Dhaka Cantonment meant the capture of state power in Bangladesh. Shaikh Hasina instructed that this plan should be implemented by all possible means.

Work started about preparation of political workers for the purpose of capturing the cantonment and giving them military training. The workers were to be recruited secretly. One paid special attention to the mind-set, thoughts and personal qualities of these workers. In a short period of time a large group of workers were recruited and trained. Out of these workers a batch was specially selected for military training.

After imparting political education to these recruits, a batch was selected for military training. But problem arose as to where a place for military training would be found and wherefrom arms would be available. Military training was not so easy as political training. For military training, at first a safe open area is needed, where the trainees will learn the use of arms through safe arms exercises. During 71's great liberation war we used Indian territory for such training. But it is not possible now. Only a few years back India had driven away Kader Siddiqui's forces from their soil. For military training there was no chance of using Indian soil. Sundarban or Hill-Tracts were also not safe for military training. In the world outside we had no friend. Afghanistan was in the control of the staunch fundamentalists. There we have no place. There was no response from the Soviet Union (Russia). In the circumstances Lebanon and the P.L.O. (Palestine Liberation Organization) came up for consideration. Secret communication was established with P.L.O. Representative in Dhaka, Mr. Ahmed A. Razek. A few meetings were held secretly with Mr. A.A. Razek at the P.L.O. Embassy in Gulshan. Mr. Razek was told candidly that we wanted military training and in return we would give whatever he wanted. Ahmed A Razek asked for one month's time.

After a month, again a meeting was held with Ahmed Razek. It was decided that P.L.O. would be giving us military training in the soil of Lebanon. In return, we shall have to fight against the Israelis on behalf of the P.L.O. We agreed. When our first batch would arrive Lebanon they would be given military training and sent to the battlefield straight way to fight the Israeli on behalf of the P.L.O. The first batch would go to Lebanon. After the training of the second batch they would go to war and the first batch would be sent back to Bangladesh. It means, one batch of ours will always fight on behalf of the P.L.O.

P.L.O. would bear expenses of our travel to Lebanon and return to Dhaka. P.L.O. would pay salaries to those of us who would fight for P.L.O.

From time to time all aspects of the plan were intimated to Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina and her advice was taken. In pursuance of the decision of the meeting with P.L.O. first batch was sent to Lebanon in the last week of May, 1982.

After receiving training the first batch started fighting for the P.L.O. in the Israeli border. The second batch was prepared to go to Lebanon. At that time Israel made an attack and occupied Lebanon. All of our fighters became captives in the hands of Israelis. Our plan failed. Parents and relatives of all of our fighters started crying for them. Mujib's daughter Sheikh Hasina conveniently forgot everything. She remained passive and silent. She never uttered any word about our sons. After this with much difficulty, through Pakistan Red Cross our fighters who were captives in the hands of the Israelis were brought back to the country.

### **INVITING ERSHAD TO SEIZE POWER**

Awami League President Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina began to give repeated calls to the Army Chief General H. M. Ershad to seize state power. People's Leader Sheikh Hasina gave assurances of all sorts of co-operation and help on behalf of the people to General Ershad. In order to topple the elected President and the Government and to capture state power by the army secret meetings were held between General Ershad and Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina on several occasions.

After that, setting an unprecedented example in the history of military coup, General Ershad gave an announcement of coup d'état by calling Newspapers Editors in a meeting at Dhaka Cantonment, much before actually capturing the power.

On 24<sup>th</sup> March, 1982 without any resistance and without any word, General Ershad pushed out Justice Abdus Sattar, the President elected by the people, from Bangababab, and on the following day he was pulled by the collar and taken to Radio and Television to make a speech to the effect that due to his inability and his Government's corruption, nepotism, etc. he had voluntarily handed over power to Army chief General Ershad and abdicated on his own accord. The old, octogenarian and infirm President Justice Abdus Sattar made his exit silently without a word for fear of life. Army Chief Lt. Gen. H. M. Ershad proclaimed Martial law in the country and he himself became Chief Martial Law Administrator .He made Justice A. F. M. Ahsanuddin Chowdhury the President in name only without any authority. On secret invitation of Sheikh Hasina and with her cooperation General Ershad seized all powers and imposed himself on the people like an unmovable heavy stone.

### **MID FEBRUARY STUDENT KILLING (1983).**

Before the turn of the year, dissension cropped up silently in the secret alliance between the Chief Martial Law Administrator General Ershad and Sheikh Hasina. In the last week of January, 1983 at the official residence of Sheikh Hasina's husband Dr. Wazed Mia at Mohakhali which belonged to the Atomic Energy commission, Sheikh Hasina said - 'Lt. Gen. Ershad the khatas (wolf), is gradually slipping away from my grip. He needs to be kept under tight control.'

With a view to keeping Ershad in her grip, Sheikh Hasina presented in the name of student movement a bogus plan and said - "In this student movement certain number of students will have be killed."

'With such killings, student's movement will gain momentum. An intensified student's movement will help keep, Gen. Ershad in my grip.'" Sheikh Hasina thus hatched a ruthless plan for the murder of students in the of name students' movement. Killing of students by any unknown killer will not do. Students will have to be killed by the military or police."

Sheikh Hasina said, This will have to be done at the cost of whatever money is needed”  
Everybody was busy thinking as to how this plan could be executed

Contact was established with Hafizur Rahman Laskar, Company Commander (senior S.P.) of the Armed Police. This Hafizur Rahman Laskar, being a police officer, was occupying surreptitiously the post of Deputy Director of NSA. (National Security Intelligence) for a long time. After capturing power Ershad drove away unceremoniously Hafizur Rahman Laskar from N.S.I. by saying, “What are you doing here, being a police man? Go and wearing police uniform catch thieves.” Hafizur Rabman Laskar was transferred to the then Headquarters of Armed Police at 14, Mirpur and posted as the Company Commander. For this reason Hafizur Ranman Laskar was angry with General Ershad and his military rule On top of this was his greed for money. Anger, hostility to Ershad and greed for money, all combined to make Hafizur Rahman Laskar accept the proposal for killing students in the name of students’ movement. N.S.I.’s main duty is to prepare list of people who work against the Government and to supply such list to the Government. And when a Government falls, all files and papers prepared during the period of the previous regime are to be burnt. The process was to be repeated.

When President Ziaur Rahman was killed on 30th May, 1981, N.S.I. officers wanted to burn all files prepared during the time of Zia or BNP Government. But when the files were about to set on fire Vice-President Justice Abdus Sattar became the Acting President, which meant that the BNP Government remained in power. As a result, NSI officer kept the files carefully in the shelves instead of burning them. Although Vice-President Sattar became the Acting President, real state power was in the hands of the Army Chief H.M. Ershad. On that strength General Ershad glanced through the N.S.I.’s files. Name of General Ershad was also there. So as soon as General Ershad came to power he drove away people like Hafizur Rahman from N.S.I. For this reason as well as for his love of money, Hafizur Rahman Laskar and others supported the plan.

In the name of students’ movement a blue print for killing of students was finalized with Hafizur Rahtnan Laskar. According to the plan, a procession of students would have to be brought to Doel Yard, south of Bangla Academy, north of Curzon Hall and west of Shishu (children) Academy. The armed police will do the remaining work. Our responsibility was to bring a students procession up to the Duel yard, and then the responsibility was on the Armed police Company Commander Hafizur Rabman Laskar to kill students by firing on the procession. The

primary responsibility of bringing out the procession devolved upon the Jagannath Hall Students' Union General Secretary and members of Kaderia Force Nirunjan Sarker, Bachchu, Sadhan Sarker, Iadab, Bidyut, Shyamol and others. The proposal to bring out a procession against General Ershad was discussed with the student leaders, Fazlur Rahman, Bahalul Majnun Chunnu, Dr. Mostafa Lalal, K. M. Jahangir, DUCSU VP Akhtaruzzaman, G. S. Ziauddin Bablu, Faruk, Anwar, Milon, Jalal and others. Everyone was in favour of the procession.

In the beginning of the 2nd week of February date for the procession was fixed and it was decided to take the procession up to Education Bhaban. Pursuant to the discussion, a procession started from the Arts building. On the other side Hafizur Rahman Laskar was waiting eagerly like a thirsty bird with his Armed Police Force near Shishu Academy fully prepared to kill the students by firing on the procession.

The procession however, could not be taken far from the vicinity of the Arts building. Most of the student leaders, though not refusing verbally to go forward with the procession, did not actually go outside the Arts building. As a result the blueprint failed. We got agitated and harassed the student leaders, and some of the student leaders were physically hurt. Again a new date was fixed for the procession.

It was decided that on the 14th February, 1983, (1st Falgoon of Bengali era) there would be a procession of students which would proceed towards the Education Bhaban.

On the 12th of February, 83 at 8 a.m. Armed Police Company Commander was informed of the decision of the final program of student's procession of 14 February. On 13 February at 8 P.m. at the house of Hafizur Rahman Laskar at section 2, Mirpur, the program to bring the procession up to Shishu Academy at any cost was firmed up and he (Hafizur Rahman) himself was fully prepared to kill students in return of cash money paid to him.

At 11 O'clock at night in the Assembly building of Jagannath Hall of Dhaka University the last secret meeting was held in the room of Nirunjan Sarker Bachchu, G.S. of Students Union and a member of Kaderia Force. In the meeting the present student leaders Nirunjan Sarker Bachchu, Mobark Hossain Selim, DUCSU's Lady Secretary Nahid Amin Khan, Sadhan Sarker, Iadab, Bidyut and others were informed of the details of the students procession of 14th February including plan for killing. It was decided that student leaders Fazlur Rahman, Bahalul Maznun

Chunnu, progressive student leaders and top-ranking workers would not remain in the procession beyond the Atomic Energy Commission office under any circumstances and arrangements would have to be made accordingly.

It was the 1st of Falgoon, February 14, 1983. Spring season would start by the Calendar whether flowers blossomed or not. Everybody was delighted at the breeze of the spring, the king of the seasons. Bengali women wearing yellow Sarees with red borders had come out of their houses early in the morning to welcome the spring season. Girl students of Rokeya Hall and Shamsun Nahar Hall of Dhaka University wearing yellow sarees had been engaged in the festival since morning. The University was humming with spring festival. Some girl students wearing festive dresses were going to far off places with their boy friends. All were in joyous mood. Nobody knew what was going to happen a little later. Who was going to be killed? Which loving mother was going to lose her son? At about 10 O'clock in the day students started gathering for the procession at the foot of Aparajeya Bangla in front of the Arts building. One motorcycle rider was maintaining contacts all the time with Sheikh Hasina at 32 of Dhanmondi, Arts building and Hafizur Rahman Laskar of the Armed Police. The motorcycle rider (the author) was communicating with great speed the latest situation in the University to Sheikh Hasina at No 32 of Dhanmondi. Hafizur Rahman took his position at the eastern side of Shishu Academy. At about 11 a.m. the procession began.

Those student leaders and workers who were not to remain in the procession beyond the Atomic Energy Commission were informed of the developments.

Everything including the procession was going on in accordance with the plan. When the students procession reached Atomic Energy Commission, a few student leaders and workers slipped away from the procession from behind. The procession passed Bangla Academy and proceeded farther to Doel yard towards the south. As soon as the procession took a turn towards the east keeping the Doel yard behind, the Armed police under Hafizur Rahman opened fire-'Gurum', "Gurum" "Tash", "Tash". Within seconds several students fell down on the ground.

The motorcycle rider went to No.32 of Dhanmondi immediately to give the news of firing to Sheikh Hasina and then proceeded to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Meanwhile the students had brought the bullet-injured students to the Emergency ward of the hospital. Of the bullet-hit

students, Joynal and Zafar breathed their last. Oh, how did their mother and their father take the death of their loved ones?

The motorcycle rider again went to No.32 of Dhanmondi with the final news of the implementation of the blueprint. After giving the news of successful killing of two students to Sheikh Hasina the motorcycle rider returned to the University.

Shadows of mourning tell on the University. The festivities of the 1<sup>st</sup> of Falgoon had vanished. The students brought the dead bodies of their friends Zafar and Joynal to the historic Battala at the foot of Aparajeya Bangla. The news of Zanaja prayer and mourning meeting to be held at 3 O'clock in the afternoon was given to No.32 of Dhanmondi and Bangbandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina came to the Battala of the University at about 2 PM. She saw the bodies of the dead students and made pretension of wiping her eyes with handkerchief. She left the University without announcing any program to protest the killing. Students stricken with grief assembled at Battala and the girl student who, a little earlier were celebrating spring festival joined the condolence meeting at Battala.

Soon after leaving the University area Sheikh Hasina contacted Martial law Administrator General H.M. Ershad and secured fulfillment of certain secret demands from him in exchange of not giving any program protesting the killing of the students. After getting assurances from Sheikh Hasina, General Ershad carried on an unprecedented attack with his military and police in the University area from all sides. The multi pronged attack by the police on the students holding condolence meeting at Battala, forced the assembled students to run away for their lives. But whichever direction they were running to they were being intercepted and beaten mercilessly by the police and army. In a moment there was no sign of any human being at Battala, except thousands of sandals and shoes lying scattered all over.

It was with great difficulty the students carried the dead bodies of Zafar and Zainul to Surya Sen Hall and locked the Hall gate from inside. Inside, there were students, teachers and employees. The whole, University area including the courtyard of the Hall was full of Police and Army personnel. Within seconds the army and the police would break open the gate and enter the Hall. Seeing no other alternative the motor-cycle rider (author) jumped out from the first floor of the Hall to its court-yard. Immediately the police force pounced on him and started beating him the way vultures grab the caracas of a cow and start eating it. The motorcycle rider, somehow

disengaged himself from them and started running towards the boundary walls of the Hall. The author was being chased by the army and police personnel. With great risk he jumped over the wall and got to Kataban and Plassey Road. He went to Rd 32 Dhanmondi but did not get Hasina there. Then he went to the house of Dr. Wazed Miah, Hasina's husband, at Mohakhali where Hasina's Pajero jeep was parked. Hasina was not found. The favourite and trusted cook of Hasina, Ramakanta said that she had put on Burqa (veil) and left for an unknown destination in a private car driven by an unknown person.

The police and the Army broke open the doors and gates of all the Halls and indiscriminately beat up the students, teachers and employees, made them sit throughout the night in the open sky and arrested some of them. They took away the lifeless bodies of Zainul and Zafar. It may be mentioned here that in those days there was no organizational presence of Begum Khaleda Zia- led B.N.P. That's why Begum Khaleda Zia did not come to the University after the killing of the students. This was the first movement, the first uprising and the first sacrifice of the traditionally struggling simple-minded student community of the country. The movement totally collapsed due to the failure of the political leadership and the machinations of Sheikh Hasina. The sacrifice of Zafar and Zainul went in vain. The military dictator Ershad held on to power without any worry. The student community became directionless and depressed in the absence of political leadership. Ershad's military administration managed the main opposition force Awami League and its leader Sheikh Hasina, as he wished and continued its ruthless rule.

### **The killing of Selim and Delwar**

The year 1984 began, and came the month of February, the month of the Shahids (martyrs) of the Language movement. The instruction of Sheikh Hasina, the daughter of Bangabandhu, for the New Year was to start students' movement against Ershad once again.

On February 3, 1984, a closed door meeting was held at 4 p.m. at the Bangabandhu Bhaban at Road 32, Dhanmondi. In the meeting the leader gave strict instruction to start student's movement by all means. A new conspiratorial plan was formulated. On the one hand, the job of hiring killer police officers like Hafizur Rahinan Laskar was organized and on the other, efforts to motivate the students and to mobilize students' movement were initiated.

The job of hiring killer police officers was completed in no time under the personal direction and supervision of Sheikh Hasina. But the job of mobilizing the students was not over. The students could not be mobilized even with great efforts.

The whole student community was against Ershad. But they did not trust Awami league and its leader Sheikh Hasina in matters of organizing a movement. The Begum Zia-led B.NP. did not virtually exist that time. Days rolled by, but there was no indication of any Students' movement. It was repeatedly suggested that a procession of students be brought out, the way it was done in mid - February 1983. Sheikh Hasina was directly encouraging this. But it had no effect. At one stage Sheikh Hasina lamented - "Nothing can be accomplished by you."

We could not come out of the University with a procession of even 500 students. So the 1983 episode could not be repeated and the method of killing students had to be changed.

In the new scheme for killing students, senior S. P. Hafizur Rabman Lasker involved Riot police in place of the armed contingent. According to the plan it was decided that if a procession of even twenty - twenty five students, at some point of time could somehow be brought out of the University, the riot police, who stayed around the University round the clock, would implement the plan for killing the students. However, even the leaders and workers of the Students' League did not want to join any procession, let alone the ordinary students.

The Leader then gave strict orders that a students procession, however small, would have to be organized. Otherwise the leaders of the Students League would be relieved of their responsibilities.

It was then decided that a procession would be brought out on February 28, and as usual, Sheikh Hasina, the leader of Awami League, was informed of this. She immediately transmitted the news to the Riot police squad through Hafizur Rahman Lasker.

On the appointed day, a procession of about thirty-four students suddenly came out of the University and started moving fast towards Fulbaria bus stand via Chan Kharpool. As had been planned earlier, a lorry of the Riot police followed the procession.

The plan this time was that the students would be killed from behind, and not from the front. Those who were aware of the plan tried their very best to be in the front part of the procession. It was generally known that the attack would come from behind. But it was not certain whether there would be firing from the lorry or there would be a different manner of attacking the students. It was 5 p.m. in the afternoon. As soon as the small procession entered Fulbaria bus-stand, the riot police lorry gathered lightning speed and ran over the processionists. In a moment's time, Selim, who was at the rear of the procession was crushed under the wheels of the Police lorry. Though others got scattered on either side, Delwar started running straight and the police lorry followed him in great speed. Within one or two minutes, the police lorry ran over him. The body was so smashed that it became unrecognisable.

The author conveyed the news of the killing of Selim and Delwar under the wheels of the riot police van to Sheikh Hasina, who had been waiting to hear it eagerly at Bangabandhu Bhaban.

When Sheikh Hasina heard the news of the killing of two Student League leaders, she cried out 'bravo' in great delight.

Then she instructed driver Jalal to keep the car ready for her. She would go out.

When the author wanted to accompany her, she asked him and others to leave away and return to Road 32 next day in the morning'.

The next morning the motor cycle rider (author) went to Road 32, but could not find Sheikh Hasina there. He then went to Mahakhali. When he saw the Pajero Jeep and driver Jalal there, he thought that the leader would also be there. However, he did not find Hasina and got the information from the cook Ramakanta that the leader had left for an unknown destination early in the morning, in a car driven by an unknown person.

The leader returned around 1 p.m. had her lunch, and came straight to the Bangabandhu Bhaban. Quite a few Student League leaders came at about 3 p.m. and met Hasina there. When they wanted to have a plan of action against Ershad to protest against the brutal killing of Selim and Delwar, Sheikh Hasina consoled the student leaders and said, "our main enemy is Ziaur Rahman, and BNP is his party. Zia has already been eliminated. General Ershed has seized power from BNP only some time ago. Our main goal now is to completely finish BNP for

good. At this moment, we should not go directly against General Ershad. We have to keep in view that our main enemy is BNP.” When the student leaders were overwhelmed with emotion at the killing of Delwar and Selim, Sheikh Hasina said “there is no point in being emotional, their families would be duty compensated. “The heartbroken student leaders left the Bangabandhu Bhaban without obtaining any plan of action.

### **UNCIVILIZED UNPATRIOTIC FORCE**

On May 3, 1984, in the late afternoon, Sheikh Hasina was chatting with a few people at Bangabandhu Bhaban. In the course of discussions the topic of liberation war and Pakistan Army came up. Also came up for discussion the subject of Bangladesh Army, which emerged through the war of liberation.

The leader Sheikh Hasina commented about Bangladesh Army, “is it an Army? It is a barbaric Force composed of ill-disciplined, greedy, unruly and blood-thirsty men. This Army has no sense of loyalty, no discipline, no patriotism. They are disobedient and benefit of any humane attitude. Talk about the Pakistan Army. You will not find such a gentle, civil, polite, courteous and loyal Army in the whole world. They really are so decent and modest.”

"They came in the night of March 25 and saluted my father, (Sheikh Mujib) my mother and even me. Then they said to my father; “sir, we have come only to provide security to you. You can go wherever you want, wherever you please. Anyone can come and meet you. We will only ensure your security. If you go out we will accompany you to provide security. We will search an incoming guest properly before we let him in. Really, whatever the Pakistani Army did was meant for our security. On the twenty-sixth of March when Abba (Sheikh Mujib) was taken away by the Pakistan Army, General Tikka Khan himself came, saluted my father and my mother. He kept standing and courteously told my father (Sheikh Mujib) — Sir, Yahya Khan has asked us to take you for consultations. I have come here to take you. A special flight is ready for you. Please get ready, and if you so wish you can take anyone, including the Madam (Begum Mujib). Abba consulted my mother and went away alone. As long as the Pakistan Army performed their duty, they came and saluted us first.

“Not only that. When my paternal grandmother had some fever, the Pakistanis got her transported by a helicopter from Tungipara to Dhaka for treatment at the PG. Hospital. When I

was expecting Joy (Hasina's son), I was taken every week to the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) for medical checkup. I was admitted to the CMH a month before Joy was born. When he was born in 1971, the Pakistan Army personnel distributed sweets. All the cost associated with the birth of Joy was borne by the Pakistan Army. We went wherever we wanted to go. The Pakistanis accompanied us in two jeeps. They guarded us to provide security.

And the Bangladesh Army! These animals, these inhuman brutes killed my father, my mother and all my brothers. I wish their destruction."

### **REMOVE THE MOSQUE**

From the beginning of 1985, Sheikh Hasina, again tried to provoke the students to start a movement. When no sign of it was visible in spite of pressure, threats and persuasion, Sheikh Hasina angrily went away to her birth place at Tungipara. There she stayed for quite a few days. In the course of her stay, one day a few elderly gentlemen from Tungipara village including Sheikh-Bari (ancestral home of Sheikh Hasina where other share-holders also lived) came and met Sheikh Hasina. They told her that a coconut tree had been causing damage to a Mosque that was constructed by other share-holders of Sheikh-Bari. They proposed felling of the tree. Sheikh Hasina's prompt response was, "No, my tree cannot be cut down. If needed, remove the Mosque. The elderly people then entreated Sheikh Hasina to permit felling of the tree which had grown up close to the wall and the roof of the Mosque, with the plea that the removal of a Mosque was forbidden in the Holy Quran. Sheikh Hasina responded by saying - Close down this Mosque. I will have a bigger Mosque constructed."

The respectable elderly people said that the tree would hit the wall and the roof of the Mosque even if mild wind blew. If this continued then the roof and the wall of the Mosque would be damaged. Sheikh Hasina said - "Let it be damaged. It does not bother me at all. I will not permit felling of the coconut tree even if you keep weeping for years."

## THE ELECTIONS OF 1986

After the killing of the Student League leaders Selim and Delawar on February 28, 1984, Sheikh Hasina tried her very best of instigate the students.

At that time a secret meeting was held between the leader Sheikh Hasina and Brigadier Mahmudul Hasan, the then Director General of the Defense Forces Intelligence (DGFI) at the Gulshan residence of a business man, one S.I. Chowdhury. Brigadier Mahmudul Hasan, on behalf of General Ershad, personally requested Sheikh Hasina to participate in the elections and promised to bear all the cost involved in the participation. Sheikh Hasina, as a part of the movement (against Ershad), responded favorably to the proposal. Under the circumstances, the difference of views between Begum Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina, due to the efforts of the left leaning leaders, particularly of the General Secretary of the Communist Party late Comrade Farhad, was reduced to this strategy that no one, other than the two leaders, (Begum Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina) would stand in the Parliamentary elections. The leftist leaders proposed that both Begum Zia and Sheikh Hasina would contest in 150 Parliamentary seats each, and all others should ensure the victory of the leaders in all the 300 seats. Thus, the military autocrat General Ershad could be removed from power through elections in a democratic manner. And this would not create any disunity or division among the political parties.

Keeping the removal of Ershad in view. Begum Khaleda Zia agreed to the proposal. Begum Zia and Sheikh Hasina held a short face - to - face meeting. But, Ershad came to know about the secret election strategy of the two leaders through the businessman S. I. Chowdhury. Ershad then issued a Presidential Ordinance forbidding participation of a candidate in more than five parliamentary seats.

As a result, the strategy of the two leaders to contest elections on the basis of 150 seats each formula" was frustrated. Begum Zia went back to her original position of mobilizing people for the movement against Ershad without falling into his election trap. There was however a meeting between Sheikh Hasina and DGFI Brigadier Mahmudul Hasan at the residence of S. I. Chowdhury. At that meeting, it was demanded that three times the sum, which had originally been agreed as the election cost, should now be paid for participating in the elections. Brigadier Mahmudul Hasan, DGFI asked for an hour's time and left. The daughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Hasina returned to Bangabandhu Bhavan. After about two hours, the businessman S.I.

Chowdhury came to Road 32 with two minibuses. He talked to Sheikh Hasina for about a minute or so, and then nine sealed new sacks were brought out from the minibuses and carried to the master bathroom located in the lower floor of Bangabandhu Bhavan, between the library and the bedroom.

After that Sheikh Hasina instructed that a Press conference be organized and Awami League central leaders, including Dr. Kamal Hossain be urgently asked to come to Bangabandhu Bhavan.

Dr. Kamal Hossain and other leaders who could be contacted over telephone were summoned to Bangabandhu Bhavan. Different newspaper offices were contacted and journalists were asked to attend an urgent press conference, the purpose of which was not disclosed to them. Neither the journalists nor the leaders, including Dr. Kamal Hossain had any knowledge about the objective of the press conference. Only four people knew about it: (1) Sheikh Hasina, (2) S. I. Chowdhury, the businessman, (3) Brig. Mahmudul Hasan, the D.G.F.I. and (4) Chief Martial Law Administrator and the president, General Hussain Mohammad Ershad.

Although it was late at night, many newspapermen arrived at 32, Dhanmondi. Sheikh Hasina told the leaders her decision to participate in the election to be organized by Ershad. The leaders were of the view that while the election was desirable, the matter needed future consultation and a decision could then be taken.

Sheikh Hasina said: "we have no time. The decision should be made quickly. We have to go to the election bypassing Khaleda Zia and her party. There is no need to have a long discussion on this. The newspapermen are waiting outside. We have to announce our decision right now." Without further discussion she walked into the room where the journalists were waiting and made the announcement about her participation in the election.

