



UNITY

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF BANGLADESH HINDU BUDDHIST CHRISTIAN UNITY COUNCIL (BHBCUC)

Bangladesh Parliament Election 2008

16% MINORITY VOTES MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

The Awami League led mohajote (grand alliance) scored a historical landslide victory at the just concluded 9th National Assembly election in Bangladesh on December 29, 2008. The pundits are busy pouring over the numbers and assigning credits or the blame. For the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council (BHBCUC), the verdict was unanimous and unquestionable: The truth won. The truth is that the people chose democracy over tyranny, the truth is that the people chose secularism over Islamism and militancy, the truth is that the country's 16% religious and ethnic minorities are not push-over and they matter the most. The number 16% that is the total percentage of minority voters shines like a bright sun today. We have seen the census numbers in the past three decades that put the minorities at a meager to 9% of the total population. Now, where have these 16% voters come from? We have always suspected that the government was involved in a conspiracy to marginalize the minorities in every way they could-- and the evidence of that are in abundance. Just look at what percentage of us are in the civil service, in the defense, in judiciary, in Foreign Service, or even in elective office. Now the conspiracy is unraveling and truth is starting to come out, however inadvertently.

Let's talk about the victory that propelled us into joyous celebration. They say victory has many mothers and defeat has none. Well the ethnic and religious minorities of Bangladesh can rightly claim this victory, because we own it. As such we owned the defeat of 2001 too. But it was not of our own making, because we were denied full and free participation in the 2001 election. This time it was different, and we were the difference in the winning column. Let's analyze the numbers. 16% of the 80.85 millions are 12.93 millions voters and the 87.16% of 12.85 million is 11.25 millions actual minority voters who cast their vote in the last election. We can safely claim that 99% of that 11.25 millions, that is 11.16 millions minority voters voted in favor of the Awami League or the mohajote. Now if we spread that number equally to the 299 Parliamentary seats nationwide, we see that the number of minority voters who voted for Awami League in each parliamentary seat is on average 37000. Minus those 37000 votes what kind of victory AL or Mohajote could envision? Had the BNP-Jamat Islamist alliance been successful at taming the minority participation by even 10% of what they did in 2001, today we would have seen a hung-parliament in Bangladesh meaning the difference between the two alliances would have been by a single digit seats, and either could have formed the government. So by any thread of analysis this victory is ours.

Now that we delivered the victory, what place do we have at the table? At a minimum the minorities should be given equitable representation in the govt. By population it is 16% or at least 8 positions in a 50-person cabinet. In political term we deserve even more, because we provided the AL & mohajote at least 30% of their vote total. Not only have had that, but minority voters as the vote-bank was the only winning factor for AL. Just to explain-- AL received 48% votes and BNP received 32%, such as it is clear that the difference between AL and BNP in straightway 16%, who are none but the minorities. As such, it is of utmost important that the incoming Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the AL leaders recognize this fact and our expectations from them. The minorities of Bangladesh bestowed their trust, loyalty and their vote in her and we expect no less. We believe she would, in time, aptly solve the longstanding issues (i.e. enemy property act, Ramna Kali Mandir, repealing 5th & 8th amendment, affirmative action, etc) that minorities have been fighting for. At the moment, how she fills her cabinet, is of our utmost curiosity.



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Bangladesh Jatiya Sangsad Election

