

Published: 02:08 AM, 30 November 2018 Last Update: 03:11 AM, 30 November 2018

Annisul Huq: A dealer in hope

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Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple, once said, "Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower." When I think about Annisul Huq, these words come back to my mind. Surprisingly true that both Steve Jobs and Annisul Huq had a very sudden end to their lives. Annisul Huq was one of the most successful business leaders, cultural organizers and entrepreneurs we have ever seen.

He shined in life with immense hardwork, unflinching devotion, outstanding creative qualities and peerless amicability which impressed everyone that came in touch with him. Annisul Huq's social connectivity was so widespread that there was no age bar. He had friendly ties with people of all ages. He was equally acceptable to everyone.

Annisul Huq's presentation, his far-sighted views transformed him into a national icon. He was President of Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BGMEA), Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) and SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Most importantly, he was the first elected mayor of Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC).

His initiatives to modernize and clean up Dhaka city can never be forgotten. Annisul Haque worked sincerely for improving the livelihood of the dwellers of Dhaka city. He materialized unprecedented measures to reduce traffic jams

in Dhaka and made the best of his efforts to make Dhaka a green and clean city. Annisul Huq's endeavors to uplift the urban features of Dhaka attracted all people around him.

Annisul Huq hosted a lot of entertainment programs on Bangladesh Television (BTV) on different occasions. He encouraged a great deal of youths to get involved with cultural and creative activities. Annisul Huq did not act in any movies but his life is no less extraordinary and dramatic than that of cinematic heroes. One day he told me that adapting to politics was difficult for him. However, he participated in the mayoral election and won the polls. He took over the charge of Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) at the behest of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

He was very close to the Prime Minister due to his amazing characteristics. Annisul Huq had good ties with the opposition fronts too. Everyone that got introduced to him started liking him because of his politeness and warmth.

Nurul Kader's Desh Garments, Anisur Rahman Sinha's Opex Group, AK Azad's Ha Meem Group, Annisul Huq's Mohammadi Group, Noman Group and Envoy Group were some of the pioneers of readymade garments (RMG) industry in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh now earns billions of dollars by exporting RMG products to foreign countries. Once upon a time Bangladesh depended only on the remittances from the expatriate Bangladeshis but the rise of the RMG sector prestigiously expedited Bangladesh's economic growth. Whenever we refer to the RMG industry, we are under moral obligations to recall Annisul Huq with honor.

We are now moving towards the goal of a middle income nation. Earnings through RMG and remittances fuel our forward march. One day Annisul Huq paid a surprise visit to The Asian Age office. At that time he told me we have to admit that Bangladesh's banking sector has been undergoing comprehensive irregularities and corruption.

There is a severe lack of good governance in the banking and financial pastures. Sums of defaulted loans, laundered money and trade deficit are mounting continuously. Annisul Huq said that if the country's banking sector cannot be rectified with immediate effect it can hammer national economy. For this reason, the policymakers and the authorities concerned should work seriously to fight anomalies from the banking arena without delay by halting the disbursement of mysterious loans, money laundering and reducing trade deficit.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina firmly believes in making Bangladesh a prosperous nation by 2041. We are confident about reaching that goal if we can wipe out corruption, nepotism and financial scams. Annisul Huq was a bold individual. He evicted illegal settlements, unauthorized bus stands, billboards from different parts of Dhaka city without fear. He never compromised with anyone.



He could never be influenced by any powerful quarters. Annisul Huq carried out his mayoral duties with utmost devotion, firmness and integrity. He brought together the meritorious urban experts to convert Dhaka into one of the

finest, greenest and cleanest cities on earth. I believe Annisul Huq could have done that if he was now alive. Napoleon Bonaparte once said, "A leader is a dealer in hope." Annisul Huq was a ray of interminable hope for us.

We need to be cautious about the fact that some people do not like creative works. After the death of Annisul Huq, Dhaka city has once again become flooded with posters, illegal banners, billboards and unlawful parking. It astonishes us how just one man's departure can turn everything upside down! But we are habituated to bear even bigger tragedies. Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was killed by a hideous, ruthless gang of assassins just within four years after the country's independence.

We will have to identify the anti-liberation entities who cannot tolerate Bangladesh's betterment and progress. We will have to keep on working with all our might to implement the unaccomplished tasks initiated by Annisul Huq by making Dhaka a beautiful and well-disciplined city. I had brotherly bonds with Annisul Huq. I offer my earnest prayers for the eternal peace of his departed soul in the world hereafter on his first death anniversary. While concluding I would like to quote a few lines from Rabindranath Tagore, "Peace, my heart, let the time for the parting be sweet. Let it not be a death but completeness. Let love melt into memory and pain into songs."

The writer is an entrepreneur, diplomat, social activist and a CIP.