The following day a large steel almirah (6'X3') was brought in. Several bags containing currency notes of Tk. 500 denomination which, had been received earlier were brought out from the bathroom. The bags were opened and wads of notes were stacked up in the steel cabinet. Notes that could not be kept there for want of space were removed to some other place.

Thus, began the 1986 election campaign. The nation became divided into two factions. One, led by Sheikh Hasina associated itself with the election to be manipulated by Ershad. The other group, at the call of Khaleda Zia directed its activities to frustrating the fake election and working for the fall of Ershad.

Sheikh Hasina declared to the party workers that Awami League would return to power through this election and that they should organize the campaign with all their might. Though such statements had little impact on the general masses, the Awami League workers began their activities seriously and created a kind of election atmosphere throughout the country.

About the same time there were parallel developments in the Philippines. Mrs. Corazon Aquino, was leading the popular movement against the dictator Marcos. The developments in the Philippines had drawn attention of the entire world. In Bangladesh, everybody was observing the situation in the Philippines with great interest.

At the final election meeting of Sheikh Hasina, speeches were being made. Suddenly the speeches stopped. It was announced that Marcos had fled the country. The people burst into cheers as if Ershad himself had fled the country and Sheikh Hasina had come to power. The developments in the Philippines gave a sense of direction to the political activists in Bangladesh.

After two days the election was held. Ershad, like Marcos was declared elected. Sheikh Hasina also declared herself elected. Both summoned the parliament. Ershad's Parliament held its session in the assembly house. Sheikh Hasina's parliamentary sessions began to be held on the stairs of the Parliament Building. It went on like this for several days.

One day in the evening, S. I. Chowdhury, the businessman, arrived 32, Dhanmondi, with three minibuses. Sheikh Hasina ran to the Microbus to meet him. Chowdhury off-loaded thirteen stuffed jute sacks, which were taken to a pre-selected place (bathroom?). The leader requested S. I. Chowdhury to have tea with her. But Chowdhury said that he was busy and left in a hurry.

It was estimated that the money she had received before announcing participation in the election was Tk. Ten Crores brought in nine jute bags. Now, after the announcement, a fresh amount of Tk. Fifteen Crores was brought in thirteen bags. The people expected that Sheikh

Hasina, like Mrs. Corazon Aquino of the Philippines, would remain uncompromising and call for a popular movement for the fall of the dictator Ershad. In the face of the people's determination the army and the tanks would be of no avail. Ershad would flee the country. But no, this was not to be. She gave a damn to people's wishes. Quietly, she joined the Parliament of Ershad and became the Honourable Leader of the 'opposition'. The country could not rid itself of the autocrat. On the contrary. Ershad became more powerful through the manipulated election of '86 and strengthened his stranglehold on the people.

### **SUCH A LARGE FIELD**

On a certain day Sheikh Hasina arrived at her ancestral village, Tungibari, in a Nissan Patrol. In the following morning the teachers of the local primary school invited her to visit the school. She accepted the invitation. A dirt road led to the school. After walking for about a mile, the school could be seen from a distance. It consisted of three large iron sheet structures, with a large field in the middle. Two of the structures were in a state of dilapidation. One, probably built in more recent years, was in better condition. It was clear that there was none to look after the maintenance of the school. A large number of boys of different age groups, their number varying between five and seven hundred, had assembled in rows and were shouting: 'victory to Sheikh Hasina, victory to Bangabandhu'. Virtually none of them had shirts to cover their bodies. Some even did not have pants and stood naked. The sight of her ancestral village was depressing — the dilapidated school, seven hundred boys and children with little clothes on. How will they sustain themselves when they grow older? These were disturbing thoughts that crossed my mind. I was waiting to hear what Sheikh Hasina had to say.

There was an old table, a chair, and a microphone in one corner of the field. Slowly she moved towards the table and straightway began to speak over the microphone. She did not talk about the school and its state of disrepair, about the naked children and about their future. She expressed her amazement at the large size of the field. "School children in the urban areas cannot think of such a large field." she said. She urged the audience to plant trees in the field. A member of her entourage offered the suggestion of planting guava trees. Sheikh Hasina promptly took the suggestion: 'Yes, plant guava trees. The children can eat the fruits'.

On one side of the political scenario was Ershad, the military dictator and Sheikh Hasina, the leader of the opposition in the rubber stamp parliament. On the other side. Khaleda Zia, a

housewife, assuming an uncompromising stand, was organizing, single handed, a movement (for the fall of the autocratic regime) and for this purpose, she was building her party, BNP, on a strong footing.

### **THE PLAY ACTING OF POLITICAL MOVEMENT**

The rider of the motor cycle (i.e. the author) thought, that a single handed effort by Khaleda Zia and her party would not produce the desired result. He inquired of the leader of her sincerity about the movement. She answered: "whatever program Khaleda announces, I will give a similar program. This will create an impression that we are in the anti-Ershad movement. The Awami League workers should do the play-acting, but never seriously get involved in the movement. In other words, the movement should be stabbed at the back. Khaleda Zia must go back home with failures so that she does not think of politics ever again." However, the Awami League workers at the field level were so keen on the fall of Ershad that her design had little effect. The workers began to play a positive role in the movement. When the workers were told that they were acting contrary to the wishes of Sheikh Hasina, they wanted to hear her instructions directly from her. It was not possible for Sheikh Hasina to come out in the open. So no clear and open statement was made.

As a result, Khaleda Zia gave leadership to the movement and Awami League workers were shedding their blood.

### **DISSOLUTION OF '86 PARLIAMENT**

On the 10th of November, 1987, Nur Hussain an Awami Youth League activist was killed when the police fired on a protest rally. Nur Hussain was carrying banners on his body. The banners had the following inscriptions: "Down with Autocracy", "Let Democracy be Unchained." These words were widely broadcast home and abroad through the news media.

Ershad became very unhappy. As the Awami League workers were playing a positive role in the movement, he misunderstood Sheikh Hasina and thought that she in fact had set her workers against him: "You take my money, eat off my hand, and then be a traitor to me. I have made you (Hasina) the leader of the opposition with rank of a minister and with lots of facilities. I have

allowed you to share powers with me in the administration of the country. And then you turn traitor.”

Sheikh Hasina, S.I. Chowdhury the businessman, and Mahmudul Hasan. D.G. Forces Intelligence tried to reason with Ershad and explain Hasina’s strategy of stabbing the movement at the back. But Ershad remained unconvinced. He held that Hasina should publicly support him. Otherwise, he would not keep her as the leader of the opposition. He would even dissolve the parliament.

When Sheikh Hasina. owing to tactical reasons, expressed her inability to openly extend support to Ershad, the latter in 1988, dissolved the two-year old parliament. Through another bout of election skullduggery, he created a new parliament. ASM Rab of J.S.D., (presently a minister in Sheikh Hasina’s cabinet) became the leader of the opposition in the new parliament.

### **THE FALL OF ERSHAD AND THE CARETAKER GOVERNMENT**

Khaleda Zia established herself as the uncompromising leader of the people in their struggle against autocracy. The people were ready to make supreme sacrifices for the fall of Ershad. As the situation was turning against Sheikh Hasina, she had no option other than aligning herself with the movement led by Khaleda Zia.

There were meetings on organizing movements under the two leaders. The political movement now reached a new height. Ershad called the army and clamped curfew. But these were of no use in the face of the determination of the people united in a common cause. All the tactics of the autocrat Ershad began to fail.

Ershad started spending millions of taka to buy the student leaders. He released many convicts from the jails and armed them to put down the movement. One such criminal shot and killed Dr. Milan on the 27th of November. The movement now spread like wildfire. The curfew as well as the general strikes for indefinite periods brought to a halt all activities. The only activities that went on unabated, were street processions, firing of tear gas shells and lethal bullets.

## ROLE OF THE ARMY IN THE FALL OF ERSHAD

High ranking Army officers prevailed on the Army Chief Lt. General Nuruddin Khan (at present Minister in Sheikh Hasina's Government) to hold a secret meeting with the senior officers. A decision was taken in that meeting that no support would be given to General Ershad any more. When the responsibility to communicate this decision to General Ershad was given to Lt. General Nuruddin Khan, he expressed his inability to do so. Then G.O.C. of 9 Division (Savar Cantonment) Major General Abdus Salam (at present Awami League M.P. and Chairman of Red Crescent Society)<sup>1</sup> took the responsibility to communicate the decision of the meeting to General Ershad. From the meeting he straightway went to Dhaka Cantonment and informed clearly General Ershad of the decision of the senior army officers not to give support to him any longer. The autocrat completely broke down. Soon after that he decided to resign. In order to restore civilian administration following the resignation, Vice President Barrister Moudud Ahmed resigned first and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed was appointed the Vice President. After that President General Ershad submitted his resignation to the Vice President. As the president had resigned, vice president Shahabuddin Ahmed became the Acting President. The caretaker Government under his leadership held election of Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) on February 27, 1991. In the history of Bangladesh for the first time all the political parties took part spontaneously in a free, fair election to the parliament under the caretaker Government. Election Process was proceeding in full swing. All the parties participating in the election had finalized the nomination of their candidates. People of the country also for the first time would get an opportunity to cast their votes in a free, fair and impartial election. Election campaign was going on widely throughout the whole country. Posters and graffiti covered the walls in all places. Processions and meetings were being held day in and day out. There would be severe competition mainly between the two parties - B.N.P. and Awami League. It was difficult to say at what place, which of these two parties would win. At this time the Bangabandhu's daughter Awami League President Sheikh Hasina said in a press conference that BNP would not get more than ten seats.

At the schools and colleges, offices and courts, homes and outside, every where election propaganda was going on. On February 10, a closed-door meeting took place in a room at 32 Dhanmondi. The meeting was in connection with the election. In the deliberations of the meeting

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<sup>1</sup> There is some confusion of identity. It was actually Major General Salam. *the* then Chief of Staff (COS) of the Army. (Translator)

the motorcycle rider (author) argued with reason that this time Awami League would not go to power. In the February election Awami League would be defeated and Sheikh Hasina will lose in both the seats in Dhaka.

Rabiul Alam Chowdhury (now Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's P.S. Muktedir Chowdhury) who was present in the meeting was furious and said: "You fellow, why do you think that Awami League will not go to power? Awami League is already in power. Look, the Home Secretary, Establishment Secretary, Foreign Secretary are sitting in the other room. In the room on the opposite side Inspector General of police is waiting. A little earlier Army Chief General Nuruddin Khan had come. Even then you say that Awami League will not go to power and Sheikh Hasina will not become Prime Minister?"

The author said, "in spite of so many Secretaries sitting and police Chief and Army Chief paying their respects, there is little chance for Awami League winning February election."

The moment these words were uttered Bnagahandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina said in angry voice - "you get out right now. Don't come again."

While going out the author said "Leader, when you have asked me to get out, I must comply. You yourself will understand after a few days what I have said."

On February 27, 1991 not only in the election history of Banagladesh, but also in that of the Sub-continent an unprecedented example of free and fair election was set. The people, male and female, exercised their voting rights without fear in a festive mood. After the counting of the votes was over, it was clear that Awami League had been defeated. In both the seats in Dhaka People's Leader Sheikh Hasina was defeated by a large margin of votes. Begum Khaleda Zia and her party B.N.P. became the winner. Rejecting the results, Sheikh Hasina said, "that there was subtle rigging in the election. I do not accept this result and if Begum Zia forms the Government, I shall not allow her to be in peace for a single moment."

## **DRAMA ABOUT RESIGNATION**

All of a sudden Shaikh Hasina announced to the journalists that she had resigned as the President of the Awami League. It created a great stir in all relevant quarters. The leaders of the Central Committee of the Awami League were stunned. The office bearers in the Central Office were stupefied. Without any indication or discussion with any one Shaikh Hasina declared that she had resigned. But, to whom did she submit her letter of resignation? Where was her letter of resignation? There was no resignation letter with any official at the Central Office. She did not even resign in a meeting of the Central Working Committee. There was plenty of speculation in and outside the Party about the resignation of Shaikh Hasina. Some were saying that she had not resigned. Some others said that she indeed had done so as she herself had announced her resignation.

While these speculations were going around, Shaikh Hasina issued instructions to all Students League and Youth League workers to hold meetings, processions and also organize fasting till death with the demand for Shaikh Hasina withdrawing her resignation. But as workers of Student League and Youth League did not respond positively and since the newspapers created a great commotion, Shaikh Hasina requested Sajeda Chowdhury, the Secretary General of the Party (at present Shaikh Hasina's Minister of Forests and Environment), to announce that she had torn the letter of resignation. In response, Sajeda Chowdhury promptly complied and made the announcement. The curtain was finally drawn on the drama of resignation.

The rider of motor cycle (the author) returned to Shaikh Hasina, who received him warmly and restored to him the responsibility and status as her personal adviser. He advised Shaikh Hasina to wait patiently and not to make untoward comments about the recently concluded election and the new government.

## **PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATURE AGAINST MONEY**

Before the election to the post of the President in place of the one heading the caretaker government Justice Shahahuddin Ahmed, Shaikh Hasina nominated Haji Makbul Hossain (at present Awami League MP from Dhanmandi-Mohammadpur constituency and President of

Mohammadpur Thana Awami League) in exchange for a payment of Taka 30 lacs (3 million). However, Ershad and his Jatiya Party put up the candidature of the former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Justice Badrul Haider Chowdhury. As many people advised Shaikh Hasina that if Haji Maqbul became the presidential candidate from the Awami League, the latter's image would be tarnished and, it would be desirable to put up Justice Badrul Haider Chowdhury's candidature jointly. She finally agreed. She called Justice Chowdhury to her house at Road 32 and after some discussion asked him to meet and obtain the blessings of Professor Golam Azam, Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami, a war criminal and murderer during the liberation war.

Haji Maqbul Hossain however was hesitating in withdrawing his candidature, in spite of instructions given by Shaikh Hasina to do so. At one stage, he refused to withdraw his candidature without getting the refund of Taka 30 lacs paid to Shaikh Hasina. She called him, almost forcibly brought him, to her house at Road No. 32 and asked him angrily if he was fit to be a Presidential candidate.

Then she said, "By nominating you as Awami League's candidate for presidential election I had given you a rare honour. Is not this enough for you? It is certain that you will not win the election for president. Now, remain silent"

Haji Maqbul was not happy. Sheikh Hasina said, I will remember what you have done for me. I will compensate you in the future. Now show your loyalty to me. Haji Maqbul complied.

### **JAHANARA IMAM AND SHAIKH HASINA**

Begum Khaleda Zia was the Prime Minister of Bangladesh and Shaikh Hasina the Leader of the Opposition. Instead of co-operation and friendship, great enmity developed between the two, which became increasingly more intense.

At this time, anti-liberation forces and fundamentalist political party, Jamaat-e-Islami, made the war criminal and murderer, Golam Azam their Amir or the chief of the party. In protest, Jahanara Imam, the mother of a martyr established a national coordination committee called the Committee for the Realization of the Spirit of Liberation War and Elimination of Murderers and Agents on February 11, 1992 and started a movement. There was widespread acceptance of this movement. When the new generation of people started participating in the program of Jahanara

Imam with great faith and enthusiasm, Shaikh Hasina began to feel uneasy and became agitated. She continued to say that Jahanara Imam had opened up a new shop and started a new business in order to become a leader. Jahanara Imam can not run a business and that is why she opened up a new business exploiting name of the liberation war.”

The rider of motor cycle (author) said to Shaikh Hasina, “What are you talking about? The entire nation knew well that Jahanara Imam was the Shahid’s mother. Her son, Rumi, became a martyr during the liberation war. She is a martyr’s mother.”

Shaikh Hasina got excited and said, “Stop talking about martyr’s mother. What type of martyr’s mother was she’? Her son Rumi got killed by his own shots fired while engaged in plundering. Her husband used to provide supplies to the Army during the war in 1971. The motor cycle rider pointed out that if one talked such things to the people, it would be counter productive.

The daughter of Bangabondhu replied, ‘that is why I have been enduring all these things and not breathing a word. I am now saying something which you should convey to the people. They (Jahanara Imam) used to Live in the first house on the right of Road 32 in a 2-stovey building. It was the first house east of our house (Bangabandhui Hiuse). The Pakistani Army used to guard Jahanara Imam and her family. Jahanara Imam's husband used to manage supplies to the Pakistan Army; They amassed huge fortune at that time. And now they have come here to realize the spirit of the liberation war! In fact, she has come here to seize my leadership. As I was defeated in the election, .Jahanara Imam, in clandestine collaboration with Khaleda Zia, has been thinking of becoming a leader of the people. That is why she has been talking about the trial of Golam Azam, trial of war criminals, realization of the spirit of liberation war, and so on. You should all beware of her and caution everyone about her. No one should get into the trap of Jahanara Imam.”

The author inquired of Shaikh Hasina if she would attend the function and participate in the program of Jahanara Imam. Bangabandhu’s daughter replied, “It does not matter whether I go or not, but you all must not attend those functions. Don’t you understand I have to go to many places against my wish. I may have to go to the program of Jahanara Imam for tactical reasons, but you all must not go.

## **GHOLAM AZAM - SHEIKH HASINA PARLEY**

Jahanara Imam the mother of a Martyr of 1971, was the convener of the coordination Committee for Realization of the Ideals of the Liberation War and Elimination of the Killers and Collaborators (Ghatak-Dalal Nirmul Committee). She set up a mass tribunal for the trial of the 1971 war criminals and collaborators including Gholam Azam. The tribunal, on the 26th of March, 1992, (Independence Day), awarded a death sentence to Gholam Azam. Jahanara Imam called upon the Government to implement the mass verdict and announced a program of public agitation on the issue.

Following this development a secret meeting was held between Gholam Azam and Sheikh Hasina at the residence of Sheikh Helaluddin at Indira Road. (Sheikh Helaluddin is the eldest son of Sheikh Naser, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib's only brother and thus a first cousin of Sheikh Hasina. Sheikh Helal is presently an Awaini League MP from Mollarhat-Fakirhat constituency of Bagerhat district). It was decided in the meeting that Gholam Azam and his party (Jamaat) would withdraw their support to BNP and instead co-operate with the movement to be organized by Awaini League to bring down Khaleda Zia's BNP Government. In return, Sheikh Hasina committed herself to sabotage the growing political agitation under Jahanara Imam. From then on a secret and close relationship began to develop between Gholam Azam and Sheikh Hasina.

## **1992-HINDU-MUSLIM RIOT**

It was the first week of December, 1992. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Khaleda Zia was the current chairperson of the South Asian Agreement for co-operation (SAARC). The summit meeting of the seven SAARC member countries had been scheduled to be held in Dhaka. The date, time and place of the summit had all been slated. Begum Khaleda Zia as the chairperson was to inaugurate the conference. Quite a few Heads of Governments had already started arriving Dhaka. The Indian Prime Minister was expected any time. In the meantime, however, there was a serious outbreak of communal riots in India following the demolition of Babri Mosque. The leader of the opposition, Sheikh Hasina promptly summoned the rider of the motor-cycle' (i.e. the author) to her official residence at 29 Minto Road.

On reaching there, he learnt that Sheikh Hasina had left a message asking him to meet her at Bangabandhu Bhaban at Dhanmnondi. The author was taken to the library room of the Bhaban. The conversation that took place between Sheikh Hasina and the author is as follows:

Sheikh Hasina: Organize Hindu-Muslim riots throughout the country.

Author: (Surprised) No, this is not proper.

Sheikh Hasina: Don't think about what is right and what is wrong. I am asking you to organize the riot. Do it.

Author: I have gone to different areas of the city and asked the youth to be watchful and prevent any attack on the Hindus. Now you are asking me to organize communal riots'?

Sheikh Hasina: Yes.

Author: No my leader. It is unethical.

Sheikh Hasina: (Angry). Hell with your principles. I am your leader. Do what I ask you to do.

Author: I deeply respect your command. However, if there are attacks on the Hindus, they will certainly leave this country. Remember, they always vote for

Sheikh Hasina: The Hindus here have no place to go. You just do your job.

Author: (Unconvinced) If the Hindus leave for India. (following a large scale riot all over), there will be an influx of Muslims from India. They may be inclined to vote for BNP. Have you considered this point?

Sheikh Hasina: You fool. Don't you understand that a situation has to be created that will make the holding of SAARC conference impossible. The conference will be chaired by Khaleda Zia. The Indian Prime Minister, Narhsima Rao has not yet arrived. This is the time for starting a communal riot. (This will create a situation that will make the arrival of the Indian Prime Minister inopportune. The absence of the Indian Prime Minister will abort the SAARC Conference).

Besides, Jahanara Imam is getting popular and many of the Hindus are now behind her. She is increasingly becoming a threat to my leadership. She has to be cut down to size. The riot will kill two birds with one stone-SAARC aborted and Jahanara Imam cut to size.

The author was entrusted with the task of organizing communal riots in Dhaka. It was decided that telephones at 29 Minto Road and at Bangabandhu Bhaban would not be used for the purpose. Instead the telephone of Sheikh Hafizur Rabman, a cousin of Sheikh Hasina and the Secretary General of Bangabandhu Trust would be used to communicate instructions to outlying districts for organizing Hindu-Muslim riots. This was measure to prevent possible leakages of the plan. The government of Khaleda Zia should not get any scent of the plan thus hatched.

A number of thugs, goons and terrorists of the city were organized according to the plan of Shiekh Hasina and given Taka Five lacs in cash. They were assembled near Shivbari Temple east of Jagannath Hall in the University area. After distributing 100 Taka notes among them, they were told, "Muslims are being butchered in India, women violated, their property looted. Should we the Muslims of Bangladesh watch it in silence? Go, start your work,"

The thugs and looters immediately began to plunder the property of Shivbari Temple with great enthusiasm. The next targets were Dhakeshwari temple and Ramkrishna Mission. Both cash rewards and inflammatory speeches had their effects on the looters. The looting soon spread to Tantibazar, Shakharipatti, Banglabazar. Millharrack, Goshairi. Narinda, and Islampur areas of the old city. Hindu shops were the main targets in the old city. Since the local agent provocateurs were known faces, inflammatory speeches could reveal the link between Awami League and the organization or the riot. Currency notes, rather than provocative speeches w-te more extensively used in the old city.

As the looting continued, Sheikh Hasina was contacted at 32 Dhanmondi after three to four hours of its commencement. She was informed of the successful execution of her plan. Jubilant Hasina praised the work of the author in the following words, "Good boy, you can deliver the goods. That's why I need you so much. I will have you elected as the member of the Parliament from Moksedpur-Kashiani constituency of Gopalganj at the next election."

The riot spread to fresh areas. Narshima Rao did not arrive. SAARC summit was effectively sabotaged.

## STOPPING FERRY BOATS

Sheikh Hasina was having midday day meal at the official residence at 29, Minto Road. I jointed in. She said, "I had not been to Tungipara<sup>2</sup>. Let's go their tomorrow. Ask Inland Water Transport Authority (IWTA) to make arrangement for special ferryboats."

I asked, "What route would you take my leader? Aricha or Mawa?"

"Aricha route is a long one. Mawa is shorter. I will take the later route," she replied.

Now, Aricha route had only one ferry crossing (The service is supported by a large number of good ferryboats). Mawa route involved river crossings at three points each having a limited number of boats. Making arrangement for special ferries meant withdrawing of boats from regular service for the exclusive use of the VIP. A boat is released only after a particular *VIP* had used it.

I argued: if you choose Mawa route, then special ferries will have to be arranged at three different river crossings. It will result in huge traffic congestion and people will suffer a great deal. It is better to take Aricha route. The leader was unconvinced. "Should I stop traveling by road if there is an occasional, traffic congestion," she replied.

I left the following day at 7 N.M. with my wife and daughter. My plan was to join her at Buriganga Bridge. Having reached there I waited for a while. As I did not see the leader coming. I drove to the next ferry station at the Dhaleshwari. There was a special police contingent on duty for escorting Sheikh Hasina to cross the river. The notional hag was fluttering in the breeze atop a special ferry withdrawn form the normal service. Traffic congestion had already begun. But there was no sign of the leader's arrival. We managed to cross the river eventually.

At Bhanga, we saw the leader coming from the directions of Aricha. We joined the entourage.

At Gopalganj Circuit House, where Sheikh Hasina had stopped for a while, she disclosed the reasons for changing her mind.

“Dhaka-Aricha is much better road”, she said.

But you could have informed the police and the IWTA officials. As they did not know about the change of plan, ferry service remained severely restricted causing considerable suffering to the people.

Oh that? You should not worry if they idle away a few hours on the road Most people are without jobs anyway.

### **SECOND MEETING BETWEEN SHEIKH HASINA AND GHOLAM AZAM**

The election of the Mayor and the Commissioners of Dhaka City Corporation was to be held on January 30, 1994. Awami League had nominated Muhammad Hanif, the President of Dhaka Metropolitan Area Awami League, as its candidate for the position.

The election activities, propaganda, street meetings etc, were at their peak. Sheikh Hasina met Gholam Azam, the Jamaat leader in the evening of the 25th of January at the residence of her cousin Sheikh Hafizur Rahman at Road no 8/A, Dhanmondi. Gholam Azam gave Sheikh Hasina the assurance that Jamaat would not support the BNP candidate. Sheikh Hasina, in return, assured Gholam Azam that Awami League would not politically attack or embarrass Jamaat.

### **THE DEMAND FOR CANCELING ELECTION OF CITY CORPORATION**

It was January 30, 1994. The City Mayor would be elected through a direct election. The voting would commence from 8 A.M. in the morning and continue till 4 P.M. in the afternoon.

Sheikh Hasina left her home after eating her breakfast and drove to a few polling stations later. She reached her official residence at Minto Road at about 11 AM. Within 15 minutes, Abdul Jalil, Joint Secretary of Awami League (presently a member of the Presidium), arrived in a huff and said “Our position is not good. Our people are being driven out of the polling stations. I have always been saying that Awami League is a party for agitation and movement, not for organizing elections. We will not win.

No sooner had he finished than Zillur Rahman (presently Minister for Local Government and Co-operatives) arrived. He was followed by Abdur Razzaque (present Water Resources Minister) and a few other leaders. Nearly all of them were mentioning about unfair means at the election.

Abdur Razzaque demurred, "Has any of us really seen our people being driven out of the polling stations?" There was no answer.

Sheikh Hasina said. "There is no need for verification. If this has not happened already, it will happen soon". She picked up the telephone and contacted a member of the Election Commission.

"I have information about false voting and resort to unfair means. Cancel the election."

The Commissioner was apparently surprised. "We have no information about the occurrence of any event that calls for postponement of election, let alone canceling it."