December 29, 2008

Minority Winners

Constituency	Winner	Party	Votes	Defeated	Party	Votes	Vote Difference
Thakurgaon-1	Ramesh Chandra Sen	AL	177,101	Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir	BNP	120,411	56,690
Dinajpur-1	Monoranjan Sheel Gopal	AL	143,097	Md Hanif	Jamaat-e-Islami	107,168	35,929
Naogaon-1	Sadhon Chandra Majumdar	AL	161,327	Md Salek Chowdhury	BNP	100,298	61,029
Jessore-4	Ranjit Kumar Roy	AL	102,958	TS Ayub	BNP	97,520	5,438
Magura-2	Sree Biran Shikder	AL	115,275	Netai Roy Chowdhury	BNP	109,808	5,467
Khulna-1	Nani Gopal Mondol	AL	119,553	Ameer Ejaj Khan	BNP	68,084	51,469
Khulna-5	Narayan Chandra Chanda	AL	144,600	Miah Golam Parwar	Jamaat-e-Islami	105,312	39,288
Barguna-1	Dhirendra Chandra Debnath	AL	131,368	Md. Delwar Hossen	Independent	80,590	50,778
Mymensingh-1	Adv. Promod Mankin	AL	142,981	Afzal H Khan	BNP	91,345	51,636
Munshiganj-1	Sukumar Ranjan Gosh	AL	143,120	Shah Moazzem Hossain	BNP	98,781	44,339
Sunamganj-2	Suranjit Sen Gupta	AL	95,593	Md Nasir Chowdhury	BNP	77,889	17,704
Khagrachhari	Jatindralal Tripura	AL	122,420	Shamiron Dewan	BNP	63,634	58,786
Rangamati	Dipankar Talukdar	AL	114,972	Moitri Chakma	BNP	56,429	58,543
Bandarban	Bir Bahadur U Shy Singh	AL	78,949	Shaching Pro	BNP	59,174	19,775

Total Voters = 80846406

Total Casted Votes = 70465727

Percent of Votes Casted = 87.16

Party-wise Votes & Seats

Party Name	Votes Received	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Percent of Votes Received
Awami League	33525557	263	230	47.57711078
BNP	22635648	259	29	32.12291842
Jatiya Party	4919375	56	27	6.981230748
Jamaat	3209226	39	2	4.554307657
Others	5792296		11	8.22001879
No Votes	383625		0	0.544413598
			299	100



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Sheikh Hasina sworn in as Premier of Bangladesh

Awami League President and leader of the House Sheikh Hasina were sworn in as the 12th Prime Minister of Bangladesh on 6th January, 09 ending the two-year long army backed caretaker government. 23 Ministers and 8 State Ministers, picked by the new Prime Minister to run the government for next five years, also took oath. With the swearing of New Premier and ministers, the caretaker government comes to an end. President Professor Dr. Iajuddin Ahmed administered the oath of office to Sheikh Hasina at the Darbar Hall of the Bangabhaban at about 6.45 p.m. Later the president administered oath the ministers and the state ministers.

Portfolios distributed:

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will be in charge of six key ministries and two divisions-Armed Forces and Cabinet Divisions as she allocated the rest of the portfolios to members of her new look cabinet. The Ministries under her stewardship are Energy and Mineral Resources, Defense, Establishment, Housing and Public Works, Religious Affairs, and Women and Children Affairs.

The portfolios distributed among 23 Cabinet Ministers are as follows: -

Abdul Maal Abdul Muhith – Finance Ministry

Begum Matia Chowdhury – Agriculture.

Abdul Latif Siddiqui – Jute and Textiles.

Barrister Shafique Ahmed- Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs.

Air Vice Marshal (retired) A.K. Khandaker – Planning

Razi Uddin Ahmed razu – Post and Telecommunications.

Adv.Ms. Sahara Katun – Home Affairs.

Syed Ashraf Islam – Local Government and Rural Development.

Eng. Khandaker Mosharrif Hossain – Labur and Employment, Overseas, Employment and Expatriate Welfare.

Rezaul Karim Hira – Land

Abul Kalam Azad – Information and Cultural Affairs.

Enamul Huq Mostafa Shaheed – Social Welfare.

Dilip Barua – Industries.

Ramesh Chandra Sen – Water Resources.

G.M. Qader – Civil Aviation and Tourism

Lt.Col(retired) Faruq Khan –Commerce

Syed Abul Hossain – Communications.

Dr.Abdur Razzak – Food and Disaster Management.

Dr. Afsarul Amin – Shipping.

Dr. AFM Ruhul Huq – Heath and Family Welfare.

Dr. Dipumoni – Foreign Affairs.

Nurul Islam Naheed – Education, Primary and Mass Education.