"Ask the Chief Election Commissioner to contact me," She left the telephone.

The Chief Election Commissioner was contacted at about 10 P.M. "What happened. You have not yet announced cancellation of election." She said in a loud voice.

"Madam, the results received so far show that Awami League candidate is leading the poll with a wide margin. It is almost certain that Muhammad Hanif will be the Mayor. Do you suggest~cancellation of election at this stage?" The Chief Election Commissioner said.

"I see, well you should ensure that the result is not reversed, I will contact you again," She left the telephone.

Zillur Rahman was doubtful. "It may be a trick", he said.

Sheikh Razzaque said, "I have close contact with a person at the Election Commission. Let me find out the truth.

Yes, ascertain the situation from different quarters, "She directed the leaders present there.

Abdur Razzaque returned at 1-30 AM. in the morning with the information that all news media including foreign media had broadcast the victory of Moharmmad Hanif. He was now unofficially the City Mayor.

I went upstairs to break the news to the leader. Sheikh Hasina was watching a Hindi film over a television with dish antenna connection. I told her that Abdur Razzaque was waiting downstairs to meet her.

"The story in the film has reached a climax, it is the most exciting part. No, I can't see anybody now. Tell him that I have gone to bed." Later Abdus Samad Azad wanted to talk to her over phone. He was given the same reply.

### **I WANT MY SHARE OF THE BOOTY**

It had been decided that Mayor Mahammad Hanif would take an oath at the grave of lather of the nation Bangahandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Tungipara. The time had been finalized. The leader of Opposition Sheikh Hasina would go to Tungipara with Mayor Hanif. Preparations for going to Tungipara was complete but Mayor Hanif did not turn up. When contacted the Mayor said that he was unwell. Hanif did not come to Sheikh Hasina's house, nor did he go to the Awami League office. Later, he formally took oath and charge of the office of the Mayor of Dhaka. He spoke to Begum Zia, the Prime Minister, once or twice a day on the hotline. He met her almost every day and conducted the affairs of the City Corporation in consultation with her. But he hardly came to Sheikh Hasina, Awami League leaders or workers. Sheikh Hasina, used to slap her own forehead and abuse Hanif - 'ungrateful, betrayer; I made him the Mayor after spending taka one crore and thirty seven lakh. Disloyal traitor!'

Sheikh Hasina kept on repeating the same theme to anybody she met. Someone said, "OK. Hanif Bhai (brother) has become the Mayor. He will make money, he will misappropriate money - let him do so. We don't want any share. But why shouldn't he work for the party?"

In response, Sheikh Hasina said, - "why'? Why should he misappropriate the money alone?" He will have to give us our shares. I have made him the Mayor after spending one crore thirty

seven lakh taka. I spent the money for him through you. Hanif has not spent a single paisa. Then why should Hanif alone enjoy the booty. I, Sheikh Hasina, will certainly realize the full compensation from him.”

Sheikh Hasina used to say - “I have phoned him a hundred times. But Mayor Hanif does not receive my call. He is asked to come and meet me but he does not do so. If I send an emissary, he says - ‘go away. Get back to the place where you came from. You have become the opposition party; stay there. You cannot go any further towards the seat of power, I am not with you (all words in colloquial slang).

### **JAHANARA IMAM IS DEAD - THE DANGER IS GONE**

In the evening of June 26 or 27, 1994 the President of the Awami League in the US conveyed the message over telephone that Shaliid-Janani (Martyr’s mother) Jahanara Imam had died on June 26. Sheikh Hasina started dancing in joy at the news and said — “Eat sweets. One of my enemies has left the world.” She wanted to become a leader — wanted to occupy my position. She is now dead — an evil obstacle is gone. You don’t know, Indian RAW (Indian Intelligence Agency) wanted to put Jahanara Imam in the position of leadership in my place. The woman (in slang) is dead, eat sweets. Distribute money to the beggars.

After a few days when the dead body of Jahanara Imam arrived at the Zia international airport from the States, Sheikh Hasina said. “Let’s go to the Airport and organize dropping of the dead body of the dangerous woman into the grave.”

Sheikh Hasina then drove towards the Airport in her red Nissan patrol. As she was being driven, she continued to mutter (in colloquial slang, a dialect spoken by the lowly) — the woman irritated me a lot. I don’t want to see the face of the dead woman. But I have to go there. In politics you have to do a lot of things against your wish.”

The daughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Hasina did go to the runway of the airport, but did not go near the body of late Jahanara Imam.

## **SHEIKH HASINA'S TRAIN IS SHOT AT**

On September 22, 1994, Thursday, the Leader of Opposition Sheikh Hasina traveled to Jessore by air and then drove to Khulna. She addressed a public meeting at Shahid Hadis Park in the afternoon. At night she dined at the house of her cousin, Sheikh Helal (eldest son of her paternal uncle Sheikh Naser) and stayed there. The next day—Friday, at 9 a.m. she started her journey towards North Bengal by train—a long journey. The ordinary passengers in the train could not know as to when the train would reach the destination as Sheikh Hasina would address meetings at different stations on the way. The train started at 9 am, but at every station it was stopped and she addressed public meetings. It took about an hour or an hour and a quarter at every station for her to address the meeting and return to the train. This is how the time was spent. There were more than a dozen journalists (whom Sheikh Hasina called dangerous or “Sanghatik” in Bengali rhyming with the Bengali word Sangbadik’ meaning journalists). In one of the VIP compartments towards the rear of the train was Sheikh Hasina. There were twelve policemen and officials in the front and the rear compartments. They had come from Dhaka for the security of Sheikh Hasina. The journalists were in the next compartment. In the remaining compartments were the ordinary passengers who were in great distress at the unexpected delay of the train journey which had already taken more than twenty four hours in place of normal six hours. Food and drinking water available to the passengers got exhausted and the passengers were suffering from thirst and shortage of food.

As the hunger and thirst of the children and the distress of ordinary passengers became unbearable, many passengers left the train with their families before reaching their destinations. For Sheikh Hasina, her companions and the journalists, ample food and drinking water (mineral water bottles) were being supplied at every station.

Throughout the day Sheikh Hasina addressed about twenty rail-station meetings. She even addressed meetings, at unscheduled places as interested people stopped the train. The journalists who came from Dhaka kept on taking notes at every meeting and Sheikh Hasina also kept the journalists under her scrutinizing eye. As she was repeating the same speech, journalists almost memorized her words and did not bother to get down from the train at night and record her speech.

It was seventeen minutes past eleven at night. 'The train would soon reach Ishwardi station, when Sheikh Hasina said. 'Are all the journalists (using the Bengali word danger-man), sleeping? I brought them from Dhaka after spending so much of money and they have been provided with comforts normally available to sons-in-law (for writing reports). The meetings are well attended. I am giving so many public speeches, and it seems that the journalists (danger—men) hardly take note of those. You wake them up and send them to my meetings so that they can send good reports for the newspapers.

The employee of Sheikh Hasina — Madan Mohan Das — (who carries her bags and in whose name the red Nissan Patrol Jeep is registered) said (in slang colloquial dialect) —'It is not necessary to wake them up by calling. Let there be two rounds of pistol shots and the sleepiness of the journalists will vanish. They will jump out of the train.'

As if Sheikh Hasina got Aladin's lamp, she shouted out to her cousin (the son of her father's cousin's) Bahauddin Naseem (currently her A.P.S) — "Fire two rounds of pistol shots."

She told her other companions in the compartment- "You will all tell the journalists that the train was fired at with the intention of killing Sheikh Hasina." A few minutes before the train reached Ishwardi, Bahauddin Naseem fired three rounds through the compartment window towards the compartment of the journalists. On hearing that, the officials in charge of Sheikh Hasina's security fired five or six rounds. The sound of all these firing scared the journalists and they started rolling on the floor of the compartment. Then we went to the journalists, and as had been planned earlier, started saying that the train had been fired at with the intention of killing Sheikh Hasina. When the train reached Ishwardi station, Amir Husain Amu, a Presidium Member started giving publicity over microphone that the train had been shot at with a view to killing Sheikh Hasina. The next day on November 24, the national dailies carried the news that Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina was fired at in the train, We, her companions, who knew the real story sat in the VIP Room of Bogra Circuit House and laughed a lot. At one stage of this merry-making, it was decided to call a 'Hartal' to protest against this "attempted killing" of Sheikh Hasina.

## THE ADVANCE OF TAKA FIFTY THOUSAND

It was October 2, 1994. The Dharala River of Rangpur can be quite difficult to cross, as its currents are as strong as those of the Padma and the Meghna. One has to cross the river in order to go to Nageswar and Fulbaria from Rangpur and Kurigram. There is one small wooden ferryboat for crossing the river. Two wooden boats were joined for making the ferry. The ferry could not accommodate more than one or two cars.

Sheikh Hasina would cross the river in this ferry for the purpose of addressing meetings at Nageswar — Fulbaria. After about half of the cars of her convoy crossed the river by the ferryboat, Sheikh Hasina's car was put on the ferry.

As soon as she stepped on it, she shouted out in horror — 'Oh my Lord! What kind of boat is this? There is only one small wooden ferry for crossing this large river!'

Sheikh Hasina was accompanied by only five companions including Amir Husain Amu, AL Presidium Member, and the driver of the car Mohammed Jalal. Six special branch police personnel were also there.

Sheikh Hasina told the boatmen, 'take care so that the boat does not sink.'

The two boatmen said, —"please don't be afraid. Though the ferry is made of wood and small, it is strong. It may sink only if the bottom of the boat breaks."

Presidium Member Amir Husain Amu said, — 'I hope you have not already damaged the bottom of the boat!'

The boatman replied, — "if we wanted to damage the boat, we could stealthily remove a wooden plank without anybody noticing it. When the boat reaches the mid-stream, and if the planks are removed, water will rush in and the boat will sink in no time. No one would have any idea as to what has happened. Sec everything is not in your hand. The Good Lord has given some power to us as well."

Presidium Member Ammi said, 'sink this boat if Khaleda Zia travels in this.'

After that Sheikh Hasina changed the topic and started talking to the boatmen and inquired about their wellbeing. The boatmen narrated to her their personal difficulties and distress and made some complaints regarding their service life. The leader of the opposition Sheikh Hasina assured them, — ‘if I go to power, I will meet all your demands.’

When the boat reached the other side, Sheikh Hasina along with others got down and all went to Nageswar and Fulbaria. After the meetings, she instructed that the return should be by the same route through which we had come. The original plan was to return to Dhaka via Jamalpur of Mymensingh. A part of the entourage had already proceeded towards Jamalpur according to the plan. Even then the daughter of Bangabandhu was unbending in her decision and ordered return through the same route. Hasina came back to the Dharala river. When we reached the ferry ghat, she got down from her red Nissan Patrol Jeep and asked everyone, including the Special Branch Security men, to cross the ferry. She said “I will be the last to cross the river.”

Following her instructions everyone crossed the ferry with their transports except Sheikh Hasina, the driver Jalal with the red Nissan Patrol, and mile. They boarded the ferry with the two boatmen. As the boat started to move, Sheikh Hasina began talking to the boatmen. She said, “you have so much of troubles worries and problems but Ziaur Rahman’s wife Khaleda and her sons are plundering the country. They are taking everything for themselves, and not giving anything to you at all. They should be got rid of. They have no right to live They are responsible for your distress. Do a thing. Kill Khaleda Zia by drowning her in this very river by sinking the ferry. I will give you five lakhs Taka. Now, take fifty thousand taka as advance.”

So saying, Sheikh Hasina brought out a wad of Tk. 500/- notes from her bag and wanted to hand it over to the boatmen. The boatmen were thunder-struck. Hasina said - “take it, hold the bundle.”

The boatmen hesitated and said, “well, Khaleda Zia does not come this way. We will not be able to do this. We are small people, how can we do this?”

Sheikh Hasina said — “you are the people who can do it. Take Taka Fifty thousand now, you will get the remaining four hundred and fifty thousand when the job is over.” She called her only

companion on the ferry by name (the author) and said “As soon as the boatmen finish their job, please hand over the remaining amount to them.”

The companion could not say anything. The boatmen were repeatedly saying — ‘how can we do this’? Begum Zia does not travel this way. We can’t do this.’

Hasina again said, “I am not asking you to do this straightway. You do it when Khaleda Zia comes this way”

The boatmen said — “we are poor people. We can’t retain money. This will be spent. How can we return your money when we have exhausted this’?”

Hasina then said, “you don’t have to return the money. You will only get the remaining amount after you have drowned Khaleda Zia. Take this money as tips. You’ll get the rest on completion of your assignment.”

Sheikh Hasina then almost forcibly pushed the bundle containing Taka Fifty thousand into the hands of the boatmen. The ferry reached the opposite bank. Sheikh Hasina got into the Jeep. As it started moving, her companion asked Sheikh Hasina “Leader, what have you done, just threw away taka fifty thousand into water?”

She replied “no, I haven’t dropped money into water; just made an investment. Since I had traveled in this route, I am sure Madam (Khaleda Zia) will follow suit and come this way. Then this investment will be of use. This is why I held out the temptation of Four and a half lakh taka. You can get even the tiger’s eye with money. If Khaleda Zia travels this way, then the job will be done. The greed of four and half lakh taka will prompt the boatmen to finish the job. Have the boatmen ever seen taka fifty thousand? I gave fifty thousand taka just to create greed for money in them”

## SCATTERING OF FLOWER

Fourteenth December of 1994 was the martyred intellectual day. Everyone assembled at the official residence of the leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina at 29 Minto Road. At seven in the morning, she started for the Martyrs' mausoleum at Mirpur. At eight-forty she placed floral wreath at the memorial.

Then she went to the slaughtering yard at Rayerbazar. After placing wreathes there she gave a short speech for the organization of the children of the martyred intellectuals — Prajanma'7 I. Thereafter, she went to see Nakib Ahmed Mannoo (now Sheikh Hasina's Deputy Private Secretary), son of her father's cousin at Bhuiyan Clinic near Malibagh Railway Crossing. On her return to the official residence, we started having lunch together at about 2-30 p.m. As we ate, Hasina ruefully commented — 'today a discussion meeting organized by the city Awami League will be held at Bangabandhu Avenue. After two days, I will resign from the position of the leader of the Opposition in the Parliament). This would be my last function where I would be the Chief Guest. I am the future Prime Minister. I am the daughter of the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahrnan. Before me is the movement for unseating Khaleda Zia. At this moment, it is necessary to enhance my image. I will attend a function associated with the Victory Day, but I am sure they have not organized any scattering of flowers on me. As a matter of fact these people — I mean AL leaders, are all uncultured, and businessmen and don't have a thinking mind. They don't do anything unless instructed. Can you organize spattering of flowers on me by the women and children at the function?

'Leader, don't worry,' I said, 'flower petals will be spattered on you.'" It was then three-thirty. Only after half an hour, the daughter of Bangabandhu will be on the podium of the function. How could I get girls and children within this short time? I, therefore, hurriedly bought some flowers from the High Court Mazar flower vendors and organized spattering of flowers by my wife and the daughter.

## MAINTAINING PET DOGS

Bahauddin Naseem is the son of a cousin of Sheikh Hasina's father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. He is now Hasina's APS. Three of her other cousins are. Nazir Ahmed Nazib (Chief of the Security of Prime Minister, Naquib Ahmed Manno, (now her DPS) and Kaniz Ahmed Kaniz (who occasionally became deranged and had been under treatment at a private clinic for mental patients at Banani) and is now in charge of the protocol at the Bangladesh Mission in the USA. Their home is in an unknown village in Madaripur, a dilapidated tin shed. They are poor through generations. Their fathers, uncles, and they themselves studied whatever little they could by staying at other people's homes as guest-students (taken on humanitarian grounds, locally known as lodging). They had no establishment of any sorts in Dhaka. They would sleep at night wherever they got a chance. [their nearest relative was Sheikh Hasina. So, there was no problem. They all, in a group. took shelter at Sheikh Hasina's home. They lived with Sheikh Hasina. Their food and clothing's were provided by her, who also gave them money. What more could one want?

Very soon, with the doles from the wealth of Sheikh Hasina, they got dozens of pants, shirts, shoes. Some of them even became wealthy through her patronage. Bahauddin Naseem, among them, thought that no one should speak to Sheikh Hasina directly, whoever he might be - even if he was a central party leader, or a leading intellectual. Irrespective of one's position or status, none should speak to Sheikh Hasina or transmit any news or information to her (except through him.

If anyone wanted to speak to her, one would have to approach Bahauddin Naseem first. He would transmit the information to Sheikh Hasina only if he considered it sufficiently important. Likewise, if she wanted to speak to anyone, the communication should go through him. Transmission of news would depend on Bahauddin's considered judgment. His important role developed on account of Sheikh Hasina's two weaknesses for him. One of these was that a few crores of Takas were kept in the name of Bahauddin Naseem in a Branch of the United Commercial Bank (UCBL Motijheel Branch) located at the East side of Adamjee Court, Motijheel. It may be mentioned that the chief accused in the murder case of the industrialist Zakir Uddin, Akhtaruzzaman Babu of Chittagong was the Director/Chairman of the Bank. The other weakness was that he is a son of Sheikh Mujib's cousin. This Bahauddin Naseem occasionally at Hasina's house at Road 5, Dhanmondi, regretfully said — 'The Mistress of this

house (Sheikh Hasina) is unscrupulous and ungrateful. She will betray any trust. She does not care to remember things. I would rather have some pet dogs here. They will be more faithful.

Quite often Bahauddin Naseem used to make comments like this. As a matter of fact, he brought two puppies and started maintaining them there. The two puppies have become quite big now at Hasina's house. They cannot be called puppies any more. Why did Bahauddin Naseem say such things? He was allowed to live in Sheikh Hasina's house. But strangely enough, Hasina with her peculiar mentality, would, with the help of gate-men, drive away Naseem's father or his brothers, whenever they wanted to visit him at her house.

### **HUSBAND AND WIFE NEVER SLEPT TOGETHER**

On December 28, 1994 Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina resigned from her seat in the Parliament. She vacated her official residence at 29 Minto Road and moved to her house at Road. 5 Dhanmondi. The ground and first floors of the house are in the name of Hasina's estranged husband Dr. Wazed Miah.

The second floor is in Sheikh Hasina's own name. The husband, Dr. Wazed Miah, a scientist, sought loan from Sheikh Hasina when he ran out of money after having constructed the first floor. Then Hasina got the second floor recorded in her name and gave Dr. Wazed the required money. However, Dr. Wazed Miah and Sheikh Hasina never spent a single night together in this house. Not only that, ever since Sheikh Hasina returned to Bangladesh on May 17, 1981, Hasina and Wazed had never spent a single night together as husband and wife. They even did not stay in the same house. Sheikh Hasina stayed for a few days at the official quarter of Dr. Wazed Miah at Mohakhali immediately after her return to Bangladesh on May 17, 1982.

Those days Dr. Wazed Miah stayed in a government Rest House. and not in his own quarters. After that, Sheikh Hasina went to her father's house at Road 32, Dhanmondi. Then she went to 29, Minto Road, the official residence of the leader of the Opposition. At that time the house of Sheikh Hasina and her husband Dr. Wazed Miah at 54, Road 5, Dhanmondi was rented out. In December 1994, the tenants of the house were almost forcibly driven out and she moved in. She participated in political movements and in the general election while staying in that house. After becoming the Prime Minister, she moved to 'Korotoa', now Ganabhavan. In all these 16/17 years, Dr. Wazed Miah never spent a night with Sheikh Hasina. They meet very infrequently in

all these years. But occasionally Dr. Wazed Miah used to appear aimlessly at her house, but was never greeted or received by Sheikh Hasina. She did not even extend normal courtesy to him.

When Sheikh Hlasina was staying at 29 Minto Road as the leader of the opposition. Dr. Wazed Miah, on an Eid day, came to visit her to extend Eid greetings as an ordinary visitor. But Hasina, though exchanged pleasantries with other visitors, did not take any notice of her husband. No one even asked him to take a seat. Dr. Wazed Miah cast a sad glance at Sheikh Hasina and slowly walked oat of the room and left through the front gate. Except Sheikh Hasina and some of her close associates, no one could know who the visitor was. Dr. Wazed Miah fell ill many times and was hospitalized even for months at the Suhrawardy Hospital and at a few other hospitals, but Sheikh Hasina never cared to visit her husband even once

### **INJURIES ON THE PERSON OF SHEIKH HASINA**

There are many signs of injury on the body of Sheikh Hasina. She sometimes groaned in pain, even sometimes burst into tears. She would call Maina (author's wife, serial No. 2 in the list of the declared undesirables') to administer a massage on a certain part of her body. The satan's son (Dr. Wazed Miah) hit me at this place in 1980. and I still suffer from pain, she would say.

One of Maina's primary duties was to massage her body. Almost every morning Maina massaged her body and woke her up from bed and then again massaged her while she went to bed. Maina also received or entertained important visitors. She would have initial talks with a visiting VIP and brief Sheikh Hasina about the purpose of the visit. She used to receive telephone calls and transmitted messages to Sheikh Hasina. She had to organize Hasina's daily meals and her wardrobe. Her additional duty was to keep Hasina informed of happenings outside.

These were Maina's responsibilities. But she did not have any regular employment. She was not paid for the duties performed. Rather Maina (author' wife) extended any help within her means, required by Sheikh Hasina.

Sheikh Hasina occasionally held Maina and cried, saying that, "the devil's son (Dr. Wazed Miah) used to beat me three times a day — in the morning, at noon and at night. To escape from the

possible beating by the bastard, at least once, I went out at noon to the park with Joy and Putul (her children). There is nothing left in my body due to the beating of that Satan, That devil's son started torturing me immediately after our marriage."

### **STRANGE CHARACTER, ACTION AND FATE**

Shaikh Hasina used to cry and repeatedly say that her husband, Dr. Wajed Miah, tortured her physically and beat her. Maina also shed tears in sympathy. But why did the husband torture her and give her thrashing? Shaikh Hasina never explained that. She possessed such a strange character and fate. Her only daughter having returned from abroad used to say that her mother had many colours and wondered what type of colour she would wear at a particular time. Whenever Shaikh Hasina would say something, Putul asked: "What number of colour are you putting on now?" She used to ask the same question to her maternal aunt. Shaikh Rehana, and tell her that her sister had a proven way of changing colours.

The daughter of Bangabandhu used to remain silent and would not reply. When Shaikh Hasina brought a proposal for marriage of her daughter. Putul immediately jumped at it and gave her consent. It appeared that she wanted to escape from the life with her mother through anybody. Shaikh Hasina also, it appeared, wanted to free herself by giving her daughter in marriage to any willing young man.

Shaikh Hasina would call over phone her only son, Joy, who was abroad and requested him to bring a saree for her when he would return to Bangladesh. Joy would curtly refuse the request and express his inability. She used to express her regrets before others at the behaviour of her children.

None could see any flaw in Shaikh Hasina's treatment of her children. Yet, it was strange that they would behave that way to her.

## **SHALL NOT MARRY DAUGHTER TO COLLABORATOR'S SON**

When the daughter of Bangabandhu arranged the marriage of her daughter Putul, an angry Dr. Wajed, rushed to House-54 at Dhanmandi and asked if the daughter belonged only to her and not to him as well. He refused to give consent to her marriage to the son of a collaborator, who used to roam around (during the liberation war) with rifle for the purpose of killing the freedom fighters. He asked Shaikh Hasina not to finalise the wedding. Sheikh Hasina replied that she would go ahead with the wedding regardless of what her husband thought. Dr. Wajed asked her once again not to marry the daughter to the son of a collaborator. Bangahandhu's daughter ignored the request and said that she did not care about collaborators; she valued the fact that they were her relatives. She cited the example of how her father, mother and brothers were killed by the freedom fighters. She said she was determined to arrange the wedding of her daughter as planned. Let Dr Wajed do anything he could to prevent it.

Dr. Wajed Mia replied that he would not be able to forcibly prevent the wedding. But he firmly said that he would not have anything to do with this wedding and refused to attend the functions

The marriage took as planned by Sheikh Hasina. True to his words, Dr. Wajed Miah also did not attend the functions, such as, formal engagement, turmeric rubbing. etc. Only on the day of the wedding, did he come to the function with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and left after a few minutes. He did not speak to anyone. nor did anybody talk to him at the function.

All arrangements for the marriage were mostly done by us (author and his wife Moyna). Besides, the son of Bangabandhu's cousin, Bahauddin Nasim at present A P.S. to Prime Minister was there. He took from us money for payment of the decorator's bill, cook's bill, butler's tips and other sundry items.

## **LEAVE AT ONCE**

At the wedding ceremony a microphone was placed before the Quazi (Marriage Registrar) for performing the marriage rituals. All of a sudden Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina shouted through the microphone and asked the guests to leave the place. "Is it a fun? Leave this place at once. Otherwise, there will be a serious consequence'.

The guests and others present were bewildered hearing these utterances from the mouth of Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina. Most of the guests started leaving the ceremony without understanding anything. Moyna wanted to know from Sheikh Hasina the reason for this sort of behavior. Her answer was that many people had come without invitation and her words were meant for them. After this Moyna tried to persuade many invited guests not to leave, but in vain. Most of the guests left without taking any food.

Wedding ceremony was over. Everybody had left. Only the bridegroom and his relatives were there. Sheikh Hasina got her daughter Putul seated in the car of the bridegroom and burst into tears embracing Maina. Sheikh Hasina told her:

“Maina, please don't go today leaving me alone”.

We along with our 5 year old daughter Swarnalata left the wedding place near the Assembly building. Accompanying Sheikh Hasina, we went to House - 54 at Road - 5 of Dhanmondi. Changing the expensive dress worn for the ceremony, Sheikh Hasina sat along with us on the floor and said — “Maina, I will not be able to pay back the debt in my life for what you have done today. I shall never forget you. Pointing to our daughter Swarnalata she said that the little girl “has been very fond of the since the day she was born.”

This was not for the first time. She had said such empty words many times before.

### **ONE CRORE 37 LAKH TAKA.**

January 10, 1995. It was the anniversary of the home-coming of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibar Rahman. After placing floral wreath on his portrait at Bangabandhu House, Sheikh Hasina was returning by her red Nissan Patrol Jeep. There was only one companion seated beside her. Driver Jalal was driving the jeep. Jalal asked Sheikh Hasina — “Apa (sister), didn't Mayor Hanif come to place floral wreath”?

Bangabandhu's daughter replied — "who knows? I have made a number of telephone calls to him asking him to offer floral wreaths. I have sent a number of people to him. Even then the unfaithful fellow did not come. The devil does not care at all. I have got this man elected as the Mayor by spending 1 crore 37 lakh Taka. You all know it; you have seen everything. How much pain I had to suffer Really once a person leaves the party he should not be given a re-entry. To become the Mayor he left me treacherously to join Ershad's party and called him his father. Being frustrated, when he came back to me I should not have taken this traitor in my Party. I did not understand that that devil would play so many tricks with me. Had understood. I would not have done what I did for him".

### **LEADER IS NOW SAYING PRAYERS**

Sheikh Hasina occupied House No.54, Road No.5 at Dhanmondi towards the end of 1994 and beginning from January 1995 she started movements, hartals, foot-march, etc. A foot-march was started at 2 p.m. from Tongi. Everybody would go on foot from Tongi to Mohakhali where a dais was erected and from where she would deliver her speech Sheikh Hasina was seated in her Nissan Patrol, while all other leaders and workers were walking on foot. Between 5 and 7 thousand people were in the foot-march. She was in the middle of the procession in her Jeep which maintained a speed keeping pace with the procession. About 20 microphones were placed in the rickshaws, from which different slogans were being chanted. It was the month of January — winter time, therefore not very unpleasant to walk. A little after midday suddenly it was announced through one microphone that the leader Sheikh Hasina was saying Asar prayer. The announcement was repeated through other microphones. It was quarter past three. Presidium member Tofail Ahmed (at present Sheikh Hasina's Industry Minister) said: "it is not the time for Asar prayer. Announce it a little later."

Hearing this all the leaders started laughing. Sheikh Hasina was saying her prayers keeping window glasses of the Nissan patrol jeep open, while thousands of people in the foot-march looked at Sheikh Hasina saying prayer. The prayer ended, but announcement over the microphones had not stopped. For about an hour 20 microphones continuously announced Sheikh Hasina's act of praying.

On another day the foot march would start from Mohammadpur and end at Badda close to the US Embassy. Sheikh Hasina directed that when prayer time would begin, announcement should

be made only then and not before. This time, the people in charge of the microphones were told of Sheikh Hasina's instructions beforehand and on that day announcements were made on time. Sheikh Hasina as usual said her prayer in the jeep keeping all its windows open, so that people could see her praying. When Bangabandhu's daughter came back home at Road No. 5 at Dhanmondi after the foot-march, one of her companions said — "Apa (sister) when you say prayers people throng to look at you, and this spoils your prayer. You should fix curtains on the glass windows of the Nissan jeep."

In reply Sheikh Hasina said—"No, the fixing of curtains will not look well on that expensive vehicle".

That companion demurred, "Well Apa (sister), you should keep a long shawl in the jeep. When you say prayer we should cover the jeep from all sides with the shawl (wrapper), so that no one can see you saying prayers".

People's leader (Sheikh Hasina) said — "No, you all are like my brothers; there will be no need of a shawl".

### **BETRAYAL WITH ME!**

Three days after this, foot march was held from Kanchpur bridge to Gulistan. In this march also there was a repetition of the same announcement, the same prayer, the same crowd of people looking at her. Noakhali district Awami League President Md. Hanif joined this foot-march. While walking by the side of Nissan Patrol of Sheikh Hasina, Md. Hanif said to her, "Leader, my name -sake is not seen". The leader asked, "which name-sake?" The district President said —"city Awami League President and Mayor of Dhaka Hanif is not seen'?"

The party President said angrily: — "You don't know that son of a bitch has betrayed me. He is ungrateful. I got him elected as the Mayor by spending 1 Crore 37 lakh Taka, but he became unfaithful to me. That fellow now meets Khaleda Zia everyday. He talks with Khaleda Zia over telephone several times a day; he does not come to me when I call him. He does not receive my phone call. When time comes, this traitor will be taught a lesson".

## I HAVE EATEN

Sheikh Hasina declared continuous hartal for three days throughout the country. Shops would not open, offices, courts, mills, factories, school and colleges would not function, wheels of the vehicles would not move. Hearing the declaration of three day long hartal in advance about half of Dhaka City dwellers left for their villages and other places. On the first day of the hartal, the motor pump for lifting water from the underground reserve tank to the overhead tank on the roof of Sheikh Hasina's House at Road No. 5 of Dhanniondi, went out of order. On the second day at about 8 p.m. one motor mechanic named Siraji was brought to the house. Siraji inspected the motor and said that one-day's time would be required to repair it and he would take it to his shop. Permission was given. Motor mechanic Siraji was a staunch supporter of Awami League. He waited to pay respect (salam) to Sheikh Hasina who had not taken bath for two days due to the break-down of the motor pump. She had not come downstairs during the whole day. In the circumstances mechanic Siraji put her in an embarrassing situation by expressing his desire to pay salam to her. Siraji had taken the trouble to come to the house on foot and he was a worker of the Awami League. Sheikh Hasina was unwilling to see him. Then she was told that if she gave an audience to the mechanic, the motor might be repaired quickly.

Bangabandhu's daughter asked —“Where does he come from?”

"From Dhaka" — reply came.

“Dhakaiya Kotti”?

“Yes, an original Dhakaiya”.

“Well, bring him to the VIP room upstairs, I will see him there”.

Mechanic Siraji came and gave salam to her. Sheikh Hasina asked —“Where is your home”?

Siraji replied- “At Nawabpur”.

Bangabandhu's daughter asked him to be seated.

Siraji sat down with great humility. The leader asked — “You work for the Awami League, is it not?”

Mechanic Siraji said —“From the days of Pakistan, I have been working for the Awami League.’

Sheikh Hasina dragged Mayor Hanif into the conversation and said- “I have made Hanif the Mayor of Dhaka. But he has betrayed me. You should not spare Hanif. I have spent Taka 1 Crore and 37 lakh on him. But Hanif being ungrateful, has entered into the fold of Khaleda Zia. At one stage she selected the motor mechanic as the alternative candidate for the Mayor in place of Hanif in the next election. Even with that her fulminations against the Mayor were not over.

Sheikh Hasina had given a strict instruction that when any person came to see her, her aides would take away the person after lapse of some time on some pretext. “I (Sheikh Hasina) have not so much beauty that I will keep sitting before me someone for hours together. It is not easy to tell a person that he should leave. So you will manage to take away the visitor on some plea.” The attendants remembered these instructions of the leader. Siraji was told — “Get up, the leader will take her dinner.”

Siraji stood up, but Bangabandhu's daughter did not stop speaking. He sat down again. For the second time he was told- “ It is time for you to leave, leader will have her meals for the night.”

But Bangabandhu’s daughter’s accusations against Mayor Hanif did not end. She kept on speaking. Mechanic Siraji sat down again. After about ten minutes the mechanic was asked for the third time.

“Please get up, leader will have her dinner.”

For the attendants Sheikh Hasina gave an interesting piece for information, ‘I have eaten,’ said she.

### **BIRTH DAY OF BANGABANDHU SHEIKH MUJIB**

Towards the end of February, 1995 in the afternoon at Road-32 of Dhanmondi. Sheikh Hasina, while taking tea said. “This time my father’s birthday should be observed in a grand manner. The main function will be held at Tungipara. Large number of people will be taken from Dhaka. A sub-committee will be formed with Obaidul Kader as its chief. And you should render help and co-operation to him. My father’s 76” birthday ceremony should be observed with great style and pomp.”

In the evening of March 1, 1995 Awami League Central Committee had a meeting at the Awami Foundation at Road No. 6 of Dhanmondi. A Sub-committee headed by Obaidul Kader (now Sports and Culture State Minister) was formed and a program for three days was chalked out. On the 1st day of the program, on the 17 of March, at 7 ant. day's program would start with placing floral wreaths at the mazar (graveyard) of the Father of the Nation. Next, at 8 am, sweets would be distributed among the children by Sheikh Hasina. After this at 3 p.m. discussions would be held in the playground of Gemadanga High School. Then mock fighting with sticks would be performed. On the second day of the program on the 18th of March at 7 O'clock in the evening a cultural show would be held at the Awami League central office in Dhaka. On the 3rd day at 3 p.m. a public meeting would be held in Bangabandhu Avenue.

For implementing the program all preparations were going on in full swing under direct supervision of Sheikh Hasina. This time there would be some newness in the program at Tungipara. About five hundred youths would travel from Dhaka to Tungipara. These young-men would be given one full sleeve white shirt each. On the front pocket of the shirt the word's "76th Birthday Ceremony of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman" would be embroidered.

Sheikh Hasina went to Tungipara on the 15th March to welcome the invited guests. On March 16, 500 young-men from Dhaka would come to Tungipara under the leadership of Obaidul Kader. Kader could not manage more than 2/3 hundred. Along with them a few more guests came from Dhaka. They were lodged in Gopalganj Circuit House, Tongipara upazilla court and office building and other places for the night. Food was provided.

Next day on the 17' of March at 7 am, the guests and others arrived at the grave of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Pursuant to the earlier decision Obaidul Kader stood in line with about 300 youths clad in full sleeve white shirts. At quarter past 7 am, floral wreaths were placed at the grave of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by her daughter Sheikh Hasina. She was followed by the guests. Then came the turn of the children. But no child other than Swarnala (my daughter) had come from Dhaka. The children who came from Tongipara village to take sweets, had little clothes on. Though a few of them had some clothes, these were so tattered that they looked almost naked. Those children were not allowed to place floral wreaths at the mazar. Swarnalata

was selected as the sole representative of them to offer the floral wreaths at the grave of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

### **YES, YES, VIDEO WOULD HAVE BEEN NICER**

The second item of the program was distribution of sweets among the children by Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina. At a distance of about thirty or forty feet from the mazar towards south-west there is a courtyard of another co-sharer of the Sheikh's house, where about 300 children were standing. On the west side of this courtyard stands the house of Sheikh Kabir an uncle of Sheikh Hasina. The porch of this house was to be used as the stage from where speech would be made. The function was being video recorded.

At 8:30 p.m. Sheikh Hasina in a solemn mood slowly walked to the stage to distribute sweets to the children. About 300 children present in the ceremony had little clothes on. On the other hand, hundreds of young men who came from Dhaka were standing in a row wearing new white full-sleeve shirts. And on the chest pocket of these shirts were written — 76th Birthday Ceremony of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman”.

The contrast was remarkable. It violated ordinary sense of decency and fairness. On the occasion of the birthday of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Raman children of Tongipara attending the ceremony did not get a piece of new cloth - what a fate for them!

I could not control myself. I severely rebuked Obaidul Kader and told him that “with the subscription money you along with your followers have managed to buy new shirts for yourselves. Was it not proper to bring some clothing for these wretched children?”

As I was upbraiding Obaidul Kader I felt that Sheikh Hasina was annoyed with me. To make the situation little lighter, I said: “at least it would have been good for video recording”

Sheikh Hasina said with pleasure — “yes, video would have been nicer.”

### **TELLING LIES TO SHEIKH HASINA**

On the 8 of November, 1995 at 3 p.m. Sheikh Hasina was holding a press conference on the second floor of the Awami League's office at Bangabandhu Avenue. Awami League had given a call for an uninterrupted hartal. This was about giving some relaxation of the program. In front of the office some AL workers clashed with the police. The riot police chased the AL workers. Some of them ran to the 2nd floor of the office and locked the collapsible gate. The riot police also came to the second floor beating the political workers. Sheikh Hasina was enraged at the riot police entering into the office. She asked Nasim to go and ascertain who were the involved police officers.

Bahauddin Nasim spent some time outside the office and then returned. He said, - "apa (sister), policemen who came here had taken off their name badges."

Hearing this Najib Ahmed said — "yes, policemen had removed their rank badges from their shoulders". Actually Najib Ahmed did not go downstairs nor did he see the policemen when they came inside the office. In fact, both he and Nasim told lies. He was trying to show to Sheikh Hasina that he was also engaged in action i.e. clashes with police. As Nasim already told lies, he supported Najib's lies. Sheikh Hasina accepted these lies as truth and asked them to file a case against the Inspector General of Police. Awami League's office Secretary Siddiquir Rahman filed a case in this regard and it has been pending in the court of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate.

### **IMPORTANCE OF AWAMI LEAGUE'S DECISION**

In 1995 in the election to the office of the Chairman of Chandpur Pourashava one Jubo League worker, defying party decision was running against the officially nominated Awami League candidate. He was elected chairman of the Pourashava. In order to sort out the issue of Party discipline a meeting of the Awami League Central Committee was held at the Awami Foundation office. In this meeting presided over Sheikh Hasina, it was decided that the Jubo League worker should be given an exemplary punishment for breaking party discipline. Otherwise in the coming parliamentary election some might put themselves up as candidates defying party decisions. It was unanimously decided that the newly elected chairman of Chandpur Pourashava should be expelled from the party organization.

Next day in the morning Sheikh Hasina's cousin, the fourth son of Sheikh Naser, Sheikh Rubel who is about twenty years old, came to Sheikh Hasina's house at Road - 5 of Dhanmondi. He said to Sheikh Hasina, — "Apa (sister), you should welcome the newly elected Chairman of Chandpur Pourashava with a garland".

Sheikh Hasina replied — "No. he will be expelled". "What are you saying? He has become chairman by defeating all, you should congratulate him by garlanding. Please call him immediately and entertain him with sweets," Sheikh Rubel said.

"The AL Central Working Committee had taken a decision last night to expel him from the party".

"Hang your working Committee. What do they know? The poor fellow has won — you should encourage him; instead, you are telling him the opposite. Bara Apa (eldest sister), please send him felicitation as the Awami League President."

Sheikh Hasina said — "let me do one thing, first we expel him, and afterwards expulsion will be withdrawn". Sheikh Rubel said — "you see, I am asking you to congratulate the chairman right now and entertain him with sweets".

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina said — "then, Zillur Rahman (AL General Secretary) should be told now, otherwise expulsion letter will be issued. May be the letter has already been dispatched." Sheikh Hasina telephoned Zillur Rahman and said — "Listen carefully. Don't issue the letter of expulsion to the newly elected chairman of Chandpur Pourashava. Hush up the matter".

When Sheikh Rubel was leaving, Najib Ahmed another cousin of Sheikh Hasina caught him downstairs and said — "Rubel, how much money have you taken from the Chairman of Chandpur Pourashava? Give me some share".

Rubel: "get away and let me go".

Najib: "Give me a share — otherwise I will tell Bara Apa (Sheikh Hasina) about it."

Rubel: "You will get it later, I have not received it yet".

Najib: "Will you give me the share?"

Rubel: "Yes, I will."

### **SPEECH TO KEEP THE PUBLIC CALM**

On August 24, 1995 alluring a fourteen year old girl named Yasmin with the promise to escort her home in Dinajpur, police raped her and left her dead. When the incident became known amid the news published in the dailies, the people of Dinajpur became agitated. They started taking out processions and placing demands against the police. Sheikh Hasina called Dinajpur District Awami League President Abdur Rahim and a few other District level leaders to come to Dhaka immediately. Advocate Abdur Rahim and four other leaders of Dinajpur held a closed door meeting with Sheikh Hasina in the library room of Bangabandhu Bhaban at 5 p.m. Sheikh Hasina instructed them to fuel a movement against the police and create an explosive situation. Sheikh Hasina advised them to give the movement a non-partisan facade and use it against Khaleda Zia's Government. You are not to look to Dhaka for guidance. You should start a movement from Dinajpur, which will end in Dhaka. Every day you have to organize clashes with the police. There have to be dead bodies — plenty of them. You may have to kill policemen also. Whatever money is required, you may take, but you have to implement this program. There are men in the police who, after getting money, would do the killing. Please contact the police and pay them money. Remember, if you are successful in these matters, you may then grab the power. Otherwise you will not be able to take Awami League into power in your whole life. If you can spread these clashes, along with looting, murders, arson, throughout the country you achieve your ends and come to power. The killing of Yasmin has created opportunities for us, and we shall have to seize the opportunity. Mind you, all these will have to be done in a non-partisan manner. Awami League's name should not be involved. Don't jump to the stage. You are to act from behind. Don't open your mouth as far as possible in any matter. You should speak about all the good things on earth. Do whatever mean action is necessary, but say the finest things. If you can create a major situation in Dinajpur. I will also go there. Do not have any talk with me there. I shall only give my speech "Have patience, be calm, etc." But you will continue your work as instructed. Now you take Tk. 20 Lakh. Depending on the circumstances,

whatever more money is needed will be made available to you there. I want work only. Have you arranged vehicles for carrying the money? If not, I will make arrangement for it.”

Advocate Abdur Rahim and others took leave of Sheikh Hasina and left Bangabandhu Rhaban at about 8 p.m.

At Dinajpur people became highly agitated because of offending policemen's attempt to hush up the matter. Two days later, Advocate Abdur Rahim tried to contact the leader at road 5 of Dhanmondi over telephone but, as she was not available, he left a message for Sheikh Hasina to the effect that no news had been received regarding dead body of any police personnel. However, seven members of the public had been killed by police firing. After Sheikh Hasina returned to her house, above message was given to her. She then dismissed Special Branch security guards and immediately went to the house of her uncle Sheikh Hafizur Rahman at Road No. 8 of Dhanmondi and talked with Advocate Abdur Rahim over telephone. Sheikh Hasina said, “Go ahead like this. Speed it up. You will get whatever money is needed. Strengthen the agitation. I am coming soon.

Shortly afterwards Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina went to Dinajpur. She exhorted the people in her speech to remain calm and to have patience. On her return, she commented that the situation was not as explosive as planned for. In other words, the money spent did not produce a matching result.

### **PAPER, PEN, AMMUNITION, EXPLOSIVES AND STRIPPING**

December 12, 1994. At the instruction of the Leader of the opposition Sheikh Hasina, Awami League's Student front, Bangladesh Student League arranged a large conference at the Shapla yard in Motijheel. Only a few days earlier, Prime Minister Begun Khaleda Zia had addressed a large conference of students organized by the BNP's student front, Nationalist Student Party (Chatra Dal) at the same Shapla Yard. In this conference the Prime Minister said that BNP's student front had enough strength to face the opposition. Sheikh Hasina arranged this conference as a counter measure.

Sheikh Hasina climbed to the dais at 4:15 p.m. The day's conference had a special feature. The Awami League leaders other than the Student League leaders and Sheikh Hasina were not allowed to take seats on the dais. Awami League leaders were seated at the foot of the dais. Sheikh Hasina took her seat, surrounded by the Student League leaders. Awami League leaders were to climb to the dais to speak from there and to resume their seats on the ground after the speech. The Leader of the Opposition, Sheikh Hasina in her speech made a clarion call to the students to be attentive to studies and she handed over exercise books and pens to the Student League leader present at the dais. While handing over paper and pen, photo-journalists took snaps repeatedly. On the following day in most of the national dailies photographs of paper and pen handing appeared and Sheikh Hasina's call to the students to be attentive to studies became news headlines. But earlier to that on Friday, December 9, 1994 at 3pm, Sheikh Hasina had called nine student League Leaders including Ajoy Kar, Pankaj, Himangshu Debnath, Jyotirmoy Shaha, Trivedy Bhoumik and Alam in the library room of Bangabandhu Bhaban at Road-32 of Dhanmondi and gave them Tk. 1 lac to buy ammunition and explosives which would be needed in the ensuing movement.

She said to them: "after our resignation from the Parliament on 28th December, you will create unprecedented terror in the whole country including Dhaka. Until the fall of Khaleda Zia's Government, you are to kill 5/10 persons every day. Otherwise Khaleda Zia will not fall. You will get whatever money is needed for this purpose. There is no dearth of money. You should build up a large stock of ammunitions and explosives. But you will not keep these in the University campus. If police raid is made in Dhaka University, all the ammunitions and explosives will be lost. Keep all these in safe places outside the University. You will discharge another responsibility seriously. There are government quarters on the western side of Eden College and Eskaton Garden where Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries live. They attend offices walking on foot during the hartals declared by me. In future, when I declare hartal, you will gather around their houses. When they go to the office on foot you will take away their clothes and make them naked in the street.

Student League leaders told — "please divide us into two groups. One group will be in charge of ammunition and explosives and the other will be responsible for making the secretaries naked".

Sheikh Hasina then entrusted Alam with the responsibility of disrobing the Secretaries.

After this many hartals passed away but secretaries could not be made naked. In spite of repeated reminders to Alam who was given the responsibility to remove the clothes of the Secretaries on behalf of Sheikh Hasina, no secretary was made naked. Then Sheikh Hasina started giving this responsibility virtually to all and sundry. Even after that Secretaries could not be made naked. Sheikh Hasina became extremely angry and gave twenty thousand taka to Alam and said, "now I give taka twenty thousand. Another sum of thirty thousand taka will be given after Secretaries are stripped off their clothes. You are to do this in the next hartal day. If you fail, the entire amount will have to be returned."

On the next hartal day, Alam made a certain person naked at Doel Yard of Dhaka University and this message of success was given to Sheikh Hasina at her house at Road No .5 of Dhanmondi. Highly pleased, Sheikh Hasina sent for Alam to her house for taking sweets. But by then Alam was caught by the police. On the following day in all newspapers of the country this news of forced striptease with photographs was published with headlines. Later, it was learnt that the victim of stripping was not a Secretary, but an ordinary citizen of Bangladesh - a poor and simple member of the public.

### **PROPOSAL TO ARMY CHIEF GENERAL NASIM TO SEIZE POWER**

Movements and agitation were of little avail against Prime Minister Khaleda Zia. It seemed that she was going to be the Leader of the 6th parliament through unilateral election of 15 February and would form the Government for the second time.

When election to the 6th Parliament, formation of Government by BNP and Khaleda Zia's becoming the Prime Minister again could not be resisted in any way, Sheikh Hasina held a secret discussion with Col Tarek Siddiqui, elder brother-in-law of Sheikh Rehana. (He was promoted to the rank of Brigadier by Sheikh Hasina immediately after she became the Prime Minister and he was made her Military Secretary). On 17th January, 1996 in the evening from the house of sister-in-law of Sheikh Rehana at Gulshan, and through Tarek Siddiqui she sent a proposal to the Army Chief Lt. General Abu Saleh Mohammad Nasim, Bir Bikarm to seize power by ousting Khleda Zia's Government through a Military coup. In 1982, Sheikh Hasina invited the then Army Chief Lt. General H. M. Ershad to topple BNP Government and gave him assurances of help and co-operation. In the same manner in mid January, 1996 Sheikh Hasina gave assurances of help, cooperation to General Nasim to capture power. But this time Army Chief

General Nasim, did not respond to the offer of Sheikh Hasina. He sent her a reply that he was a professional soldier. If there was a political crisis in the country the politicians should face and solve it politically. Army could not get involved in this crisis and thus create a fresh round of crisis.

Sheikh Hasina became highly disappointed and remarked that the country unfit for living. It is not possible to stay here.

### **I WANT DEAD BODIES OF POLICE, DEAD BODIES OF THE MILITARY**

It was the 10th of February, 1996, time — 9 am. Sheikh Hasina was holding an urgent and secret meeting with 11 student leaders including Student League President Enamul Haque Shamim, General Secretary Ishaque Ali Panna, Shamim Osman of Narayanganj (now Awami League M. P.), Ajoy Kar, Pankaj, Niranjana Shaha, Dipankar, Ashim and Sadan Das in the VIP drawing room of House No. 54 of Road No. 5 of Dhanmondi

On February 15, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia was going to hold Parliamentary Election. She had made a unilateral declaration to this effect Sheikh Hasina would resist this election with all her might. So, on that day i.e. 10th February at 3 p.m. there would be a meeting at Panthapath followed by a procession towards the residence of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia. Sheikh Hasina was holding this meeting in connection with the program of agitation and procession. Sheikh Hasina looked very worried and pale. No body was saying anything. She was also not talking. Every body was sitting in silence. It seems a defeated Queen was sitting with her beaten soldiers after losing her kingdom. Suddenly in a choked voice and with tears in her eyes Sheikh Hasina said, “today not a single brother of mine is alive. If I had only one brother who was alive, he would have complied with my instructions to implement our program. Can you not be my brothers? I got my lost brothers in you. If you consider me as your sister and if you are really my lost brothers, then you should be prepared in these hard days to implement difficult programs.

You now take an oath of allegiance to me. Saying this Sheikh Hasina administered oath to all present. Sheikh Hasina uttered in the oath “We make a solemn oath that we shall not hesitate to sacrifice our lives to implement a program of any nature. And we make solemn commitment that

we shall obey command of our leader Sheikh Hasina at the cost of our lives, even if the orders are extremely difficult”.

After reading out the oath, Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina said —‘Today I want ten dead bodies of police, five dead bodies of the army personnel’.

Asking for dead bodies of police was not new to Sheikh Hasina. In the past she had wanted dead bodies of the police many a time. However, the element of drama that was enacted today was absent previously. Those present could understand these words. But nobody took them seriously and as such her instructions were not obeyed. For that reason, on 10th February, 1996. Sheikh Hasina wanted 10 dead bodies of police and 5 dead bodies of military personnel and extracted a commitment from the workers to this effect under oath in a ritualistic atmosphere. Sheikh Hasina's cousin Abul Hasanat Abdullah (Son of Abdur Rob Serniahat) now Chief Whip of National Assembly entered the room with a briefcase in his hand. Sheikh Hasina opened the briefcase and threw ten bundles of Tk.500.00 notes i.e Taka 5 Lacs to the student leaders and told - “Take this, go and hit the targets.

Sheik Hasina left her house at road 5 of Dhanmondi at 3:30pm and arrived at the meeting in Panthapath. About 3 thousand people had gathered. After the speeches of three or four leaders, Sheikh Hasina came to the rostrum. At the outset she declared-We shall go to the residence of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in a procession. All of you shall take part in the procession.”

No sooner had she uttered these words, than the sounds of explosions and gunshots were heard from all sides. In a moment the assembled crowd started running for their lives without understanding anything. Leaders on the dais jumped from the rostrum and ran in all directions. With much difficulty Sheikh Hasina was rescued and taken to 32 Dhanmondi. In the competition of fleeing a leader was as smart as the other. It so happened that when Sheikh Hasina was a little slow in leaving the rostrum, one leader (now Minister) pushed her (Sheikh Hasina) down to the ground and fled with all the speed he could muster.

The program of the meeting and procession towards Prime Minister's residence was aborted. Afterwards, because of mass disturbances police stopped traffic in Sonargaon Road, Panthapath, Green Road. etc. and as a result 2 double-decker buses, 5 private cars, 4 auto rickshaws, etc. caught in traffic jam on Kalabagan Road and one Petrol pump at Sukrabad in

front of Road 32 were set on fire by the staff of Bangabandhu Bhaban at the instructions of Sheikh Hasina. Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina herself set fire to a scooter (baby-taxi) near Road 32 of Dhanmondi.