Abdul Latif Biswas – Fisheries and Livestock.

State Ministers:

Adv. Mustafizur Rahman – Forest and Environment

Capt. (retired) ABM Tazul Islam – Liberation War Affairs,

Tanjim Ahmed Sohel Taj – Home Affairs.

Begum Munnujan Sufian – Labour and employment.

Architect Yafez Osman –Information Communication and Technology.

Dr.Hasan Mahud – Foreign Affairs.

Dipankar Talukdar – Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs.

Ahad Ali Sarker – Youth and Sports.

(Out of those Ministers one is from Hindu community- Mr.Ramesh Chandra Sen. One is from Buddhist community – Mr. Dilip Barua. One is from CHT - Mr. Dipankar Talukdar).



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The Daily Star

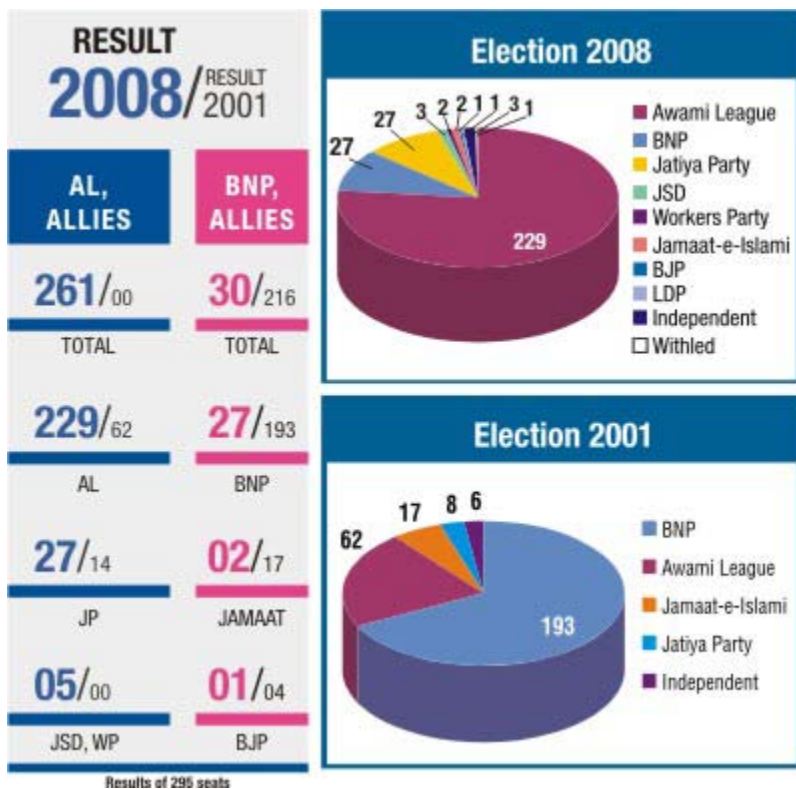
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Friday, January 2, 2009 10:11 PM GMT+06:00

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Front Page

8th and 9th Js Polls in comparison



Secularism returns to Bangladesh?

Secularism returns to Bangladesh-Prof Ajay Roy speaking from Dhaka: Huge win of progressive force of Bangladesh marks as the most significant event of 2008 in South Asia-Prof Ajoy Roy is explaining significance of this major victory.

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Worldwide Conference Call of BHBCUC

Repeal Enemy Property Act & Show the Support: Dr. Benkin

Bangladesh Hindu Buddhists Christian Unity Council global chapters joined in a conference call on Saturday, 10th Jan 2009, just after the election. Global OP leaders called upon the newly formed government to prioritize the minority issues and repeal the enemy property act now. Leaders from Bangladesh, America, Switzerland, France, UK, Czechoslovakia Republic, Cyprus & Sweden joined the conference call which lasted 2 hours. Dr. Richard Benkin joined the event as a guest speaker. Biren Adhikari joined from Bangladesh as a guest speaker. Dr. Thomas D. Roy, President, BHBCUC, USA joined from France.