### **THE TRAITOR IS COMING**

Since Begum Khaleda Zia's BNP could not make sufficient number of voters come to the polling centres on the 15th February election day. People in the Political quarters, administration and others who had so long supported the government started opposing BNP openly.

On Saturday, the 17th of February, 1996 at about 3 p.m., the telephone no. 868779 of Sheikh Hasina on the first floor of the house at Road 5 at Dhaninondi started ringing. The telephone was picked up. A voice at the other end said: "I am Hanif."

'Which Hanif?'

'I am the Mayor of Dhaka.'

"Assalamu-alaikum, Hanif Bhai. Is it really you!"

"Yes, I am."

"Who are you?"

"I ....."

'O! Are you alright brother?'

'Yes, I am.'

'I wanted to talk to the Leader. I was sick for a long time and so couldn't talk to her. Can I get to her over phone?'

'Please hold on. Let me see where the Leader is.'

Bangabandhu's daughter was washing her hands after eating her lunch. 'Apa, the Mayor is on the line,' she was told.

Wiping her hands the Leader proceeded towards the phone, "Is not that Brother Mahiuddin'?" (Mayor of Chittagong City Corporation).

"No. It's the Mayor of Dhaka." Hearing this Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina halted and murmured. "The traitor!" She stood there for a while and thought about something deeply. Perhaps she was thinking whether she would talk to him at all. However she walked slowly and picked up the receiver.

"Hello. No, no, not here. You come to 32. (32 means Bangabandhu Bhaban at Road No. 32, Dhanmondi). Let us discuss things sitting at the sacred place. Yes, come at once. Yes, I will wait for you there.

Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina put down the phone and said, "Come, let's go to 32. The traitor is coming."

We went to the Bangabandhu House at Dhanmondi.

Sheikh Hasina started strolling in front of the gate of the Bangabandhu Bhaban while waiting for Mohammad Hanif. After about 20 minutes the Mayor arrived in a jeep flying the national flag. Sheikh Hasina went forward and opened the door of the Mayor's jeep. She then said: "here is the future Local Government (LGRD) Minister. Can the Mayor of Dhaka go without the LGRD Ministry'? You are the Minister for LGRD. As the Mayor descended from the jeep she introduced him to those who were present as the future LGRD Minister. Hearing this from the mouth of Sheikh Hasina, Mayor Hanif was beside himself with joy and said, "whatever the Leader pleases."

## **THE HERO, THE MINISTER AND THE PEOPLE'S STAGE**

Sheikh Hasina led Mayor Hanif to the office room in Bangabandhu Bhaban and asked for some sweets to be bought in. "Treat Hanif Bhai with sweets."

While taking sweets she said, Bangabandhu was the Great Hero, and you are also a hero. Can we do without a hero? The whole country, the whole nation is now casting its eyes on the hero, on you. The people Dhaka are looking towards you. I have brought the whole thing upto this point; now it is your turn to finish it off. Everything depends on you. Could my father become the father of the Nation if you all did not help or cooperate with him in those days? It's you the people of Dhaka who made him the father of the Nation? I am his daughter. If you do not help me, how can I be great. My brothers are not alive. You are my brother. I am your sister. Please cooperate with me. I shall never forget you. I shall not proceed without you.

Mayor Hanif said; "Yes, Leader, give me one month's time. I will dislodge Khaleda Zia."

Sheikh Hasina said. "no, one month's time can't be given. (It has to be sooner).

It was decided that a permanent stage would be set up in front of the Press Club from where movement would be continued round the clock till the fall of Khaleda Zia.

Later on, drama artist and TV news caster Ramendo Majumder and drama artist Pijush Bandopadhyaya named this stage the People's Platform (Janater Mancho).

Everyday songs, music, speeches and poetry recitations were rendered on a huge stage constructed in the middle of the road totally blocking the Topkhana road from East to West and to the north of the Secretariat. It closed the road from the Paltan turning to the Supreme Court building. At one stage a few officers and staff of the Secretariat joined this Mancho. All these were happening under the leadership of Dhaka's Mayor Mobammad Hanif whom Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina called the hero and the future LGRD Minister.

## **WE HAVE A PICNIC TODAY**

Meanwhile, for amending the constitution for the purpose of providing for a caretaker Government which would conduct a free election, Khaleda Zia called the session of the Seventh National Parliament for a day with the parliament members who had been elected in the uncontested election of 15th February (due to the boycott of election by Awami League). This she did under pressure from the foreign donor countries, specially the USA. The session of the Seventh National Parliament began for a day at 10 AM on March 25, 1996, under the leadership of Begum Khaleda Zia. This Seventh National Parliament was in session for amending the constitution in order to hold fresh election under a caretaker government Begum Khaleda Zia joined the session of the parliament at 10 O'clock in the morning. She was still there till reports last came in at the dead of night.

The following day was 26th March, the Independence Day. Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina started from Road No. 5, Dhanmondi at quarter to seven in the morning for laying floral wreath at the National Mausoleum at Savar. While going to the Mausoleum in her red Nissan Patrol (registered in the name of her paid employee, a bag carrier, Ram Mohan Das) she said: Golapi (one whose skin has the colour of the rose) is still sitting in the parliament. You woman (Khaleda Zia). what job do you have now in the parliament that you are still sitting there?

One of the fellow passengers said, "she is there to display her beauty."

Bangabandhu's daughter said, "Golapi (Khaleda Zia) exhibited her beauty sitting in the parliament during the whole day and whole night." She did not like that Khaleda Zia would be sitting till the morning. Does it take 24 hours to bring about the amendment in the constitution, she wondered.

Having arrived at the National Mausoleum Sheikh Hasina said, "Golapi (Prime Minister Khaleda Zia) has not yet come. Today I shall be the first to lay the wreath."

After laying the wreath at the Mausoleum Sheikh Hasina took the Kaliakoir - Gazipur road from Savar instead of proceeding towards Dhaka. She entered a place with a large area protected by barbed wire fencing near Ganakbari. There was a small bungalow type house amidst a lot of

trees. She sat in that house and said, “you take the ‘biriani’ (a kind of pilau rice) out of the car. I will spend the whole day here. Today we have a picnic.”

Biriani’ was ordered in the previous night at the Haji Biriani shop at Kazi Alauddin Road in old Dhaka. Before starting from Dhaka for the Mausoleum the ‘biriani’, plates, glasses etc. were put in a microbus. All these stuff were brought out from the microbus. The food was eaten amidst merriment punctuated by comments such as, “Golapi (Khaleda Zia) is still sitting in the parliament;” “Golapi has exhibited her beauty sitting there in the parliament.” There were other comments of the same standard.

### **MEETING BETWEEN SHEIKH HASINA AND GENERAL NASIM**

The Seventh Parliament sat for a day under the leadership of Begum Khaleda Zia and amended the constitution, making provisions for election under a caretaker Government. After that the Seventh National Parliament was declared dissolved, and announcement was made fixing the following 12th June 1996, as the date for election to the Eighth National Parliament. A caretaker government was formed with the former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman as its head.

Sheikh Hasina sent a proposal to the Army Chief Lt. General Abu Saleh Muhammad Nasim for a discussion. This proposal was sent through the former Army Chief (during Ershad’s regime) Lt. General (Rtd.) Nuruddin Khan (now Sheikh Hasina’s Minister) and Maj. General (Rtd.) Salam (now M.P. from Awami League and Chairman of the Red Crescent). Pursuant to this proposal the drama artist Lutfunnahar Lata (now residing in America) and her husband Major (Rtd.) Nasir arranged a meeting between the Army Chief General Nasim and Sheikh Hasina. The face to face meeting between Sheikh Hasina and the Army Chief was held at the apartment of the artist Lata and her husband in the four storied building with ceramic tiles facing named “Kulsum Villa” located at 117, Banani, Block-E, Road-4. In this meeting Bangabandhu’s daughter Sheikh Hasina sought the assistance of the Army Chief General Nasim and his forces in the election of 12th June next. In reply, the Army Chief General Nasim gave full assurance of all help and cooperation and said, if you (Sheikh Hasina) so desire, the armed forces would work at your command from now onwards.

While replying to this, Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina said, if this is true then in future I shall also abide by your instructions.

From then on, the Army Chief Lt. General Abu Saleh Muhammad Nasim B.B. started running the affairs of the Army on the suggestions and instructions from Sheikh Hasina.

### **THE HINDUS VOTE FOR THE BOAT**

Various political parties nominated their candidates to contest in the election on 12th June 1996. The Awami League also gave nominations. In the three seats of Gopalganj and two seats of Bagerhat nearly sixty five percent of the total voters belonged to the Hindu community.

Naturally in these five seats no candidate with any symbol other than boat, the traditional Awami League symbol, had any chance to win. In fact, never in the past anyone from any other Party could win nor will win in future. In the five seats of (1) Moksedpur and Kashiani, (2) Gopalganj and Kashiani, (3) Tungipara and Kotalipara, (4) Mollarhat and Fakirhat, (5) Baithaghata and Dacope, the Awami League candidate with the election symbol of boat will continue winning as long as sixty five percent of the total population remain Hindu. The candidates for these five seats do not need to do anything in their areas. Someone, whoever he may be and who by any means gets the Awami League ticket will secure 75% of the votes.

These five seats are called the gift seats. Whoever gets one of these gifts from Sheikh Hasina would become the representative or Member of the Parliament from this region. When an illiterate old Hindu of this region was asked why he had voted for Awami League, his reply was: "We do not understand what Awami League is or for that matter any other League. We vote for the boat, the Awami League's election symbol".

When asked why he had voted for boat, he said, "Why shouldn't I vote for boat? Boat is the carriage of the goddess. Mother goddess Durga came to the earth from paradise in this carriage (boat) to contain Asur (the evil). In that case, it will be dishonoring the carriage of the goddess if we do not vote for boat, Mother Durga will curse us. That's why haven't you noticed that at the time of vote we go and cast our vote for the symbol boat chanting 'mother Durga' 'mother Durga' just to please the Mother goddess Durga. Not a single one of us has defaulted in that. If we do not cast our vote for the boat, Mother Durga will be displeased. It will be very bad for us.

That's why, regardless of the urgency of any other call on the election day, we will somehow manage to go to the polling centre and vote for the symbol of boat.

### **SELLING THE SEAT TO A RAZAKAR**

Sheikh Hasina herself ran from three out of the five seats in this region. In another seat her cousin (through her aunt) Sheikh Selim was the contestant. And for the remaining constituency of Moksedpur-Kashiani Bangahandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina on several occasions gave her word of honour. She gave it voluntarily on her own accord.

She gave the author various types of assignments and at the end of each task she said, "I will make you the MP from Moksedpur-Kashiani." On several occasions she said the same thing to the author's wife Maina also. "I can never repay the debt for what you have done, and have been doing for me. I can never forget you. I will make Rentu (Matiur Rahman Rentu) MP from Moksedpur-Kashiani."

But no, Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina did not keep her word. She made promises but acted otherwise. She broke the promise, although in her speeches she said on numerous occasions about Begum Zia: "Allah does not like those who break promises". But why Matiur Rahman Rentu alone? Sheikh Hasina did not nominate Ismat Kadir Gama, a former student leader who is also a dedicated and honest person, Abul Hassan or Mukul Bose from Moksedpur-Kashiani. She nominated such a person against whom there are charges of armed collaboration (an armed Razakar during the war of liberation). It is said that during the War of Liberation in 1971 Lt. Col. Faruque became an armed Razakar. He set up a Razakar camp in his house, and burnt down many homesteads in that area with the help of the Pakistani army. He (Lt. Col. Faruque) is a distant nephew of the famous Muslim League leader Salam Khan. After the liberation of Bangladesh he had tied away from his home fearing reprisals. Later, perhaps in 1972/73, he joined the Bangladesh Army at Jessore. He served in the army for a period between twenty and twenty five years and got a posting in the Army Supply Corps endearing himself to General Ershad. He made lots of money. Matiur Rahman Rentu, Ismat Kadir Gama, Abul Hassan, Mukul Bose are all Freedom Fighters. Ignoring all these Freedom Fighters and dedicated people, Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina gave nomination to Lt. Col. Faruk Khan, a Razakar of 1971 who had just gone on LPR (Leave Preparatory to Retirement). But why? Lt. Col. Faruk Khan gave Tk. one crore to Bangabandhu's daughter out

of his ill-gotten money during his career in the army supply corps. Sheikh Hasina sold out the Moksedpur-Kashiani seat to a Razakar in consideration of taka one crore in cash.

### **HINDUS ARE MY STRENGTH AND HOPE**

The day when Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina announced the nomination of Awami League, she declared that she herself would be contesting in the election from four seats. One in Gopalganj, two in Bagerhat and one in Demra of Dhaka. But on the day following this declaration, she withdrew her candidature from Demra. A few leaders led by the Mayor of Dhaka, Muhammad Hanif made a request to her saying: you are contesting from three seats of Gopalganj and Bagerhat (Tungipara, the other side of river Madhumati), whereas you are not contesting from a single seat in Dhaka. Khaleda Zia is contesting from five seats; you should also contest from five. You are our leader. Please contest at least from two seats in Dhaka.

In reply Sheikh Hasina said, "Gopalganj and Bagerhat have 70% Hindu population. What's the percentage of Hindus in Dhaka? The Muslims do not vote for me. Muslims are unfaithful and ungrateful. The Hindus are loyal. I can rely on the Hindus and trust them. But I can't trust the Muslims. Nor can I rely on them. That's why I can contest from three seats in 70% Hindu dominated areas of Gopalganj and Bagerhat, but not even from one seat in Dhaka. Though I had decided to stand from Dhaka, I had to withdraw my nomination after I made queries and came to know that there are not many Hindus in Demra." Mayor of Dhaka Hanif said, that the idea was wrong. If the Muslims did not vote Awami League, how could its candidates win?

Bangabandhu's daughter said, basically Awami League had the entire vote bank of the Hindus; the rest is made up by the relatives and sundry groups pressurized to vote in our favour. Had there been no Hindus, my party could not win even in a single seat. I have clinched this caretaker government after so much of movements and fights only to ensure that the Hindus could cast their votes safely and peacefully. Hindus are my strength. Hindus are my hope.

The election campaign was progressing fast. Posters, placards, festoons, banners and wall writings were everywhere. There was hardly any empty spot. Meetings and processions were going on all the time.

## **SHE FLEES AWAY AFTER ORDERING DEPLOYMENT OF THE ARMY**

In the last week of April, 1996, Army Chief General Nasim sent a message through the drama artist Lutfunnahar Lata to Sheikh Hasina that all authority relating to the armed forces was vested in the President through the constitutional amendment that had been made in the non stop session of the Seventh Parliament that lasted for more than 24 hours on 25th March, 1996. In other words, all authority over the armed forces rested with the present President Abdur Rahman Biswas of BNP. Hearing this news Sheikh Hasina said, "I see. That is why Khaleda Zia was sitting in the Parliament throughout the whole day and night. She was doing this mischief. I did not realise this earlier, nor did I think about it."

Then Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina got excited and said, what constitution? What amendment? General Nasim shall have to do what I ask him to do. He has given me his word of honour that he would run the army in the manner as I ask. Lata (Lutfunnahar Lata), you go and tell the Army Chief General Nasim to do whatever I ask him to do and the way I want him to do. Rest of the responsibilities are mine and I shall manage them.

According to the constitution, the entire authority and responsibility regarding the armed forces lay with President Abdur Rahman Biswas. But the Army Chief General Nasim B.B. started running the army everyday every moment on the instructions of Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina. Crisis cropped up inside the army owing to dual command. If President Rahman Biswas (supreme commander of the forces) gave any order to the Army Chief General Nasim would give counter order on the instruction of Sheikh Hasina. If President Rahman Biswas ordered the transfer of a senior army officer, General Nasim would give a counter order on the instruction of Sheikh Hasina. The crisis within the armed forces deepened further and was heading for a conflict. In the circumstances, President Abdur Rahman Biswas compulsorily retired Maj. General Ghulam Helal Morshed Khan GOC, Bogra cantonment, and the Deputy Director General of BDR Brigadier Miran Hamidur Rahman. (One of those retired senior army officers was a relation of Sheikh Hasina's cousin Sheikh Helal). When as a counter measure, Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina advised the retirement of four senior Army officers, the army Chief General Nasim passed orders for the retirement of these senior army officers. (Maj. General Muhammad Abdul Matin, Maj. General Subid Ali Bhuiyan, Brigadier Abdur Rahim and Cot. Abdus Salam). As a result, the conflict reached its peak. When President Abdur Rahman Biswas, who was constitutionally in full authority over the aimed forces, decided to retire the

Army Chief General Nasim, Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina instructed the latter on 19th May, 1996, to pass order for marching the army in his support from all over the country to Dhaka. The Army chief General Nasim accordingly ordered all units to march towards Dhaka after 2 O'clock on the night of 19th May, that is in the morning of the 20th May.

A few hours later at 8 A.M. on 20th May, Sheikh Hasina surreptitiously left Dhaka for Cox's Bazar by a private airline named Aero Bengal without informing the Army Chief General Nasim. The army units from Bogra, Rangpur, Jessore and Mymensingh cantonments started marching towards Dhaka. On the order of the Army Chief, Brigadier Zillur Rahman, Commander of Mymensingh Brigade and Brigadier Shafi Mehboob, Commander of Bogra Brigade provided the main leadership to the army units coming from outside Dhaka. In the circumstances President Abdur Rahman Biswas dismissed the Army Chief General Nasim and appointed Maj. General Mahbubur Rahman the new Army Chief and promoted him to the rank of Lt. General. General Nasim continued claiming himself as the Army Chief defying his dismissal order and the appointment of General Mahbubur Rahman as the new Army Chief. He tried repeatedly to establish contact with Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina for next instructions but failed.

Sheikh Hasina, on the other hand, having reached Cox's Bazar by Aero Bengal, owned by Dr. Iqbal, - now an M.P. from Awami League and a business partner of the Sheikh family — was gazing at the sea and watching sea waves sitting in the Circuit House (the Circuit House is at the top of the hill) of Cox's Bazar. And while taking a cup of tea, she was sipping a little bit of phensydyl every now and then.

She had however, never taken phensydyl before. When she lost the election of 1991 and moved to the official residence at No. 29 Minto Road as the Leader of the Opposition, she would always suffer from cough, cold and sleeplessness. Her nose was running all the time. She would have a headache and could not sleep because of tension. In particular, her voice would break down when she delivered a speech. This was the greatest problem. She swallowed hundreds of bottles of homeopathic medicines given by Dr. S. A. Malek (her political advisor). These had no effect. Sometimes, juice of 'Tulsi' leaves and 'Jaishti Madhu' (juice of a particular bark that tastes like honey: translator) would also be taken along with homeopathic medicines. But nothing worked. One day Dr. Malek brought a bottle of Indian Phensydyl and said to Bangabandhu's daughter, " Leader, take two spoonfuls of this medicine three times a day. You

will see that your cold and irritating coughs are gone. There will be no problem with your voice and headache will also disappear. You will have good sleep at night.”

Someone said, “oh, no’ Apa, this is phensydyl. People who take this get addicted to it. It is an intoxicant. Brother Malek, what is this that you have brought’?”

Dr. S. A. Malek said, “This medicine was there in our country. We prescribed it so many times. It is very effective and a good medicine. It was banned during Ershad’s regime for no particular reason. Leader, take this. If your troubles are not over then tell me.”

This happened during early 1992. She started taking two spoonfuls of it three times a day. On those days when there were meetings and conferences or she had to make speeches, she took five to six spoonfuls of it three to four times a day. This used to be taken to the place of the meeting. She would even carry it to the place of the meeting. She would take it there mixing it with tea for keeping the voice in order till the last moment before making a speech. She took it even in the midst of making a speech if it was to be a long one.

Thus the Leader took phensydyl every day regularly. Later, she could not give it up. Whenever she stopped taking phensydyl, her old ailments such as, cold, throat itching, voice breakdown during speeches, sleeplessness came back. So Dr. S. A. Malek continued giving phensydyl to Sheikh Hasina regularly and the Leader too would take it.

In order to draw her attention, Bangabandhu’s daughter Sheikh Hasina was asked, Apa, what’s the news about Dhaka?

The leader replied in a poetical tone, none can beat the other, it is a game of equals. Then she added, I have started it, now anything may happen.

The leader had a number of street corner meetings to address on a certain day. She had to keep her throat clear. The situation in Dhaka had become tense. So she took a bit more of phensydyl. The meeting at Cox’s Bazar started at 11 AM. About that time the news came that the situation in Dhaka had worsened. It was not clear as to who was controlling Dhaka cantonment because of the conflict between President Rahman Biswas and General Nasim. But, that Savar and Gazipur cantonments were with President Biswas was clear from the fact

that the army units from Savar cantonment had taken position at Aricha Ghat on the order of the GOC, 9th Division Maj. General Imamuzzaman to oppose the troops coming towards Dhaka from Jessore, Rangpur, Bogra and Mymensingh cantonments as directed by General Nasim. These soldiers stopped the ferry operation and warned through wireless that the troops waiting to cross the river at Daulatdia and Nagarbari Ghats would be drowned if they tried to cross the river. On the other side, the troops at Gazipur stopped the units coming from Mymensingh by putting barricades on the road. The situation at the cantonments of Comilla, Chittagong and Bandarban could not be ascertained. Meanwhile Sheikh Hasina had already addressed seven street corner meetings. News came that tanks were moving on the streets of Dhaka. But for whom was that movement? Who had won the battle? General Nasim? Or President Rahman Biswas? This could not be known. In the circumstances Sheikh Hasina cancelled the street corner programs and became nervous with the thought as to where she would flee. Some suggested that she should go to Teknaf, some mentioned Bandarban. There were still some others who suggested Chittagong.

The present Awami League M.P. from Bandarban, Bir Bahadur, started for Bandarban with Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina. On the way, Mayor Mohiuddin of Chittagong City Corporation, Sheikh Hasina's present Labour Minister Mannan and Aviation Minister Engineer Mosharraf Hossain met Sheikh Hasina and took her to Chittagong Circuit House.

Sheikh Hasina along with Mayor Mohiuddin, who was the President, city Awami League, the Labour Minister Mannan, central leader Advocate Sahara Khatun, central leader Dr. Mostafa Mahiuddin Jalal and others were watching television sitting in the VVIP Room of Chittagong Circuit House. Bangabandhu's daughter was totally silent about the action to be taken at this critical moment, as if there was nothing to be done other than watching TV. She became quiet after making a phone call to Dhaka asking Sheikh Rehana to leave the house and stay somewhere else. Advocate Sahara Khatun asked, "Leader, what should we do now?"

The Leader hesitated to reply. The author, the companion of the Leader who had come from Dhaka said, "we should now take out a procession in support of General Nasim."

Advocate Sahara Khatun inquired: "why such a procession?"

“General Nasim is the opponent of BNP President Rahman Biswas. That is why a procession should be taken out. There would be check and balance in the Army if General Nasim stays as the Army chief. General Nasim’s fall would mean the establishment of the sole authority of President Rahman Biswas of BNP over the Army. This would have impact on the election on June 12th”

“O.K. Bring out a procession in support of Nasim,” said Sheikh Hasina and so saying she went to her bedroom. Mayor of Chittagong Mahiuddin and AL President Mannan refused to bring out a procession. When they were pressed to do so, they said, where shall we get the people now and what will be the slogan in the procession?

The author said, “It is better than doing nothing. We must go to power after 12 June election. The protest must be there even if Nasim does not last. You take out a procession. In the procession raise the slogans: General Nasim Zindabad (Long Live General Nasim). Down with Rahman Biswas.”

At this stage Mahiuddin and Mannan left and paraded round the Circuit House with a procession of some people.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas gave a speech on TV. Hearing the speech Sheikh Hasina said, where is the Caretaker Government? Where is Habibur Rahman? Sitting in the Parliament for 24 hours Khaleda Zia has amended the constitution in such a manner that power has actually remained in their hands. We could not understand anything of it.

Sheikh Hasina again went back to the bedroom. The author telephoned Dhaka and said to his wife, “you go to the Awami League office and to the houses of the Awami League leaders and workers. Tell them that the President of the Party Sheikh Hasina has asked them to bring out processions in which the slogans would be ‘General Nasim Zindabad’, ‘Down with Rahman Biswas’.

Suddenly I heard Sheikh Hasina’s voice on the telephone, which had a connection with a set kept in the bed room.

She muttered “Hei, Hei.” Then nothing was heard. Obviously, the leader had lifted the receiver in the bedroom and was eavesdropping.

The Leader listened to the speech of the Chief of the Caretaker Government and again went back to the bedroom. When Najib and Bahauddin Nasim suggested to her to leave the Circuit House and go somewhere, she said, “Where shall I go? You better wait and see what happens.” So saying she drank half a bottle of phensydyl and hit the bed.

At midnight it was clear that General Nasim had lost the battle.

In the morning Sheikh Hasina said, “It is good that Nasim has lost. I had told him to seize power in the month of February but he showed his pride at that time. He is rightly served.”

Bangabandhu’s daughter Sheikh Hasina returned to Dhaka from Chittagong by the 9 o’clock flight in the morning. The army chief General Nasim was dismissed and arrested. Since then Bangabandhu’s daughter Sheikh Hasina has never uttered the name of General Nasim.

### **ABU HENA’S ARRIVAL**

It was June 12, 1996. Parliamentary election was held setting an unprecedented example. People irrespective of sex spontaneously went to the polling centers and cast their votes. Election results started being announced on Bangladesh television after dusk. In the beginning it appeared that Awami League had a good lead. After 10 p.m. however it was seen that BNP was leading steadily.

Sheikh Hasina and all others present felt very glad at the election results declared at the early stage. But they began getting worried at the results that came out after 10 p.m.

After midnight Bangabandhu's daughter asked everyone present in her house to leave saying that there could be an attack on her. Sheikh Hasina's house at Road No. 5 of Dhanmondi became quiet after everyone had left. At about 1 o'clock at night the Chief Election Commissioner, Abu Hena accompanied by another person came to Sheikh Hasina's house and for about an hour they had a secret session.

## **GOVERNMENT BY CONSENSUS**

After the final results of the election were announced, it appeared that Awami League had got more seats than any other party. But Bangabandhu's daughter calculated that if BNP, Jatiyo Party, Jamaat and ISD (Rab) formed a coalition, the total number of seats would be one seat more than those of Awami League. Thus Awami League would be short by one seat. In that case instead of Awami League, this alliance or combined parties of BNP, Jatiyo party and JSD (Rab) could form the government and could easily divide the 30 reserve women seats in the Parliament among themselves. With this calculation Sheikh Hasina started saying; "Abu Hena (The Chief Election Commissioner) deceived me like this? Cheated me? He did not keep his word and did not act as he had agreed to do."