Initially Dr. Benkin talked and answered questions for about 75 minutes. He told that, AL is better than BNP but it will be the biggest mistake if we don't do anything. We need to pressurize the government, we will lobby around the world and they will not do anything if we sit down idle. He told that, he had already talked with some of the members of the Congress & they promised to take the issue this year. In answer to questions he told that, I agree that you should not antagonize the government at the beginning, but if they don't do anything, we must act. He told that, the government should repeal the enemy property act now to show the support to the cause of minorities.

Dr. Dr. Richard L. Benkin (<http://www.InterfaithStrength.com>) told that: I understand that we must give this new government a time, but I would not be as optimistic as some of the other callers. First, we know that the Awami League have benefited from the racist Vested Property Act. Ending the persecution of minorities must be considered one of the first priorities. What is more important than that? And I have one other question: 'this attitude of passivity and let's give them a chance; how well has that worked for the minorities and the victims in the past? Not well. We are sitting by while people are being killed and tortured! So, yes, we must give them some time--but not much or we will see that their words are nothing more than words.

Mr. B.N. Adhikari from Bangladesh talked about election, ministry and what we need to do now. He also answered questions from the audience.

Among others present in the conference call were Ratan Barua, Nabendu Dutta & Sushil Saha; Pradip Das, Chandan Sen Gupta, Sitangshu Guha from NY; Europe president Udayan Barua, Swadesh Barua, Pranab Barua, Ujjibon Chakma, Titu Barua from France; Chitra Paul from Sweden; Arun Barua, Joint Secretary, Europe & Sumon Chakma, Tipu Barua from Switzerland; Bijoy Barua from Cypress; Saikot Sinha from Czechoslovakia Republic.

Dr. Benkin's article in Asian Tribune: <http://www.asiantribune.com/?q=node/14993>



Buddhist Temple Set Ablaze

Although the national election of Bangladesh concluded peacefully on 29th of December, 2008, but the minority voters at Fatiklchari and Rangunia Upazila at Chittagong have been threatened by the cadres of Salauddin Quader Chowdhury. Three houses of minorities at West Nanupur-Fatikchari Upazila and a Pagoda of Buddhist Temple within the Constituency of Chittagong-2 have been burnt. In this constituency Mr.Salauddin Quader Chowdhury from 4-party alliance and Mr.A.T.M. Pearul Islam from Mohajote was contesting. It is alleged that Mr.S.Q.Chowdhury was staying at night near a village belonging to Buddhist community. Fire was set on with leadership of Nasiruddin Bahadur who is a cadre of Salauddin Quader Chowdhury.

In another constituency at Rangunia Upazilla Chittagong-6 the vote casting was repeatedly hindered by constant attack by the cadres of Salauddin Quader Chowdhury. In this constituency also the cadres of S.Quader Chowdhury threatened the minority voters. The law enforcing agencies also tried to resist the attack of the cadres of Salauddin Quader Chowdhury.

Daily Samakal & Prothom Alo, 30th Dec 2008.

Pastor's Wife Gang Raped?

Date of Incident: 5th Jan 2009

Place of Incident: Chaksin Baptist Church Pastor's Residence, Village: Chaksin Noyakandi P.S: Moksedur. Case Number: 02 of Moksedur PS. Date: 6th Jan 09.

Primary Information: On 5th Jan 2009 Wife of Christian Church pastor at Moksedur Gopalganj was gang rapped by a group of 8/9 people. A group of heavily armed people broke into the house of Pastor of Chaksin Baptist Church in late night. They tied the pastor and rapped his wife. After rapping her for about an hour the perpetrators looted the house. The rape victim pastor's wife was later admitted in Moksedur Hospital in serious condition. She was then shifted to Gopalganj Sadar Hospital. A case has been filed in the Moksedur police station. The Minority people in that area are in fear. Source: The daily "The Independent" and "Samakal" dated 6th Jan 2009