On 15th June in the evening Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina ordered to bring the JSD Leader and the only elected Member of the Parliament from JSD, ASM Rab to her house by means fair or foul.

When this information was given to ASM Rab, the domesticated Opposition Leader and the watchdog of the combined parties of the autocrat Ershad's 1988 Parliament, he jumped at it. It seemed as if he was waiting like a swallow for such a news. ASM Rab, MP rushed to the House of Sheikh Hasina who made him sit in the VVIP room on the first floor and offered him some sweets. Then she said, "brother Rab, you got this country liberated. You participated in the creation of Bangladesh. It is you who made my father Bangabandhu from Sheikh Mujib. You have contributed to making him known all over the world. At the root of all these you had the maximum personal contribution."

ASM Rab said, "you were not there in politics at that time. So you do not know that we never wanted to oppose Bangabandhu. I personally never opposed him. It was those who surrounded Bangabandhu and a few others who had created the distance between us. In fact Bangabandhu was our real leader. And we were the real followers of Bangabandhu."

Sheikh Hasina said, "yes, Brother Rab, you are the real follower of Bangabandhu. That is why I want to form the cabinet with you. We all want to form the government jointly and run the country."

ASM Rab said. "I had long been mentally ready to have the government under your leadership. All these days I was only waiting for your call."

Bangabandhu's daughter said, "believe me, I will return your trust (in me)."

ASM Rab said, "yes, there is no lack of confidence in you. You are the daughter of Bangabandhu, how can one disbelieve you?"

ASM Rab looked at Najib Ahmed, Bahauddin Nasim, Nakib Ahmed Manu, Kaniz Ahmed (all of them are the sons of the cousin of Sheikh Hasina's father), Ram Mohan Das, Mrinal Kanti Das, Anam and Sentu, who were all present there and said, "I want to talk to the Leader alone."

Sheikh Hasina asked everyone present there to leave.

After they left, Sheikh Hasina and the JSD leader ASM Rab started their negotiations inside the room. After about five minutes Sheikh Hasina asked for a pen and two sheets of paper which were sent inside. It could be understood from outside that Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina and the JSD leader ASM Rab concluded a written agreement between themselves. After about 15 minutes ASM Rab went away. Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina declared, "ASM Rab has been managed. May be I can now form the Government."

The next morning Ram Mohan Das presented a calculation and tried to convince Sheikh Hasina that even if BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-i-Islam, JSD (Rab) and the only Independent MP Makbul Hussain of Kushtia formed an alliance, still then Awami League would retain its majority and could form the government. According to the constitution the Members of the Parliament who had been elected from more than one seat could retain only one seat and was required to vacate the rest before taking oath. The seat so vacated would be declared vacant. That is, one M.P. would represent only one constituency irrespective of the number of seats from which he was elected. Thus, BNP, Jatiya Party, JSD, Jamaat and the Independent Alliance would be required to vacate 11 seats and Awami League only four. If the calculation was made deducting the seats to be vacated before taking oath, it appeared that Awami League alone would have one seat more than those of the above mentioned Alliance. When she understood this calculation, she said, "where had you been earlier? Now everything is over. Rab bluffed me and

got it in writing. It cannot be changed now. You bastards, what did you do earlier? What shall I do now?"

This is the way in which the government by consensus formed by Sheikh Hasina came into being and this is how JSD leader ASM Rab became a Minister.

### **ROWSHAN ERSHAD GRABS HER FEET**

It was June 19, 1996. At 7 p.m. Rowshan Ershad, wife of the former President Hussain Muhammad Ershad called on Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina at her residence at No. 5 Dhanmondi. In the VVIP room on the first floor the former First Lady Rowshan Ershad and Sheikh Hasina sat face to face on a sofa. The distance between the two was about 5 feet. Rowshan Ershad said, "apa (sister), I have a request to make to you. Please do not make Zeenat Musharraf a lady M.P. from Jatiya Party."

Sheikh Hasina said, "this is your affair. Whoever is nominated by you I will make her the lady M.P."

Rowshan Ershad said, "apa, you are my sister. You are a woman too. You have also a husband. Be kind to me as a sister. Please help me in getting back my husband. You please do not make that woman of loose morals, Zeenat Musharraf a lady M.P. from Jatiya Party."

Sheikh Hasina said, "no, I shall allot two seats of lady M.P. to Jatiya Party and one to Jamaat.

Rowshan Ershad said, "in that case, whatever happens, do not make Zeenat an M.P." Sheikh Hasina replied that it was her problem.

Rowshan Ershad got up from the sofa, straightway grabbed the feet of Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina and said, "apa, 'you are my sister. You please do not push me to this danger. You please save my husband.'

Sheikh Hasina said, "what are you doing'? You leave my feet, I shall see."

Rowshan Ershad said, 'apa, you give me your word."

Sheikh Hasina said, "alright, I will not make Zeenat an MP"

No sooner had Rowshan Ershad gone out of the VVIP room through the western door and reached the stairs than Sheikh Hasina started dancing. She was saying: "I will spare none. I must make Zeenat'Musharraf an MP"

### **SEATS FOR THE BURQA-CLAD WOMEN**

At the time of the movement for the downfall of Khaleda Zia, Hasina built up a close political relationship with the war criminal and killer Ghulam Azam and his party Jamaat-I-Islami. She had a secret meeting with Ghulam Azam and Matiur Rahman Nizami in the house of his brother-in-law Musharraf Hussain (father-in-law of her daughter Putul) at Uttara on the eve of the election.

It was decided in that meeting that the Jamaat workers and supporters would not cast their votes in favour of the BNP candidates in the election of June 12, 1996. It was also decided that they would try to vote for Awami League candidates in those places where Jamaat's position was weak. In exchange, Sheikh Hasina would give Jamaat two seats of lady M.Ps.

It was 10 P.M. Sheikh Hasina was having her dinner. She recalled her promise to Jamaat leaders and said, "I had told them that I would give two seats of lady MPs to the Burqa-clad women. At that time I thought that Jamaat would get about 15 seats. But Jamaat could secure only two seats. Now I won't give the Burqu-clad women more than one seat of lady M.P."

Hearing this Sheikh Hasina's aunt (wife of Sheikh Nasser and mother of Sheikh Helal M.P.) said, "now it is all the same, whether you give or don't give them seats. The job is over."

That is, Jamaat may or may not be given lady M.P. seats now. The necessity is over.

Bangabandhu's daughter said, "Let me give one woman seat to the Burqa-clad in order to keep them in my grip in the future. Mrs. Matiur Rahman Rento (Maina) said. "apa, what are you saying? Don't break anybody's heart and don't shatter people's confidence. You are the leader of the pro-liberation forces. People consider you as the symbol of independence. If you allot a

woman M.P seat to Jamaat then there will be no difference between you and Khaleda Zia. Pro-liberation people will be disheartened. It will be harmful for you. Please don't do this."

After that the freedom fighter Matiur Rahman Rentu and Mrs. Matiur Rahman Rentu (Maina) together grabbed Sheikh Hasina's feet and said crying, apa, you give us word that you would not give a single woman M.P. seat to Jamaat."

Sheikh Hasina said, "let me think."

It was 2 o'clock at night.

Next morning at 7 the freedom fighter Matiur Rahman Rentu and Mrs. Matiur Rahman Rentu (Maina) first went to the house of Sheikh Hasina's aunt (Sheikh Helal's mother) at Indira road. Both of them fell at the feet of Sheikh Hasina's aunt and said, "Only you can dissuade Apa (Sheikh Hasina) from giving woman M.P. seats to Jamaat."

The aunt referred to what she had said to Hasina a day earlier: 'you may give or may not give women's seats to Jamaat'.

Both husband and the wife said, "No aunt, you would only say: don't give any woman M.P. seat to Jamaat."

The aunt was almost forced to go to the house of Sheikh Hasina at Road No.5. Dhanmondi. Once again both of us grabbed the feet of Sheikh Hasina and started imploring her not to give a woman M.P. seat to Jamaat. The aunt said, "these two are crying. Moreover it won't be a loss for you if you do not give Jamaat a woman M.P. seat."

Sheikh Hasina said, "Well, if you do not want it, I will not give."

## **HANIF, MINISTER FOR LGRD**

Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina was to take oath as the Prime Minister from President Abdur Rahman Biswas at Bangabhaban at 7 p.m. on 23rd of June, 1996. Everybody was very busy; those who were expecting to be appointed Minister were in great tension. They had been visiting Sheikh Hasina's house frequently. 'I will be a Minister' each one of them thought. Each began lobbying for his inclusion in the cabinet and pestering people who were close to Sheikh Hasina, her relatives and other member of her household.'

While every aspirant was busy lobbying for himself, there was one who refrained from it. He was certain that he was going to be a Minister. For him not only Ministership but also the Ministry was also certain. And that Ministry was the Ministry of LGRD. That person was none but the city Mayor of Dhaka Muhammad Hanif. For him only the oath taking part remained. On 23rd June next the oath taking ceremony too would take place. The reason why Hanif was so sure was that on 17th February 1996 Bangabandhu's daughter herself had made a promise to him to this effect.

## **EVERYONE HAS A SAD FACE**

It was June 23, 1996. Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina would take oath as the Prime Minister from President Abdur Rabman Biswas at 7 P.m. in the Assembly Hall in Bangabbaban. In her house at Road No.5 at Dhanmondi everybody except Sheikh Hasina was worried. The sons of the cousins of Sheikh Hasina's father, Najib Ahmed Najib, Nakib Abmed Mannu and Kaneez Ahmed—all had a sad expression as if the dark clouds of the 'Kalbaisakhi' (seasonal storm that visits Bangladesh in the Bengali month 'Baisakh': translator) had descended on their faces. Another cousin Bahauddin Nasim had left Sheikh Hasina's house before dawn. The servants of the house, peons, driver, cooks, even those who had been staying with Sheikh Hasina for long sixteen or seventeen years had tears in their eyes.

Within an hour Sheikh Hasina would take oath as the Prime Minister. Why were the inmates in her house were in such a state of sadness. She inquired. "Am I dying that everyone has started expressing his grief?"

When two or three persons, including Sheikh Hasina's relations, were asked about the reason of such state of grief, they said, "you don't understand? She has become the Prime Minister and thus has managed everything for herself. What will happen to us'? She won't even remember that we suffered so much for so many years."

In reply it was pointed out that there was no reason why she should forget those who had served her for so many years.

They replied, "oh, You have not yet realized what an unfaithful creature she is. You will know."

At 7 P.m. everyone entered the Assembly Hall in Bangabhaban. All the Awami League MP's had come. The judges had come. Three service Chiefs of the Armed forces had also come. Officers of the executive services and the elite were also there.

Mayor of Dhaka Muhammad Hanif arrived wearing new 'pyjama and punjabi' and a Mujib coat. Usually he did not put on a Mujib Coat. But that day he was sure that he would be inducted as a Minister. On February 17 Sheikh Hasina had declared him as a Minister. So he was wearing a Mujib coat. He had set up "Janatar Mancho" (People's Stage) and which enormously helped bring down Khaleda Zia's government. Considering all these, he was the centre of attraction in the ceremony. As the Mayor of Dhaka, Hanif is no less important.

### **TREACHERY WITH ME?**

The ceremony began with Sheikh Hasina taking oath of office as the Prime Minister. Now the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina would announce her Cabinet of Ministers. She was taking out from her bag the list containing the names of Ministers. Mayor of Dhaka Muhammad Hanif started rising slowly from his chair. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was taking a little time in reading out the names. Mayor Hanif was having such a posture from which one could not be sure if he was sitting or was standing. He thought why he should sit on the chair when he would be required to stand up in no time, as the first name in the list of Cabinet Ministers was his. He did not leave the chair thinking that it might look odd. So he was in a half sitting half standing posture. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina started reading out the names of the members of her Cabinet. The first name was not that of Mayor Hanif, nor was the second one, nor the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh or eighth one. His name was not in the list. Mayor Muhammad Hanif

then hurriedly left the Assembly Hall, through the passage between the two rows of chairs. While he was leaving someone called out 'Hanif Bhai' and grabbed him from behind. But he pushed him aside and left Bangabhaban repeating the words:

"Treachery with me! Treachery with me!"

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina returned home and while eating her dinner said," today I have two reasons for joy. One for becoming the Prime Minister and the other for taking revenge of Hanif's ingratitude."

Later, Mayor Muhammad Hanif got himself admitted into the Diabetic Hospital (BIRDEM), called the press men and said, " you may not respect someone but you cannot insult him."

Then he asked for a mini government (for the city corporation) followed by his demand for a Metropolitan Authority. But no, Mayor Hanif got nothing, no ministership, no mini government and no Metropolitan Authority.

## **UNBALANCED**

After returning to her residence, Road No.5 of Dhanmondi, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked her relations to choose a new government house for her. With this started the search for a house for the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The first one to be seen was the state guest house Sugandha After that the widely talked about building at 30, Hare Road the construction of which was started at the time of Ershad and finished during Khaleda Zia's time, was seen. This was followed by visits to the state guest houses, Padma, Megna and finally to Karotoa. After much thinking and consultations with the relations, the fortress-like building, karotoa situated in the western side of the Crescent lake and to the north-west of the Parliament building was selected. During the rule of the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's father Sheikh Mujib, his office was situated there. At that time this house was called Ganobhaban. This building was made the residence of the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the name Ganobhaban was restored.

On July 3, 1996 at about 9 A.M. she came to Ganobhaban to live there. Having arrived, she straightway went to the first floor. She saw bedrooms, dining hall, reception room, and eight or ten other rooms. Each room had a 26" coloured TV and was tastefully decorated with modern

furniture. As the night advanced, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina could not see the ground floor of the large palace. She went to bed. Next day on the 4th of July, Sheikh Hasina woke up early in the morning, took bath, wore a new saree and went to the Prime Minister's office before 7 O'clock. She returned at about 1 O'clock at noon and entered into Room 3, with her aunt, mother of Sheikh Helal. She was so impressed with the quality of the furniture that she lost control and embracing Sheikh Helal's mother shouted, "oh Aunti! such a big table!" and said "please send news to all our relations at home. We shall all eat together at this dining table."

Her aunt said, "Even if all kith and kin come, this table will not be full." Sheikh Hasina said — "Then all people of Tungipara be informed. We all will eat at this table."

The noises issuing from room no 3 drew the army special force — S. S. F. and P. G. R. members deputed for the security of the Prime Minister to the room. Then Sheikh Hasina became silent and went upstairs with her aunt.

Room 3 of Ganobhaban is a large room. There is an oval shaped table in this room; there are about 200 revolving chairs on all sides of this large table. Sheikh Hasina did not realize that it was not the dining hall. It was the conference room.

## **TWO SISTERS DIVIDE THE SPOILS**

In Bangladesh today, the person who exercises substantial authority, whose finger is in every business pie, who influences the appointments to high positions whether military or civil, whose influence matches that of the Prime Minister, President, Minister and others exercising authority, into whose hands has accumulated great deal of money through legal or illegal means, is none other than Sheikh Rehana, the second daughter of the Father of the Nation, and the adored younger sister of the Prime Minister. She has no love or affection for the people of Bangladesh whom she openly calls ungrateful dogs and hypocrites. She would have been most happy, had the 120 million people of Bangladesh been wiped out through a sudden disaster.

In the afternoon of July 7, she came to Ganabhaban and approached her elder sister Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. She assailed her with questions: "is Sheikh Mujib only your father"? Is he also not my father? Where is my share? You alone will have it all? I must also get an even share. I want to have five Ministers of my choice."

Sheikh Hasina grinding her teeth said: “what will you do with Ministers? If you want money you will get it.” Sheikh Rehana replied, “I don’t understand all this. You must make five of my people Ministers today.” Sheikh Hasina was firm. ‘You won’t get any Minister. I am running the show. Let me do it. Whatever money you want you will have it.”

Hearing the exchange of shouts, the Prime Minister’s security guard drawn from the Armed Forces (Army, Navy and Air Force - 64 officers and staff in all) and the 16 members of the Prime Ministers Guard Regiment came running. As the Prime Minister made some gesture they understood that this was a family affair. They decided to overlook the incident.

Sheikh Rehana insisted that unless she had her five Ministers appointed she would go away to the United States. “I will come only when there is an even share,” she said. “keep it in mind.” Having said this Sheikh Rehana left.

Later, Sheikh Hasina went to the US to make up for it and ultimately, agreed to share the gains. She brought her younger sister back to Bangladesh on condition that Sheikh Rehana would be made Sheikh Hasina’s cashier. All the monies would be in the hands of Sheikh Rehana and she would be the next successor of Mujib.

### **SHARE MARKET SCAM**

In the month of July 1996 PM Sheikh Hasina’s younger sister Sheikh Rehana’s husband Shafiq Siddiqui used to come every evening to the Prime Minister’s office, in Sheikh Hasina’s red Nissan Patrol with yellow number plate followed by two Toyota cars. Two Shikhs, three Marwaris and two Indian Bengalis used to come with him to Sheikh Hasina’s office and had sessions in the Meeting Room No. 5.

Before sitting down for the meeting Shafique Siddiqui would hear from the author the latest information from the share market. Shafique wanted to know what sort of crowd had gathered in the share market. The author (motor cycle rider) would say that in front of Modhumita Cinema hall quite a number of traders had gathered.

Shafique Siddiqui would suggest, “everyone should deal in the share market and buy shares as the current trend is good”. He would tell his friends and residents of the area to buy shares for there was substantial profit in the trade.

Thus every evening he would meet with the above mentioned people after having ascertained from the author the size of crowd at Motijheel (where the stock exchange is located).

Shafique would repeat daily that the business was profitable and everybody should buy shares. Days passed in this fashion. The author’s duty was to provide information on the crowds present at the stock exchange. Shafique Siddiqui, thereupon, would hold discussions with the Shikhs, Marwaris and Indian Bengali businessmen.

Siddiqui held that there was profit in buying shares and that selling them was easy. But the real thing was the emphasis on buying and not on selling. Thus if today, you could buy shares tomorrow you could realize several times the price you paid in buying. The whole country was buying and plenty of buyers were there in the market but not many sellers.

One day the messenger told Shafique Siddiqui that the share market had the largest ever number of buyers. From the corner of Ittefaq office, through the length of Motijheel upto the Lotus fountain and beyond up to Notre Dame College the entire length of the street was crowded. All traffic had stopped. There were only buyers and no sellers. Shafique Siddiqui along with his Indian friends sat from 5 p.m. for one of the longest meetings for almost five and a half hours compared to the normal meetings of one to one and a half hours.

Next day even more people gathered at the stock exchange and Shafique Siddiqui and his colleagues sat in the PM’s Secretariat from 3 PM to almost 10 PM. At the end of the meeting the Indians parted with Shafique Siddiqui after exchanging hugs and embraces.

Next day in the Motijheel Share Market only sellers kept bumping into each other and only their cries were heard. No Buyers could be found. Shafique Smddiqui and his Indian friends were not seen in the PM’s secretariat.

## THOSE SIX FREEDOM FIGHTERS

After the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on August 15, 1975 those who opposed the assassination - Kader Siddiqui along with those freedom fighters who fought in two wars, gathered at Purana Paltan for a meeting. Their discussions continued throughout the day. The main subject was how to assist Sheikh Hasina and her government. One of the acknowledged freedom fighters From Kalurghat and Nalitbari thana, a physician in an emotionally charged voice said; 'I fought in the great war of liberation in 1971. I fought for independence of the country. Yet I did not die. I fought against the opponents of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975. We lost the war but I did not die. Ultimately, I married a young widow. We have one male child I am now the husband of a young mother. I do not want to do anything that will make my wife twice widowed and my son an orphan.'

The meeting ended at 7 p.m. and people began to leave for home. The physician Jasimuddin had hired a microbus and left for Nalitbari thana. Next day I received a phone call from a freedom fighter named Hashem Masud Jamil Jugal. The latter told me on the phone that six freedom fighters including Jasimuddin had been killed. Hearing this news my heart almost stopped beating. For a while I could not speak. Just last night, only some ten or eleven hours ago, people with whom I had talked at length were now dead. This was shocking. Controlling myself I asked, "who said this? How were they killed?" Hashem Masud informed that the microbus in while they were traveling was involved in a serious road accident.

Deeply shocked, I left the house for the official residence of the Prime Minister to inform Sheikh Hasina of the sad news. She listened without comment. Later, she left for the office. In my mind a thought arose. If the Prime Minister wanted someone to be killed she would have sought someone from the families of the six freedom fighters. That is why I had told her of the death of the six freedom fighters on her return from the Ganabhaban. In reply she said "so what? "Every day many people die." About an hour later around 3 p.m. Sheikh Hasina attended a discussion meeting arranged by the Bangabandhu Association to commemorate her fathers death anniversary. It was held at the Engineers Institute. There she wept repeating the words; "My father, my mother, my brothers."

If one cannot respond to other people's distress and have sympathy for their losses, then one is inhuman. How does it profit the country to have a leader devoid of ordinary human feelings? For

her own parents and brothers the Prime Minister has grieved and wept frequently. “Oh Allah, give the Prime Minister some understanding, some love and some feeling for the people so that she can understand the sorrow and sufferings of others — Amin”

### **GETTING A DOCTORATE**

Boston University in the United States conferred on the Prime Minister a Doctorate of Law degree. The University President John Wesley, before announcing the degree, came to visit Bangladesh for three or four days, in the last week of December 1996. During his stopover in Dhaka John Wesley was a state guest at the Ganabbaban guesthouse. He was taken out on a tour of Dhaka. He visited such places as Bangabandhu Museum (Road no 32 Dhanmandi). Subrawardy Uddayan, the National Assembly, the Martyr's memorial etc. During this tour John Wesley was briefed about history. One day he was taken to Tungipara where he was shown Mujib's grave. He stayed at the Gopalgang Circuit House during the night. Next day he returned to Dhaka where he was shown all the pictures in the Bangabandhu museum the contents were explained and John Wesley was indoctrinated like a parrot. The full responsibility for this briefing fell on the Prime Minister's Parliamentary Adviser Suranjit Sengupta. The latter not only briefed him but also raised the issue of the Doctorate of Law. The Boston University President John Wesley was showered with presents before he left Bangladesh.

The fact that the Ganabbavan was Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's official residence was not mentioned to John Wesley by Sen Babu. As a result. John Wesley was led to believe that Dhanmondi Road No. 32 was Bangabandhu's museum; that Tongipara was Bangabandbu's village home and that the Ganabbaban was Sheikh Hasina's father's house.

Thus on 6 February, 1997 while conferring the Doctor etc. of Law on PM Sheikh Hasina, President John Wesley in making his address, at one point referred to Sheikh Hasina's fathers huge palace - “your birthplace, inheritance, source of culture, consciousness and zeal” Obviously, the huge palace referred to is the Ganabbaban which is not Sheikh Mujib's house but an official residence of the Prime Minister.

## **FIRST VISIT TO THE USA**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was going to the United States on her first visit as Prime Minister. Her relatives left the Ganabhaban in large number for Zia International Airport to see her off. In good time Sheikh Hasina also reached the airport. Her relatives, laughing, joking and gossiping had tea with a variety of foodstuffs. The entire cabinet, Chiefs of the Armed Forces, high officials, both civil and military and other important personalities were gathered at the VVIP terminal prior to seeing off Sheikh Hasina.

Hasina's cousin (Father's sister's son), her APS Bahauddin Nasim decided that a new example should be set. He took some of the senior officials of the airport to the lounge near the passenger tarmac stating that as the Prime Minister was so close to the common people she would board the plane from the passenger tarmac and not from the VVIP lounge.

Thus Sheikh Hasina's cousin APS Nasim gave the order to take the plane to the passenger tarmac. The Airport officials so instructed the pilot who taxied the plane to the passenger lounge.

A little later came the Prime Minister's Chief of Security Nazer Ahmad Najib. On hearing that on Nusim's order the PM's plane had been taken to the passenger tarmac, Najib promptly instructed that the Prime Minister would board the plane from the VVIP tarmac and ordered the plane to be brought back there. Accordingly, the plane was brought back to the VVIP tarmac. Sometime later the PM's APS Bahauddin Nasim heard that his cousin Najib had brought back the plane to the VVIP tarmac. Nasim told the airport authorities, "I am the APS of the Prime Minister. I plan her programs. Do you know more than me. I have sent all the journalists to the passenger lounge. What I say stands and you must work accordingly." The PM's plane was sent back to the passenger tarmac again.

The PM's Chief of Security Nazer Ahmad Najib came to check whether the plane was ready and found that it was at the passenger tarmac. Shouting abuses "Haramzada, Kuttar Bacha etc (Bastard, son of a bitch etc.)" he demanded on whose authority the plane had been moved. Nasim replied. "on my authority. I have taken it to the passenger tarmac." Najib said, "who are you to move the plane. I am the Chief of Security. The plane will move only on my orders." Nasim replied angrily. "it will move on my orders." Najib shouted, "don't talk too much. It will be

bad for you.” Nasim said with equal vehemence, “do you think I smoke your tobacco, (I am under your obligation) that I will be cowed down.” During the altercations between the two cousins of Sheikh Hasina the Airport officials stood waiting for some twenty five minutes. The Prime Minister asked as to what the matter was and why she was not boarding the plane. There was one person who influences over both and could stop the fighting between the two cousins. To him both of them would turn when they needed money and other facilities. This person was Sheikh Hasina’s cousin Sheikh Helal MP who now came forward. Both Najib and Nasim feared him. Sheikh Helal said “The PM has been waiting and you have not made any arrangements for the plane to leave. Go take the plane in the VVIP tarmac.”

The airport officials once again told the pilot to return to the VVIP tarmac. The pilot now insisted that he be given a written order. Pending this he put the plane mid-way between the two tarmacs. This created further predicament for the airport officials. Finally, they gave written orders and the plane was moved to the VVIP tarmac.

The PM thus started her historic visit to America. Despite the fact, that for the above reason the PM’s departure was delayed by one hour and a half and the PM expressed her extreme displeasure (though it was not quite known to whom), the country’s newspapers the next day mentioned only the delay of the journey. No newspaper revealed the reason for the delay. Only one journalist Abed Khan of the Bhorer Kagoj headlined his column “Was the Prime Minister’s security hindered.”

### **FIGHTER PLANE PURCHASE**

Sheikh Hasina’s cashier, Sheikh Rehana along with her husband Shafiq Siddiqui came one afternoon to the PM’s official residence. They advised the PM to purchase the Russian MIG 29 fighter planes, saying that if these planes were bought the ‘Uttar Para” (the armed forces personnel living at the Cantonment) would be happy and the Government would not be accused of being subservient to India.

The author Matiar Rahiman Rentu told the Prime Minister not to heed to the advice. He argued that crores of people were unemployed in the country and money saved by not buying the fighter planes could be used to help these unemployed. Sheikh Rehana and her husband Shafiq Siddiqui were barely able to contain their anger. Sheikh Hasina said that the planes could be

bought on credit. The author argued that even if the planes were bought on credit the country would ultimately have to pay for them. He said that one thing had to be kept in mind. If unemployment could be eased and the country made to prosper then not only Sheikh Hasina but her children and grandchildren would be held in high esteem. Sheikh Rehana interceded as said to the PM “can’t I talk to you alone without your people interfering.” The author thereupon left.

The PM Sheikh Hasina then talked to Sheikh Rehana and Shafiq Siddiqui. For a poverty stricken country like Bangladesh it is unimaginable that fighter planes should be bought. Were they to fight a war against India? In an anguished manner Sheikh Hasina asked Sheikh Rehana “can anyone think of fighting a war be it against India or any other?” Sheikh Rehana said “of course not.” The Sheikh family in particular, cannot even think of war with India. They consider India as their guardian and custodian. They consider West Bengal Chief Minister almost as their father. They would not wage war with India but they would still buy fighter planes What is the secret? Both Hasina and Rehana know that Bangladesh is among the poorest countries of the world. People have half-empty stomachs, lack clothes, education, housing and shelter. It is also clear that whatever happens they will never fight against India. So why are they buying the planes’?

One thing must be kept in mind. Monies spent for the defense of the country are not subject to questioning in the Parliament. This is not only so in our country but in many other countries as well. That is why the Parliament in India did not have a serious discussion on the Bofors deal despite the fact that the late Prime Minister of India was clearly involved in it. Defense expenditures involve very little accountability. The question posed was that if a war was ruled out then why were useless and ancient fighter planes being bought by Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana? The reply is simple — “agency commission:” Sheikh Hasina and her cashier made in moderate terms crores of taka.

## **KADER SIDDIQUT VERSUS SHEIKH HASINA**

During the liberation war a person raised from the grassroots a freedom fighter group called the Kader Bahini. This was composed of a company from Tangail, one from Mymensingh and another from Pabna. They were in the forefront of the freedom struggle. By not leaving the country, by not going to India and by establishing companies in Tangail, Mymensingh and Pabna they created an independent zone into which no invading Pakistan force could successfully penetrate. Whenever the Pakistani army tried to enter this area they suffered heavy losses and had to retreat. In this independent zone, the freedom fighters developed side by side with military organization, a civilian administration. Thus, along with fighting a war, a civil-political administration was established which had such functions as tax collection, employment of public servants (such as chowkidar, dafadar) as well as officers. Also, a judiciary began to function. These developments are difficult in any freedom struggle, anywhere in the world. The person who set this example was the popular hero, Bangabir Kader Siddiqui, whose name would make Pakistanis shiver.

When Sheikh Hasina's father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated on 15 August 1975 only Bangabir Kader Siidiqui protested the murder. He declared himself to be Sheikh Mujibur Rabman's fourth son and started a war in 1975. This war was the biggest mistake in Kader Siddiqui's life. He did not have popular support and this war was a far cry from that of 1971.

Though the assassination of Sheikh Mujib in 1995 needed investigation, it was by and large, accepted by the people. That is why no one supported the second war. This was left to the Government and the army to deal with. Thus, while in 1971 the great freedom fighter Kader Siddiqui was considered to be victorious, in 1975 Kader Siddiqui and those who opposed Sheikh Mujib's death were defeated. He was forced into exile in India, where Sheikh Mujib's daughter Sheikh Hasina called him to be her brother in faith.

From that time on their brother-sister relationship became so strong that Kader Siddiqui did not eat meat as Sheikh Hasina did not do so. She used to cook fish for him when he visited her hotel. Sheikh Hasiria often used to say that apart from Kader Siddiqui there was no one else in the world who could be her father's spiritual heir. Sheikh Hasina used to say that even if she worked her whole life as a servant she could not repay the debt she owed to Kader Siddiqui.

On May 17, 1981 Sheikh Hasina while returning to Bangladesh said at Dum Dum airport that her first job would be to bring back Bangabandhu's spiritual heir, her brother in faith, Kader Siddiqui and his people. However, on her return no effort was made for his return. It was Bangabir Kader Siddiqui's wife, Nasreen Siddiqui, who formed an Association for his return. She traveled all over the country and forcefully lobbied for his return. Sheikh Hasina did not see this in its true light and viewed Nasreen Siddiqui's Association as a challenge. She did nothing openly but told the Awami League to keep aloof from Kader Siddiqui's Association.

Following the 1990 mass upsurge against the autocrat, General Husain Muhammad Ershad and his fall, Kader Siddiqui spoke to her over telephone regarding his return to his homeland. Sheikh Hasina immediately opposed this and told her Awami League cadres to oppose it as well. However, during the Victory Day celebrations on December 16, Kader Siddiqui returned to Dhaka. Many people went to receive him at Zia International Airport. Neither Sheikh Hasina nor any other Awami League leader was present. Open hostility started between them. Sheikh Hasina said, "I am here that is why he is here. Kader Siddiqui's position was like late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's daughter-in-law Maneka Gandhi, Sanjay Gandhi's wife. As long as Indira Gandhi was there, Maneka was there. Now that Indira Gandhi is no more, there is no news of Maneka. If I wasn't here, no one would care for Kader Siddiqui."

As for Kader Siddiqui. thank God, he had never accepted Sheikh Hasina as his leader and had never bowed down to her. Kader Siddiqui had a similar line "Sheikh Hasina is my sister as I am her brother in faith. I am also a heir to Sheikh Mujib.

For various reasons and particularly to avoid hostility coining out in the open, Sheikh Hasina kept Kader Siddiqui in the Awami League and made him an MP. For similar reasons, Kader Siddiqui stayed in the Awami League. Sheikh Hasina's thinking was that removal of Kader Siddiqui from the Party would weaken it. Kader Siddiqui could publicize her betrayal and challenge her leadership. It was better to keep him in her father's Party and to let him rut there Kader Siddiqui for the time being also approved of these for tactical reasons. When Sheikh Hasina in order to humiliate Kader Siddiqui and so to secure some political gains decided to send police to his house, the author, Motiur Rahman Rentu argued with Sheikh Hasina against such a move. He said that she should have a bit of gratitude. When the bodies of her father, mother and brothers were lying on the stairs of 32 Dhanmondi nobody raised a finger except

Kader Siddiqui. And today, she had sent police to his house. “You cannot do such an ungrateful thing.” he said.

Sheikh Hasina said, “Kader Siddiqui’s brother is a terrorist and the police were sent to catch him”

The author said, “Kader Siddiqui's brothers Murad and Azad Siddiqui, whether they had been terrorists or not in the past, had done no terrorism or committed no crime during your time. In the bad days when your parents were killed Kader and Latif Siddiqui were exiled from the country, the two brothers who remained were the only ones who had the courage to utter the name of Sheikh Mujib or the Awami League. It was they who in Tangail kept alive the name of Sheikh Mujib among the young people and came into direct clash with the administration. Thus their names were entered into the list of terrorists. Apart from this, Azad and Murad were no longer involved in any sort of criminal activities. This is not unknown to you. If during your rule they become involved in any illegal activities then warn them that they would be sent to jail.”

The Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said, “No, we will send police to Kader Siddiquis house to arrest them.” The author again argued, “If you want to harass Kader Siddiqui then there is no such thing as gratitude in this world.” Prime Minister having heard this left for her room in anger. Police went to Kader Siddiqui’s house.

### **JUSTICE SHAHABUDDIN BECOMES PRESIDENT**

It was June 23, 1996. Even before the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina took her oath of office, she had been in a quandary over the choice of the President. Whoever, among her Party leaders was approached by her for taking the responsibility would refuse.

In this situation, the author and his wife suggested that the former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the President of the Caretaker Government, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed be made the President. The author and his wife argued that Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed was liked by the people, that he was experienced and that if he was made the President, Sheikh Hasina’s popularity would grow.

Bangabandhu's daughter, Sheikh Hasina said, "no. Shahahuddin will not be made President. The reason is simple. When I mentioned that the 1991 election was rigged, Shahabuddin Ahmed, as the President of the Caretaker Government joined hands with Khaleda Zia and said that the election was completely free and fair. Is this justice? I will not make this person the President."

Bangabandhu's daughter first approached Zillur Rabman. He said. "Leader, you were pleased to make me the Secretary of the party. If you don't give me an executive post now then as the Secretary of the party I will not have any importance. Please don't make me the President and give me a Ministry so that I can always be near you.

Bangabandhu's daughter then approached the Presidium member Salahuddin Yusuf. He said that he was not in good health. Sheikh Hasina commented, "that's good. The President has no work. He only sits at Bangabhaban and enjoys himself." On hearing this, Salahuddin Yusuf fell at the feet of Sheikh Hasina and said, "Leader, please give me the opportunity to do something for the people in my constituency."

The author and his wife, again raised the issue of making the former Chief Justice Shahabudin Ahmed the new President. Sheikh Hasina approached a Presidium Member, the current Foreign Minister, Abdus Samad Azad. Samad said, "Leader, please have mercy on me. In my final years don't obliterate me. I was Bangabandhu's Foreign Minister. Give me the opportunity to work. I will show you how efficient Sheikh Mujib's Ministers were.

Bangabandhu's daughter could not find anyone to be the President. Whoever she approached turned his back on the proposal. At this time, one Haji Moqbul Hossain, an Awami League MP and former presidential nominee of the Awami League in 1991, came forward and exhorted Sheikh Hasina to do something - to appoint him either as President or a Minister. Sheikh Hasina replied, "I will not appoint you to any post; you spoke against me in 1991; it is enough that I made you an MP."

Following this, the author and his wife once again impressed on Sheikh Hasina that the President has no real functions and that he simply sits and takes rest, and has no work. He has no executive powers. In a government run by Ministers the President is a puppet. He will dance

to your tune. In this situation, why will you not use him? Make Justice Shahabuddin the new President and take some praise. This opportunity will not return.”

Finally, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina agreed. On 23 June, Bangabandhu's daughter took the oath as Prime Minister in the President's house and as Prime Minister went to former President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed and offered him the post of President. On the expiry of the term of office of the President Abdur Rahman Biswas, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed was elected the President.

### **CASE AGAINST BEGUM KHALEDA ZIA**

One afternoon, in the first week of November 1996, in the drawing room of the official residence, Sheikh Hasina and her relatives were busy gossiping. Sheikh Rehana and her husband Shafiq Siddique, her cousins Loona, Mina, all of them together, urged Sheikh Hasina to institute a case against Begum Khaleda Zia on the ground of distributing jobs of police sub-inspectors.

On coming to power in 1991, it was alleged that Begum Zia and the Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury had given some 745 young men jobs as police sub-inspectors. Sheikh Hasina's relatives kept pressing for a case to be registered against Begum Zia and Abdul Matin Chowdhury for nepotism and corruption.

The author, his wife Maina, argued with Sheikh Hasina and her relatives that instead of poking the former Prime Minister they should try and smooth things over. This would help the country and make it prosper. We argued that, “If once you can consolidate your position, you will see that not only you but your grandchildren will be carried by the people on their shoulders. If you make Khaleda Zia and the BNP hostile, you will not be able to save this country. The country's prosperity depends on both of you. If there is no unity between the two of you, the country will be split. Again you and the Awami League will be abandoned. We urge you to hold out the hand of friendship. Begum Zia was Prime Minister before you. You must look upon her as an elder sister and embrace her and work for the prosperity of the country. In this way you can set a good example. If you do not, you will be harmed and so will be the country.

The Prime Minister said, “You don't know Khaleda Zia. The students and the members of the youth wing of her party have been given jobs in the police.

The author said. “this may be true. Even if it were true that all those who got jobs were from the “Chatra Dal or Jubo Dal”, it is immaterial. They are still the citizens of the country. If Begum Zia had given 745 young men jobs, you may give 7000 students/youth jobs. But don’t bring a case. Cases don’t lead to results. If you bring a case you will lower yourself.”

The Prime Minister said, “you try to obstruct everything.” With these words the Prime Minister went away to her bedroom. Her relatives then gave Motiur Rahman Rento and his wife a serious scolding. Subsequently, a case was registered for nepotism and corruption on 21 December 1996 against the former Prime Minister and the Home Minister.

### **THE GANGES, HILL TRACTS TREATIES AND TRANSIT TRADE**

Towards the end of 1996, West Bengal Chief Minister, Jyoti Basu visited Bangladesh. On his arrival, he called on the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence. Among Sheikh Hasina’s acquaintances in India, Chief Minister Jyoti Basu belonged to the top echelons. When the Prime Minister and her sister were in India they came to respect Jyoti Basu more than anyone else. They came to look upon him as a father figure.

Since her return to Bangladesh in 1981, Sheikh Hasina had gone to India several times. Whenever she did so, she would always meet Jyoti Basu and seek his blessings. In a certain manner Jyoti Basu’s support had helped Sheikh Hasina to come to power.

As Jyoti Basu arrived at Ganabhaban, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina touched his feet and received him in a manner that only a daughter shows to her father. She then escorted him to the second floor, where a variety of food had been placed on the table. Sheikh Hasina herself served the Indian leader who was heated like a member of the family and addressed him as uncle. They then began to talk about political developments and Indo-Bangladesh bilateral relations.

At this point Jyoti Basu said, “Look ‘ma’ (daughter) you won’t get any Ganges water. I don’t get any, so how can you get a share? I have discussed the matter with the Indian Prime Minister, Dev Gowda. You sign the Ganges Treaty. If you do so, your opponents will not be able to make a political issue out of it even if you do not get any water. You will get that benefit. We will make

a long-term, say twenty or thirty year treaty. But do not say anything about a long term treaty now. You talk about a five year treaty only. Later, I will announce say a twenty or thirty year Treaty. I have already talked to the Prime Minister and Water Minister. You carry on the negotiations in this manner. One further word. You must also quickly make an accord with the tribal leaders of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. They must control their own revenues and employment. If your government wants to do anything there they must ask the Tribal leaders for their concurrence. This, I have already promised to the Prime Minister, the Home and Defense Ministers as well as the high-ups among the tribal leaders. You must conclude this agreement with the tribal leaders as quickly as possible. You must call this agreement a Peace Treaty. In this way you will gain. You will broadcast that you have swept aside the past by making a Peace Treaty. The whole world will be supportive of you. You may even win the Nobel Prize.”

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina like a dutiful child could only say “Yes Kaka (Uncle) Yes Kaka.’ Jyoti Basu went on to say, “if they are happy what will happen. In the parliament you will gain all the three seats just as you get in Gopalgang. And by giving India a corridor as well as transit facilities, you will be implementing your father’s words. He did lay down the ground work. You must, at an opportune moment, keep us informed of this. Do not delay too much. If you do so, New Delhi may misunderstand.” West Bengal Chief Minister left after having finished his task. The Indian Prime Minister, Dev Gowda later visited Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina visited New Delhi and signed the 30 Year Ganges Water Treaty tailored by the West Bengal Chief Minister, Jyoti Basu.

After this, another cousin of the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina (aunts’ sister’s son) the Chief Whip of the parliament, somewhat eccentric, Abul Hasnat Abdullah, was made leader of the CHT National Committee. Following the blueprint laid down by Jyoti Basu, the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Treaty was signed (without the presence of any official). According to this Treaty:

- (i) The Government of Bangladesh will not get any revenues from the CHT. All taxes, land revenue etc will be collected by the tribal authority and spent by them.
- (ii) In the CHT the tribal authority will choose their own employees from among them and decide their promotion, dismissal etc.

(iii) In the CHT all lands, forests etc will be under the control of the tribal authorities. Without their permission the GOB cannot operate or acquire any land.

### **DR. MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR BECOMING MINISTER**

After the Iftar party was over, the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina sat in Room Number 5 on the ground floor of Ganobbaban with some of her relatives who came to the Iftar Party for discussion. She mentioned that Dr. Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir would be made a Minister. At this the author said, "Why you should you make Mohiuddin Alamgir a Minister'?" Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina replied: "Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir has a lot of contribution behind my coming to power.

The author said, "Dr. Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir is an untrustworthy person. Only a few days ago, in spite of his being a government officer he organized a revolt against the government. An officer of the Government can not be rewarded for revolting against the Government. This will be an instance of giving rewards for anti-government activity. If the example of reward is established, there will be revolt against your Government in future. You are to keep this aspect in your mind before making Mohiuddin Khan a Minister. If you really think that Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir has contributions to your coming to power and you want to reward him, then you may retire him from service first and make him an Adviser. Instead of making him a Minister straightway, you may give him status of a Minister. Make him a member of the Presidium of Awami league, and make him a Minister next."

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said - " Rentu, will you continue to put obstacles to my official work, or will you let me work?"

"No, Leader, why should I obstruct your work?"

"Then, why are you talking so much?"

"I said this because you raised the issue."

"There are many present here. Nobody is obstructing me like you. Why are you talking so much?"

“I have been talking like this from before; it has become a habit with me.”

“You could talk like this earlier when I was Sheikh Hasina. Now I am the Prime Minister.”

“So long as I will be with you, I will be telling you the right thing. It is your discretion to pay heed to it, and to act or not to act on what I say.”

“You have not seen the power of the Prime Minister as yet. You will see.” Having said this, the Prime Minister went upstairs. Dr. Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir who revolted against the Government became a Minister.

#### **DECLARATION ABOUT BEING UNDESIRABLE**

Matiur Rahman Rentu and Mrs. Rahman Rentu (Maina) were declared undesirables. Instructions were sent to all law enforcing agencies like the Police, Special Branch (SB), National Security Intelligence (NSI) and Detective Branch (DB). Prime Minister's directives stated that these unwanted people would be forbidden to enter or to attend functions at Prime Minister's Residence, Office and any programs attended by the Prime Minister. The law enforcing agencies were asked to remain vigilant in this respect. This declaration was also published in the newspapers.

#### **SHIEKH MUJIB'S PICTURE ON 10 TAKA NOTE**

One Friday, Dr. Parvez, Private Secretary to Finance Minister Kibria, came to Ganohhaban, official residence of the Prime Minister, and showed her the proposed format of a 10 Taka note with the picture of Shaikh Mujib on it for approval. The proposed layout had the picture of a mosque on the front side and Shaikh Mujib's picture on the reverse side.

Shaikh Hasina became angry and asked why the picture of the Father of the Nation was on the reverse side. Parvez was embarrassed and explained that the existing 10-taka notes carried the picture of the mosque on the front side and as such, keeping in mind the religious susceptibilities of the people, it was not changed. The picture of the Father of the Nation

however had been printed on the other side of the note. Sheikh Hasina angrily retorted, "I don't know the significance of the mosque. The picture of the Father of the Nation should be on the front side of the note. The fact that my father is the Father of the Nation has to be swallowed by this race of devils. Dr. Parvez came another day with the new design Sheikh Hasina was very happy.

### **NONE KILLED BY SHOTS FIRED BY THE POLICE**

Only corpse is wanted. Dead human bodies. During the movement against the autocratic rule of General Ershad many lives, including martyr Noor Hussein's, were lost in the hands of his Police, Bangladesh Rifles and the Army. But during the movement against the government of Khaleda Zia, democratically elected in 1991 under the supervision of a neutral, non-partisan government headed by Justice Shahabuddin, not a single person was killed by the Police, BDR and the Army in the capital city of Dhaka. After 1991 during the movement demanding the fall of Begum Khaleda Zia's government raising various issues, a total of 103 persons lost their lives; none was killed by a shot fired by the Police or any law enforcing agency.

Following the formation of the government by Begum Khaleda Zia after the election in 1991, Shaikh Hasina became desperate to topple the government. She started movements bringing one issue after another, i.e. rescinding VAT, seizure of the Secretariat, the Parliament, the Election Commission, the Prime Minister's Secretariat, demand for cancellation of the budget and all kinds of other issues. From 1992 till the day of independence on 26 March 1996 when the Bill for Caretaker Government was passed every program of movement and hartal of Shaikh Hasina cost two to four lives. People were killed not by the bullets fired by the Police, BDR or the Army. All those 103 persons, were unknown persons whose addresses could not be traced. Not a single person so killed could be identified as a worker of the Awami League. The government of Begum Khaleda Zia, claimed that the victims were innocent passers by.

It is, however, not important whether the persons killed were innocent passers by or political workers. The important point is that those who lost their lives were not shot by the Police, BDR or the Army. Then from 1992 to 1996 by whose bullets these 103 persons were killed? Though they were not identified, yet they were the sons of the soil. Who murdered them indiscriminately? Who were the killers? What was their identity? Who helped the killers? Who organized the crime? In whose interest so many people lost their lives? In every program of

hartal, seize and other movements these innocent people were killed, according to Shaikh Hasina, by the bullets fired by BNP terrorists (?)

The truth is: two days before a program of any kind, money was paid in advance to professional killers of Dhaka City for committing murder. The professional killers were told that on the day of the action program there should be some dead bodies. One used to observe closely the progress of the program. One used to eagerly look for the news about corpse. Until definite news about a death reached Sheikh Hasina, she would not eat or drink. She would only take tea and Phencydyl (a prohibited drug). She would remain restless and mutter, "till now there is no news of death; what shall I do, what program should I give in future?" She used to pace up and down on the ground and first floor corridors of 29 Minto Road raving like this.

As soon as the news about a killing came she would lie on her bed and take rest. She would regain her appetite and order food. After about an hour or an hour and a half of rest, she would prepare herself to go to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital to see the dead body. She would press handkerchief on her eyes after seeing the dead. Photo-journalists would take photographs. The pictures used to be published in newspapers under the caption that the daughter of Bangabandhu could not hold her tears at the sight of the dead victim.

On the day of a program for gherao (of surrounding the Secretariat) there was no news about any dead body till about 2 P.M. Messengers went to various places but no news appeared about any death. The daughter of Bangabandhu became delirious almost like a mad woman. The program had started at 10 O'clock in the morning: yet not a single person was reported to have been killed and the Police had not even fired tear gas shells. A central leader of the Awami league, Tofail Ahmed who is the Minister for Commerce at present, was munching peanuts and chatting with policemen under a tree opposite the National Press Club. Another central leader of the Awami League, Matia Chowdhury, who is now the Minister for Food, was taking corn soup in a Chinese Restaurant, Sung Garden, in Bijaynagar, which was owned by the daughters of Bangabandhu, Shaikh Hasina and Shaikh Rehana. News came to Shaikh Hasina that the minimum environment needed for killing was still not there and that is why no killing could take place.

In other words, the minimum turmoil needed to create a situation in order to justify killing had not yet been created. It appeared that the action program of gherao or laying a seize of the

Secretariat had failed; everything was quiet, peaceful and natural; killers were not getting any pretext of opportunity to kill. Hearing this, the daughter of Bangabandhu ordered, "run fast and tell Tofail and Matia Chowdhury to do something in order to create some turmoil." Otherwise, there would be little justification to continue such program in future.

Someone (meaning the author) went to Tofail and conveyed the message. Tofail got angry. He said that he did not believe in such things; he believed in constitutional politics. He forbade the messenger not to repeat such demand to him again and drove him away.

Later, the messenger went to Matia Chowdhury. She heard the message and replied in a loud voice that it would not be possible for her. But on pressing the demand, she said softly, emphasizing that she being a woman had her limitations. She got up from the chair, ordered soup and insisted that the messenger take soup with her.

When these developments were reported to the daughter of Bangabandhu, she brought out Taka 1 lac or one hundred thousand and insisted that a man must be dead by all possible means.

It was about 3 P.M. the killers started looking for the kill at the bus stand near Gulistan. A bus arrived from outside the city. The passengers, men and women, started alighting from the bus. The killers fired their hand made indigenous pipe guns. Fourteen or fifteen innocent, unsuspecting passengers fell down on the streets of Dhaka.

As soon as the news reached the daughter of Bangabandhu who was waiting like a vulture, she felt immensely relieved and repeatedly inquired if the persons were dead. She then tried to assure herself, saying that the way they had been shot, they must have been dead. She instructed me to go to the Dhaka Medical College to obtain information as to how many had been killed. Then she said she was hungry and ordered food.

On return from the hospital when she was informed that 3 victims were lying dead, she left for the morgue of the Dhaka Medical College and pressed handkerchief on her eyes after seeing the dead bodies. Photographers took pictures, which were then published in the newspapers.

## RELATIONS WITH LEADERS AND ADVISERS

President of the Awami League, Shaikh Hasina has no respect for other Awami League leaders. She does not value them as much as her own household servants, who enjoy better consideration from her. She used to say publicly that these leaders were with her in the Awami League for opportunity and for purpose of extortion. There was no leader in the Awami League who was not humiliated at least once by her. Of course, the Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed and Home Minister Muhammad Nasim were exceptions. These two leaders always maintained some distance from their leader. Perhaps, it was a matter of strategy or the fear of being humiliated. It is thought that Tofail Ahmed represented the US lobby in the Awami League. For this reason, Shaikh Hasina would not generally cause annoyance to Tofail. He also in matters of political strategy would never oppose Shaikh Hasina. He would always abide by whatever Shaikh Hasina would ask for, he would never oppose her. Even if he did not like something, he would remain silent but not oppose openly. Tofail knew all about the politics of arms, bombs, arsons and killings as well as the widespread extortion. But he never got himself involved in these matters. He used to pursue a safe, middle course. Even on the platform of a meeting he would ask the Prime minister if her artillery was ready.

Shaikh Hasina used to be happy at such questions and say with much pride and arrogance - 3000 in Mirpur, 5000 in Narayanganj, 2000 at Farmgate cocktails, bombs and pipe guns were lying ready. We will flatten the entire country.

Tofail used to inquire of the action troops, meaning the professional killers. She would reply, "the action troops were ready all over the city. Corpse will be available on order. There will be no difficulty for us to organize any action program. After hearing all these, Tofail used to ask the leader to keep everything in readiness.

Although Shaikh Hasina used to attend meetings and demonstrations, she seldom went of the headquarters of her Party. As a result, leaders used to come to her residence to meet her. But they were often sent back dismissively either by her servants or her relatives. At one stage, a member of leaders stopped visiting her. Those few who used to come would humbly request the author or his wife for arranging a call on the leader. He used to ask the guest to take seat and would go upstairs to her room. Hasina was often seen watching television or VCR with relatives, while at the same time singing, dancing and joking.