Biharis casted vote for the first time

Stranded Pakistanis known as Biharis, exercised their franchise for the first time on Monday, 29th Dec 2008 in the 9th Parliamentary election. In Bangladesh, they are known as minority, after liberation and they were never treated as citizen of Bangladesh. Biharis achieved the voting rights following the High court orders, thronged the polling centers at different places in a festive mood. They casted votes with a high hope that the next elected government would resolve their problems. Talking to Bangladesh Minority Watch (BDMW) some of the Biharis said their demands have partially been fulfilled as they are allowed to cast votes in the crucial 9th Parliament Election. "We should no longer be treated as stranded Pakistanis". They said that only 20% Biharis were enlisted as voters and sought co-operation from the next government so that all of them can be voters in January. Asked if they have any preference for a particular political party, most of the Biharis said they are not particularly worried about this. They are looking for an honest and patriotic government which will ensure their basis rights.

Hindu BNP leader was tortured OC Suspended

Christian Development Alternative (CDA) informed that, a group of armed and drunken supporters of Awami League attacked a Nitya Lal. Younger brother of local Awami League leader Abul Mansur Rubel lead a team of 7-8 perpetrators. As the family members try to save Nitto Lal they were also attacked. The perpetrators finally hurt Nitya Lal with sharp arms. Nitya Lal was severely injured and first taken to local hospital. He was then sent to Dhaka, Truma Hospital in Shayamoli and when his condition was deteriorated, he was finally taken to Apollo Hospital, Dhaka on 31st Dec 2008.

Date of the incident: 30th December 2008. Time: 3:00 am. Place: Village: Das Para Union: KuliarChar Dist: Kishoregonj. Victims: 1. Nitya Lal, 50; 2. Provati Rani das, 40;3. Raju Das, 17 4. Shiuli Rani Das, 35; 5. Montu Das, 40;;6. Sujata Das, 26; Perpetrators: 1. Abul Mansur Rubel, 40; 2. Bakkar, 40; 3. And 5-6 unknown

Bangladesh Minority Watch (BDMW) informed that, Nitya Lal Das, 50 a minority BNP leader of Kuliarchar Municipality at Kishoreganj district of Bangladesh was inhumanly tortured at his home at DasPara on 30th December 2008 late night at about 3:30am. The perpetrators started beating him with deadly weapons and were looting belongings. Nitya Lal's mother, wife and his son tried to resist the perpetrator but they continued to torture. At one stage they unclothed him in presence of his mother, wife and children. Advocate Rabindra Ghosh, President of Bangladesh Minority Watch (BDMW) along with William Gomes of CDA visited the Trauma Hospital, Dhaka. Kishoreganj Superintendent of Police informed that he would suspend the Officer-in-charge of Kuliarchar PS. CDA & BDMW demanded that Bangladesh Human Rights commission shall take urgent step about the incident





Sumon Barua, Secretary, SRG Welfare Society demanded to form a 'Minority Ministry' in a meeting of the United Nations Forum on Minority Issues, 15-16 Dec 2008.



SRG WELFARE SOCIETY

(Govt. Regd. No: C-1668/91)
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Ref:

Date: ১০-০১-২০০৯

ধর্মীয় সংখ্যালঘু বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়ের দাবী তুলেছেন জাতিসংঘে

জাতিসংঘে মাইনোরিটি ইস্যু ফোরামে বাংলাদেশে 'ধর্মীয় সংখ্যালঘু বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়' এর দাবী জানিয়েছেন সুমন বড়ুয়া। গত ১৫-১৬ ডিসেম্বর ২০০৯ জেনেভায় জাতিসংঘের ফার্স্ট সেশন মাইনোরিটি ইস্যু ফোরামের বিশ্ব সম্মেলন অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। পৃথিবীর ১২০টি দেশের প্রায় দুই শতাধিক প্রতিনিধি এই সম্মেলনে যোগদান করেন। ফোরামের মূল আলোচ্য বিষয় ছিল- সংখ্যালঘুদের মৌলিক শিক্ষা নিশ্চিতকরণ। এসআরজি ওয়েলফেয়ার সোসাইটির সেক্রেটারী জেনারেল সুমন বড়ুয়া বাংলাদেশের ধর্মীয় সংখ্যালঘুদের শিক্ষা মৌলিক অধিকার হিসেবে চিহ্নিত করেন এবং আদিবাসীদের নিজেদের মাতৃভাষায় প্রাথমিক শিক্ষার সুযোগ নেই বলে জানান। পাশাপাশি ধারাবাহিক বাংলাদেশে ধর্মীয় সংখ্যালঘু নির্ধাতনের কথা মাইনোরিটি ফোরামে তুলে ধরেন।