Unless there was a meeting, demonstration or procession to attend, she would spend most of the time watching Hindi films with her relations. She used to prefer those films, which showed dishonest politicians, murders, bribery, black marketers and base characters. She not only used to watch these characters, but also used to imitate them for use on the people of Bangladesh.

Whenever she was engrossed in watching such films, she refused to meet visiting leaders of her Party. The author would go downstairs and explain to the visitors that Hasina was in the locked bedroom and that he should go back home and await a telephone call from Hasina. Visitors used to understand the excuse and return home with little expectation of receiving a telephone call. They would approach the author instead of Hasina's servants and relatives living in the same house in order to avoid insult to which they were subjected with encouragement from Hasina herself.

Except for the author and his wife, Hasina used to be surrounded by people with little culture who neither knew manners nor the knowledge of how to treat gentlemen and ladies. They would not extend customary greetings (salams) to people nor would respond to greetings by others. She is still surrounded by such people.

### **NATION OF DOGS**

President of the Awami Women's League, Secretary of the Women's Section of the Central Awami League, wife of the Secretary General of the Awami League (at present Minister for LGED), Ivy Rahman informed Hasina about the reported scandal involving a particular lady. Hasina immediately responded, "a prostitute, isn't she? Let the nation of dog be led by a prostitute." Ivy Rahman was dumbfounded and left without a word.

## **ZILLUR RAHNIAN'S APPOINTMENT AS GENERAL SECRETARY**

Hasina was talking to Shaikh Hafizur Rahman Tokan, Shaikh Marouf and a few others in the library room of the Bangabandhu House on Road No. 32 in Dhanmondi. While talking about selecting the Secretary General of the Party, she said that the present Secretary being a woman could not be kept in her post. She asked those present to suggest someone, who is a man only by name but, in fact, weaker and more pliable than a woman. In case a real man like Abdur Razzak is put in charge then the Party will be destroyed. So, look for someone, who is a man but has a weak character.

Tokan said, "auntie, How about Zillur Rahman?" Hasina's response was immediate. "you are right, he is most suitable.'

Shaikh Marouf said, "no sister, you can not appoint Zillur Rahman. After 15th August, he and his wife cooked Biryani (special dish) and entertained killers like Dalim and Farouk."

Hasina replied, 'I need a person like him. He will behave like a lamb. A lamb even without a leash stays on the homestead and does not go out of its limit". Zillur Rabman was appointed the Secretary General of the Party.

## **MONEY AND DEAD BODIES**

In her personal life Shaikh Hasina does not value anything more than two items - money and dead bodies. She does not want anything more from her visitors. On her birthday when someone offered her something other than money, she would scold them and ask for cash. On her birthday on 28 September 1996, she said the same thing. Unless you pay her cash, you have no importance to her. She would receive money as if she was being repaid loans taken from her father. In accepting bribe and in giving bribe no one can match Hasina. When you pay her a bribe, you will get all the respect and will be offered a chair with much cordiality. The opposite will happen if bribe is not given.

One day, Shaikh Hasina was with her cousin Shaikh Helal. At that time Bazlur Rahman (Shaikh Mujib's P.A. now Shaikh Hasina's Liaison Officer) went to Hasina with a man saying that the

person wanted to hold a function. Before he could complete his sentence, Hasina got up from her seat and shouted, "I do not go to any function of any ordinary person. I am the daughter of the Father of the Nation. Don't I have any value? Throw this man out of the house and don't let him enter here again." The man was startled and slowly moved towards the door. Before he could reach the door, Hasina was heard saying, "he does not give any money and claims that he hails from Chittagong." The man turned back, briskly came forward and placed two bundles of 100 Taka notes on the table in front of Hasina. She picked up the bundles quickly like a falcon and asked him to take a seat. She called the servants and ordered tea and refreshments for him.

Shaikh Helal started quarreling with Hasina for a share of the money. She told the man that she would go to their function and asked him to make good arrangements for the function. She also invited the man to come to her more often.

Hyundai, the Korean contractor in charge of building the Jamuna bridge used to make payments regularly to Shaikh Hasina from as early as 1992. That is the reason why Shaikh Hasina remained totally silent and took no effective steps on the official allegations of negligence and sub-standard performance made against Hyundai after the collapse of the newly constructed gas pipeline attached to the bridge a few days before its formal inauguration.

Shaikh Hasina never talked about ideals, principles or value of sacrifice to her Party leaders and workers. Whoever went to her used to be told that she wanted corpse "I have given instruction to kill and get dead bodies.' Many of those who are in the present cabinet say that the daughter of Bangabandhu did not recognize anything other than money and corpse. They used to wonder how many or how much more they had to provide. The industrialist and Executive Chairman of the UCBL Bank, Akhtaruzzaman Babu the chief accused in the case of the murder of the industrialist Zahir, used to wonder how much more money was to be supplied? Some of the (Industrialists) almost turned bankrupt.

## SEPARATE LIVES OF HASINA AND DR. WAZED

Following her return to Bangladesh on 17 May 1981 Shaikh Hasina never lived with her husband, Dr. Wazed Mia as man and wife. I had already mentioned earlier that following her return to Dhaka, Shaikh Hasina first resided at her husband's quarters in Mohakhali, then moved to Bangabandhu House at Road-32, then to 29 Minto Road, before taking up residence at Ganabbaban. Hasina never asked him to visit her in these places. Besides, when Shaikh Hasina used to live at Mahakhali with Dr. Wajed living in the Rest House within the same compound, they avoided seeing each other. During her stay in Mahakhali and later at her house on Road-32, before she came to know Mrinal Kanti Das, Shaikh Hasina used to go out routinely every evening for a couple of hours to an undisclosed place. She would take a bath pot on a perfume, powder herself, arrange her hair neatly before going out alone with driver Jalal. Except for that unknown place, Shaikh Hasina never traveled alone in a jeep; she always used to be accompanied by others.

In 1987, Shaikh Hasina came to know Mrinal Kanti Das, the vice-president of Haraganga College at Munshiganj. She brought him to Road-32 where he began to live. She gradually gave up her usual routine of going out to the unknown place in the evening. Till late night, she would talk and laugh with Mrinal Kanti in the Library room of the Bangabandhu House, having locked the doors from inside.

Very thin and young Mrinal Kanti Das soon became fat with his hip measuring about seventy inches. His acceptance to Shaikh Hasina went up so high that it became a matter of jealousy for all. His influence over Shaikh Hasina became so great that anybody belonging to the Awami League did not hesitate to salute him as if he was the king of Shaikh Hasina's kingdom. Mrinal became so powerful that in 1990 he insulted the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Awami League, at present Minister for Environment and Forests, Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, and sent her out of Bangabandhu Bhaban. As she did not get any redress from Shaikh Hasina, Begum Sajeda Chowdhury raised this issue at the Working Committee of the Party. After this incident, Mrinal's authority became even greater. Shaikh Hasina's pet relative - at present Assistant Private Secretary of Prime Minister Bahauddin Nasim and at present her Chief Security Najib Ahmed and others used to feel grateful in carrying out his orders to fetch cigarettes for him.

One day in Bangabandhu Bhavan Mrinal was playing cards with four or five people. It was around 3 or 3.30 p.m. At that time the only maternal uncle of Sheikh Hasina, Akram Mamu, appeared and in a very suggestive and bad manner told Mrinal, "Oh Mrinal, go, she is waiting for you. She has not eaten." Mrinal replied, "Does not matter. Let her stay for sometime, let her remain hungry." That Sheikh Hasina was waiting for Mrinal was the message Akram Mamu was trying to convey to Mrinal. In order to show his authority to those with whom he was playing cards, he told Mamu that Hasina should wait for him for sometime. Mrinal Kanti Das became undisputed master of Sheikh Hasina's kingdom. The sign of that authority became perceptible in Mrinal's expressions and manners.

Mrinal became arrogant. One day he had a row with Sheikh Hasina and left. Sheikh Hasina personally went to pacify Mrinal and brought him back to Bangabandhu Bhaban. After some days, Mrinal again left angrily. Once again there was a repeat performance.

After losing the 1991 General Elections, Sheikh Hasina left Bangabandhu Bhaban, at Road 32. As the Leader of the Opposition, she went to live at the allotted government quarter at 29 Minto Road. She had with her, Mrinal and her three dependant relations, namely, Najih, Nasim and Naqib.

But Mrinal was very annoyed as Sheikh Hasina allowed her three dependent relations to live in the same house. At one point of discussion, Mrinal left the Minto Road residence. This time Sheikh Hasina could not persuade Mrinal to return. He began to talk about his physical relationship with Sheikh Hasina. He used to laugh and boast that he knew every inch of Sheikh Hasina's body.

Sheikh Hasina came to know that Mrinal was spreading these words. After some months, on the first day of the Bengali year 1401 (14 April 1994) Mrinal went to see her. They met on the balcony of the first floor. A goat was grazing in the garden below. Sheikh Hasina pointed her finger at the goat and said to Mrinal, look at that creature. You are like that goat".

After a year or so, Mrinal began to see Sheikh Hasina regularly but could not restore his former position. On February 17, 1996, Sheikh Hasina was at Bangabandhu Bhaban. It was evening. She clasped Mrinal from behind with her arms around his substantial stomach. After this, she was not seen giving much importance to Mrinal.

## **WHY HINDUS SUPPORT AWAMI LEAGUE**

The Hindus of this country (most of them) firmly believe in Hindustan (land of the Hindus). They hope that some day Bangladesh will be annexed by the Hindu state of India. In this respect they regard Awami League as their friend. Hindu community of this country believe that Awami League is the only reliable Party through which one day Bangladesh could be made a part of India. That is why the entire Hindu community of this country support Awami League and vote for Awami League. According to the Secretary General of the Hindu Buddha Christian Unity Council, Dr Nimchandra Bhowmik, who is a teacher at Dhaka University, Awami League is the only political party of this country which will support and help India in a clash between India and Pakistan.

A sweet shop owner, half literate, Ram Hari Majumdar says, "you will see, one day there will not be any Muslim in the Awami League. Then the Awami League will become a Hindu League. We believe in Joi Hind (Long live India). Don't you see how Joi Bangla rhymes with Joi Hind? Also you see, Joi Doorga, Joi Maa Kaali, Joi Bangla- are very similar. If we do not support Awami League who will support it then? Awami League is half Hindu - someday it will become full Hindu.

A high ranking Hindu officer in the forestry department of Bangladesh Cadre Service (BCS). who is not willing to disclose his name, says, "Awami League believes in the independence of this country and that is why Hindus have faith in Awami League. Hindus of this country not only vote for it, but also give it money and advice. They even go beyond it. In reporting a news item a Hindu journalist would take Awami League's side. Worst and most dangerous is that many Hindu judges would also take side. When they begin to hear a case, a Hindu Judge would try to ascertain the political affiliation of the litigants. An Awami League supporter will be given a light sentence. On the other hand, supporter of any other Party may be given a heavy sentence.

## **REMITTANCES**

A Hindu, whether he is a businessman or a civil servant, remits the wealth of this country to India. Hindu civil servants, no matter how they have earned money, legally or illegally, by corruption or otherwise will remit money to India. The same is true about Hindu businessmen.

Similarly, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and members of her family do not consider Bangladesh as their own country. And that is why, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her sister Sheikh Rehana do not keep even small amount in this country. They remit most of their legally and illegally earned money abroad. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the members of her family remit money mainly to India, Singapore, Hong Kong, London and the USA.

### **WITHDRAWAL OF VAT**

In 1992, Khaleda Zia's government introduced value added tax (VAT) in Bangladesh. At that time, the then Opposition Leader Sheikh Hasina and her Awami League started a movement for the repeal of VAT. In the initial stage of this movement, Sheikh Hasina set a time limit within which VAT was to be repealed by the government- otherwise hartal would be called.

Someone then asked Sheikh Hasina. 'you are calling hartal to repeal VAT, what will you do when you go to power. Will you repeal VAT?'

"We will see that when the time comes", replied Sheikh Hasina. She went on to observe hartal. When Sheikh Hasina came to power, she not only retained VAT imposed by Khalada Zia's governance but brought in many other items within the scope of VAT.

### **GAMES**

Sheikh Hasina regards herself as the world's most skilled player and there is none to match her. She loves to play games. She plays games with everybody - with the people, political leaders, workers of her own party, her husband. She plays less with her relations. She plays with her sister, but gets caught and she loses. She also loses against her son and daughter.

She is extraordinary and unique.

The game which Sheikh Hasina plays is the game of deception. She plays this game with everybody.

### **LIKINGS AND DISLIKINGS**

Favourite food	Tripe (intestine of cow, goat etc)
Favourite song	Zindegi Zindegi (Hindi film song)
Favourite personality	Joti Basu (Chief Minister of Indian state of west Bengal)
Favourite acquisition	Money
Most disliked person	A deeply pious Muslim
Most pleasure bearing object	A dead body.
Greatest expertise	Telling lies

### **PRIORITY IN ISSUING INSTRUCTIONS**

Sheikh Hasina's first instruction is to kill. "Kill and throw away the body." If an Awami League leader, a worker or a supporter speaks about a person belonging to other political parties or administration, who does not support Awami League - Sheikh Hasina's immediate instruction or order will be, "Then kill him. Throw away the body. I am giving the order to kill."

If for some reasons, that person cannot be killed, then she will say, "Bribe him. Give him money and bring him over to our side."

In 1995, Sheikh Hasina and her associates were traveling by Mawa Road to Tungipara. Professor Abdul Asem (a citizen of the UK. and a director of BSRS) was talking to her about his own thana, Nawabganj in Dhaka district. He said that there was no point in nominating a candidate for election from Awami League because the people of Nawabganj do not like Awami League and they do not vote for it.

On hearing this, Sheikh Hasina said, "set fire to their houses at night. Burn them down'.

## **THERE WAS NO LEADER**

Sheikh Hasina would not discuss with any leader or a knowledgeable person before taking a decision. She would consult mainly the young hangers-on and her relations. When she would join a procession, no leader would be by her side. If by mistake some leader or elderly person came near her, the young hangers-on would push them aside. Sheikh Hasina saw and understood this. She used to enjoy such a situation and giggle. Her indulgence allowed these young hangers-on to misbehave with elderly leaders.

## **SPEAKS WITHOUT THINKING**

Sheikh Hasina says whatever she feels. She would not have discussions with anyone before making her utterances. The Awami League leaders and well wishers are always worried lest Sheikh Hasina should utter something which embarrasses all.

On January 10, 1997, Sheikh Hasina was speaking at Ramna park on the occasion of celebrating the founding of Chatra League (Awami League's student wing). Suddenly she turned towards her Minister Mr Tofael Ahmed and said, 'there is Tofael Bhai and others, who gave jobs to unfit persons in Bangladesh Cadre (civil?) Service'. This statement was published in all newspapers on the following day.

After this accusation by the Prime Minister, all those officers belonging to BCS '73 batch should lose their jobs and the then Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman should be posthumously tried for appointing unfit persons. If this is not the correct course then these officers should file a case against Sheikh Hasina on charges of humiliating them.

## **KING, PRESIDENT, PRIME MINISTER**

One day some junior leaders of the Awami League said to Sheikh Hasina's son Joy, "we are with you and we will be with you when you become the Prime Minister."

Joy replied, "Prime Minister"? President? By begging votes from the people? I shall never be a Prime Minister or a President by begging votes. If you make me a king, I shall be with you otherwise not."

Immediately, Sheikh Hasina said, "my son, we are kings and queens. Some day you will be a king. Your grandfather (maternal) was indeed the king of this country. His servants conspired, killed him and captured the throne. Alibordee Khan was the Nawab of Bengal. After him, his grandson Serajuddowla became the Nawab. Your grandfather Sheikh Mujibur Raman was the king of Bangladesh; in future you will become the king of the country. In modern times, kings and queens are known as Presidents or Prime Ministers."

## **PROMISES**

Before election, Sheikh Hasina had made three main promises. The first of these was the granting of autonomy to radio and television. The second was the abolition of Special Powers Act 1974, which allows persons to be imprisoned without trial. The third was that the Judiciary would be separated from the Executive.

During Ershad's time, Sheikh Hasina branded state television channel as Saheb Bibi Golams Box (King, Queen and servant's box). During Khaleda Zia's regime, she called it Bibi Golam's Box (Queen and Servant's Box). Sheikh Hasina used to say this so often.

Now that she is in power, she not only has forgotten her commitments, but has transformed the television organization in such a way that people call it, 'Father and Daughter's Box.

Her second promise was to repeal the Special Powers Act, 1974. But how could the Prime Minister repeal this black law which is used for holding people without trial? On what grounds would she do it? This black law was made by her father. Her father, the then Prime Minister

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had imprisoned so many innocent people, including the liberation war fighters, under this black law. How can she repeal her father's black law and at the same time claim that she is the worthy daughter of her father?

That is why immediately after coming to power she said that the question of repealing the Special Powers Act 1974 did not arise. She really is her father's true successor. She not only kept the black law but also kept on applying it fully. She imprisoned four opposition leaders without showing any reason. The court intervened and fined the Prime Minister for using this law unjustly. Even then Sheikh Hasina was not ashamed. She did not repeal this law. After all, this black law was made by her father.

Regarding her third promise to separate Judiciary from the Executive, she is not saying a word. She has kept total silence about this promise

### **YES MADAM, CORRECT MADAM**

Yes madam, correct madam. That is what they say in the administration whose only job is to make the Prime Minister and her Ministers happy. They particularly try to make the Prime Minister and the President (if he is the Chief Executive) happy. When the master orders, even the servant or the cook may point out good or bad sides of such orders. But, when the Prime Minister orders, government servants refrain from making any suggestion.

If at 10 or 11 am. the master orders the cook to work outside home, the cook will point out that this will make preparation of lunch difficult and it may not be ready on time.

But, the main task of the Prime Minister's Principal Secretary, other Secretaries and principal officers is to wake up in the morning, pick up pen and paper and be present at the Prime Minister's residence. And, when the Prime Minister wakes up and says something, they would note them down and proceed without offering any suggestion.

They never give any opinion about the propriety or correctness of the work of the Prime Minister. They only say, yes madam, correct madam, right madam. Government officials do not find anything wrong but only the rightness in the instructions of the Prime Minister.

In this respect, the opinion of officers is that the responsibilities of taking a decision and doing things do not rest with them. We are government servants. We will carry out whatever orders are given by the Government. Whether it is a martial law government or an elected government, we will continue to work in accordance with instructions of that Government. Whether some action is good or bad should be determined by the Government and those who elect the Government. As government officials, our main duty is to satisfy the Government, in particular the Prime Minister.

### **AUNT AND NIECE DO IT!**

Sheikh Muibur Rahman had only one brother Sheikh Naser. Naser's widow, who is thus Sheikh Hasina's aunt, came to the Prime Minister's official residence, Ganobhaban and told her, "We do not see enough of you. You are so busy. That's why I do not come. You are working hard and you look tired. Why don't you do one thing. Declare two days' holiday a week. Workers will be happy. We will also find you among us for a longer time.

"You are right, aunt," replied Sheikh Hasina. Next day, the Prime Minister declared two days' weekly holiday.

A storm of discussions and criticisms blew over it. Critics noted with surprise the ignorance of government decision makers regarding two days' weekly holiday. Even the cabinet ministers did not know. No one had even raised a demand for two days' holiday. Newspapers continued to write about this but failed to find out who had given this suggestion. Nobody knew. Nobody could discover that the aunt and the niece between them had done it!

### **WHO HAS TO BE HONEST FIRST**

Who has to be honest first? In order to save the country from dishonesty and corruption that has invaded every layer of the society, who should set the example of being honest first? This kind of thoughts and questions were in the mind for a long time. But there was no easy answer.

In July 1998, a meeting of the District Forest Officers was held at the Rest House of Cox's Bazar. About 20 to 25 DFOs were present. The subject of the discussion was the appointment of a new Chief Conservator of Forests. There were five candidates for the post. The incumbent CCF wanted an extension of his service after retirement. Four other Conservators were also contenders. The discussion related to the amount of bribe a candidate had to give to the Minister of Forests for this appointment. This amount had to be collected from the DFOs for this purpose. The amount of bribe to be taken by the Minister of Forests would be shared with the Prime Minister. She would get a large amount, since the concerned post was very important.

The DFOs thought that only one candidate would get the post and the others would not. In that case, the DFOs who would be contributing to the losers might have a disadvantage. They might get transferred to the Headquarters, where there was no scope for earning extra income. It may be recalled that the DFOs when working in places outside the Headquarters are able to amass huge amounts of money by illegal means. The DFOs decided unanimously that all the five prospective candidates for the post should have equal amounts of contributions from each of the DFOs.

Abdus Sattar who was to be appointed as the new CCF collected all the funds for the Minister of Forests and the Prime Minister, and instead of paying the entire amount to the Minister, he paid only a part. Then he went straight to 12 Baily Road. where Shafique Siddiqui, the half-crippled husband of Sheikh Rehana, the cashier-cum-sister of Sheikh Hasina, had opened a chamber for receiving people seeking special favors. As Shafique was not there, he went to Sung Garden restaurant at Bijaynagar owned by Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana. When he explained his purpose to the manager Islam, Abdus Sattar was taken to another restaurant of Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana, namely Fountain Fortuna at Banani. There, Abdus Sattar handed over to Shafique Siddiqui the funds meant for the Prime Minister. Sattar was then appointed as the Chief Conservator of Forests.

What did it boil down to? Who has to be honest first to take the initial step to get rid of corruption from the country? The President or the Prime Minister, whoever is the Chief Executive, has to be honest first. Ministers will be honest due to the example of the chief executive. Then would come the turn of the Secretaries. In this way, honesty and righteousness will be gradually established all over the country.

However, some hold a different view. Dr. Nazneen Begum Fancy of Dhaka Medical College Hospital and her husband Dr. Rahmatul Bari Lablu of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar maintain that the people have to be honest first. People must not elect as their leaders and representatives those who are not honest. They must not look at the Party candidates but cast their votes in favor of those who are honest.

This professional medical couple spoke about Dr. Kamal Hossain, a candidate from the Mohammadpur-Dhanmandi areas during the election in June 1996. They spoke with regret that they had returned to Dhaka hurriedly from abroad in order to cast votes in favor of an honest and educated person like Dr. Kamal Hossain. But at the time of counting of votes it was found that he was defeated miserably, though voters from Dhanmandi and Mohammadpur were all educated. They therefore hold that the people have to be honest first; they may be right.

### **TALKING IN THE SAME TUNE**

In politics, one has to talk in the same tune. One has to talk in the same tune as that of the leader of a Party or an Organization. In spite of your being an important leader, you have to talk the same way as the leader does. If the leader says that it is night during mid-day of Chaitra (hottest month in Bengali calendar), you hardly can contradict him or her. Otherwise, you will be unacceptable to the leader. If you do not do so, then you will not be able to excel in politics.

If anyone by mistake or from an honest feeling try to correct the leader, he is unfit and disloyal. In respect of the leaders in Bangladesh, particularly the President of the Awami League, Sheikh Hasina. this is the established principle. The first political principle of her is that she can do no wrong. Those who follow this principle are successful in her political domain.

### **HAS NOT LEARNT ANY LESSON**

Among historical figures who wielded power, whose voice would inspire hundreds of thousands of people, at whose words people would willingly embrace death, Sheikh Mujib would have an important place. Some people call him the Father of the Nation; others do not. Most people of the country do not regard him as the Father of the Nation. That he was President and Prime Minister of Bangladesh is recognized by all. On August 15, 1975 at dawn when the Muazzin

was calling people to prayer, saying prayer is better than sleep, the most powerful man in Bangladesh at that time was trying in possible manner to remain alive, just to remain alive, he telephoned the Army Chief, the Dhaka Brigade Commander, the Head of his Special Security Unit, the Inspector General of Police, the Police Control Room, and Ganobhaban staff. But no response came from anywhere. The Almighty did not send a single person to save Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family. He had so many people, so many weapons, so many followers and so much of power, but alas, these were of no avail.

Sheikh Mujib's arrogance increased with each passing day. He arrogantly shouted on the sacred floor of the Parliament: "Where is that Shiraj Shikdar today". after the latter had been shot and killed in police custody. M. A. Rashid, who had read the declaration of independence, was the General Secretary of the Students League when Sheikh Mujib's nephew Sheikh Salim was its President. Due to some quarrel with Sheikh Kamal, he did not visit Sheikh Mujib for a long time.

M. A. Rashid said that he knew that Bangabandhu would die soon. In August 1975 when "at the request of the brother Sheikh Moni, I went to visit Bangabandhu, the latter burst out laughing and said, 'is there anyone in the world who will not be present in my darbar (court)'. In that laugh and words there was so much of arrogance that I felt that his end was near." The lesson of the 15th August was to fear God, always to remember God, not to consider oneself omnipotent and to love and respect fellow human beings. Also, one must shun self-praise and boastfulness. But it is a matter of regret that Sheikh Hasina, Sheikh Rehana, and the members of their family did not learn anything from the 15th August. If anything, they learnt a bad lesson. They have no love for any man and get a kind of satisfaction by humiliating others.

### **WHO HAS HOW MUCH MONEY**

There is a joint account in the bank for both Sheikh Hasina and her sister Sheikh Rehana. After a lot of quarrels between the two sisters, a compromise was effected by opening a joint account. These two sisters own three departmental stores in the States. One of these is run by Sheikh Hasina's daughter Putul and her husband; the second one is managed by her son Joy and the third is run by Bobby, son of Sheikh Rehana. Besides, the two sisters have between them Tk. 3 to 4 thousand crores (30 to 40 billion @ 1 crore = 10 million) in various countries abroad. Sheikh Helal MP, a cousin of Sheikh Hasina from the father's side, owns about 1 thousand crores of

Taka. Prime Minister's cousin sisters, Luna and Mina, are also owners of hundreds of crores of Taka. The other cousins of the Prime Minister, Rubel and others have also become owners of hundreds of crores of Taka. Prime Minister's uncle Sheikh Hafizur Rahman Tokon has about 500 crores of Taka. Prime Minister's second cousin and at present her Assistant Private Secretary Bahauddin Nasim and another cousin of hers, the Chief Security Officer Najib Ahmed Najib and his brothers, have amassed several thousand crores of Taka. There is hardly a close relation of Sheikh Hasina who has not made a fortune. Many of the distant ones have not been left behind in the competition for building personal fortune.