বার্তা প্রেরক

S. Barua

সবুজ বড়ুয়া
তথ্য ও প্রচার সম্পাদক



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PRESS RELEASE

HIGH COURT RELEASES PAHARI LEADER, RANG LAI MRO, ON BAIL

The High Court today ordered the release on bail of Rang Lai Mro, the traditional leader of the Mro community, and sitting Chairman of Sulaok Union Parishad Bandarban. Mro has been jailed for 22 months since his arrest in the early hours of 22 February 2008 from his home in Bandarban and his being implicated in a criminal case under the Arms Act for illegal possession of weapons. Mro was hospitalized the day after his arrest and was required to obtain urgent medical treatment for blockages in his arteries which he has still not received.

Lawyers for Mro argued that he should be released on bail on humanitarian grounds in order to receive emergency medical treatment. They also argued that he had been falsely implicated in this case the behest of certain vested interests in reprisal for his steadfast efforts to ensure the rights of persons displaced through forcible occupation of lands including forest areas in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Mro was brought to the National Heart Hospital on 1 January 2008 in a seriously ill condition but was kept in danda beri (bar fetters) from which he was released after interventions by Ain o Salish Kendra and then the National Human Rights Commission. A number of national and international organisations had earlier issued appeals for Mro's release, including Amnesty International, the International Commission on the CHT and others. A Division Bench of the High Court, comprising Justice Md. Mozzamel Hossain and Justice Afzal Hossain Ahmed, issued the order. Dr. Kamal Hossain and Mr Nizamul Huq Nasim moved the petition, with Sara Hossain, Karunmoy Chakma and Pratikar Chakma.

BACKGROUND: Mro, now 43, is an environmental activist and human rights defender, President of the Mro Social Council, the representative body of the Mro community and the Chairperson of Mrochet, a local NGO. He is also a Headman (l community leader) and the elected Chairman of Sualok Union Parishad. He is an executive member of the National Committee of the Movement for the Protection of Forests and Land Rights in Chittagong Hill Tracts. In January/February 2007, Mro had been campaigning on the issue of forcible displacement of villagers in Bandarban due to acquisition of land by the authorities. He was arrested on February 23, 2007 in the early hours from his home in **Bandarban**. He was hospitalized the next day in a serious condition, and an FIR was lodged against him under the Arms Act Sections 19A and F. Mro was tried by the Additional Divisional Commissioner, comprising the Court of the Additional Sessions Judge, for the Hill Districts. The trial was held under the Emergency Powers Rules 2007. The Court convicted him and sentenced him to serve 10 years and 7 years imprisonment, the sentences to run concurrently, under section 19(A) and F of Arms Act-1878 respectively, for illegal possession of weapons. An appeal was filed on in the High Court in July 2007.

For further information please contact: Sara Hossain 01713 031828/ Shirin Sultana Lira 01712 512403



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Birth of a new democratic Bangladesh

Fosaactv Editorial: **Dr. Biplab Pal**, Editor Fosaac.TV, 30 December, 2008

Although today I am overtly delighted with landslide victory of progressive force of Bangladesh, I shared same anxiety of secular people of Bangladesh ever since, I was introduced to Bangladeshi forums late back in 2004, when there was a hue and cry among rank and files of secular groups in Bangladesh that secularism is on retreat in the golden land of Bangla which boosts a poetic harmony for mankind from time immemorial. It is a land of Lalan Fakir, Rabindranath Tagor and Nazrul Islam who spoke of undivided humanity at best and broke the fallacious barrier of being a Muslim or Hindu. This is a land which spoke human being and humanity above all and everything. Unfortunate as it is, with birth of Muslim league, communal harmony of Bengal plunged into rock bottom in the beginning of last century. Perhaps many of my readers do not know, that in 1946, Bengali Muslims actually got caught up with sinister design of two nation theory for exploitation of Bangla by Punjabi Muslims and therefore, along with Hindu leaders like Sarat Bose, Bengali Muslim leaders actually pressed for an united Bengali nation refuting Jinnah's Pakistan and favoring Bengali nationalism over Islamic identity. This was turned down by Muslim league and Congress alike. Although Bengali nationalism in Bangladesh was nipped in the bud in 1947, it took them another 24 years before breaking up with falsehood of Islamic nation theory of Pakistan paying an untold cost of three million people-largest genocide since Holocaust. Although a secular Bengali nation was born in 1971 led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman, soon military coup d'etat took over in 1975 killing the forces of secularism and modern Bangladesh reversing back to Islamic nation. Since these coups were aided by US-Pakistani nexus who were apprehended by Indian-Russian influence over Bangladesh which, at that time, was full of socialist zeal to reorganize the country in Soviet fashion, Ziaur Rahaman took no time to bring back Islam into politics because it is only in Islam, he would have created a new alternative power circle against Bengali nationalism. Like any other military general, Zia started off with populist measure but reversed the momentum of modern Bangladesh into Islamic Bangladesh. After General Ershad took over, he cunningly balanced the country between Islam and Bengali nationalism. However, he was so corrupt to begin with, he too failed the aspiration of common people and was deposed subsequently by a bloodless democratic coup. Since 1991, three elections were held in which BNP led by widow of General Zia and Awami League led by daughter of Sheikh Mujibar Rahman shared their power and again failed common people's aspiration for a modern affluent Bangladesh by mindless corruption and complete collapse of state system. However, it is during this democratic time of '91 to 2006, independent media flourished in Bangladesh. This is the biggest gain of democratic era which would prove decisive during present election of 28th December, 2008.

Ever since Bangladesh politics was torn between bitter battle of Bengali versus Islamic nationalism, poor and marginal people of Bangladesh were increasingly frustrated who were asking for food and job rather than anti-Indian or pro Islamic jingoism of BNP or "living in the past ideologies" of the Awami League. It is only in Dec,2008 election, for the first time, Awami



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League recognized the need for a future looking vision and the fact that young generation is not looking forward to Islam or India or Bengali but a better material living. Their strategy paid off handsomely against the backdrop of outdated conspiracy theorists turned corrupt leaders of BNP and Jamati Islami. Added with it, was empowerment of women voters who outnumbered male and was well aware of danger posed on them by Jamati Islami through Sharia law. They thrashed out all the Islamic parties sending clear message to them that they want Islam as spiritual religion and they do not want criminals as torch bearer of Islam.

Today's victory of Bangladeshi secular modern force is a decisive victory over Islamist extremist force with 4/5th majority and after this, they can not have any excuse of why they could not turn around a modern a Bangladesh with all needed mandate with them. Now they have the opportunity to root out reactionary force that opposed Independence of Bangladesh. As Leon Trotsky once said " in a serious struggle there is no worse cruelty than to be magnanimous at an inopportune time"- I believe, for progressive force in Bangladesh, that time is now to eradicate poverty and malice of religious extremism. If they fail to listen to marginalized people once again as they did in 1996-2001, they too, will be trashed in history.

For a long time secular intellectuals groused over reversal of attainment of '71 freedom struggle-well people of Bangladesh has given them back what they wanted. So ball is in their court to take Bangladesh to 21st century. I hope with decimation of Islamist force, Hasina, now can be assured that people are asking for "dal vat" (lentil-rice) and they do not want religious appeasement politics which is a contagious virus in whole south Asia. I am also glad that people of Bangladesh realized hunger is the real enemy and propaganda of Islam or nationalism is a tool for the rulers to mislead them from their fundamental right for food and future.

Joy

Bangla!

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HAPPY NEW YEAR 2009