

BANGLADESH CANDIDATURE AS THE OIC SECRETARY GENERAL: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACTORS FOR DEFEAT IN THE OIC TOP POST RACE

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Abstract

*Bangladesh became a member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (previously Organization of Islamic Conference) in 1974. Bangladesh, since its entry in the OIC, had been becoming more and more involved in the OIC activities and making unique and fruitful contributions in some issues and crises of the Muslim Ummah through the OIC. It has also played a very vital role in the OIC and its organs holding important posts and offices including the Assistant Secretary General for a number of terms. But unfortunately, Bangladesh has not held the position of Secretary General despite yet being the second largest Muslim country (now third largest). Bangladesh sought to secure the position of the Secretary General four times namely in 1979, 1983, 2000 and in 2004 and geared up all her efforts to win the election. But she had to withdraw candidature every time on political consideration. Some internal and external factors were responsible for the defeat in the OIC. In this paper an analysis on the internal and external factors responsible behind the failure of the candidate **are** of Bangladesh do the OIC top post contest will be explained.*

Key-words: Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Turkey, Malaysia, Bangladesh Awami League, Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)

Bangladesh became the member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (previously Organization of Islamic Conference) in 1974. Bangladesh, since the entry in the OIC, had been becoming more and more involved in the OIC activities and making some unique and fruitful contributions in the issues and crises of the Muslim *Ummah* through the OIC. It has also played very vital role in the OIC and its organs holding important posts and offices including the Assistant Secretary General for a number of terms. But unfortunately, Bangladesh has not held the position of the Secretary General yet being the second largest Muslim country (now

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third largest). Bangladesh sought to secure the position of the Secretary General four times namely in 1979, 1983, 2000 and in 2004 and geared up all her efforts to win the elections. But she had to withdraw candidature every time on political consideration. The first three candidates back tracked at the request of other member states in a last minute decision from its rightful claim. Bangladesh made its utmost triumph to win the top post in the OIC by announcing her candidate for the fourth time. Bangladesh failed to achieve the coveted job that was totally unexpected to her. Some internal and external factors were considered for taking away Bangladesh from OIC top most race. In this paper an analysis on the internal and external factors responsible behind the failure of Bangladesh in the OIC top post contest will be pursued. Special emphasis will be given on the the first ever balloting for the post of Secretary General of the OIC and unexpected defeat of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh became a member of the OIC in February, 1974, during the Second Summit Conference held in Lahore, Pakistan. Since then, Bangladesh has been actively and very sincerely participating in all the activities of the OIC. It has been actively participating in all the OIC Summits, Islamic Conferences of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) and other important meetings and conferences. Bangladesh as the second largest Muslim country articulated its firm and unequivocal commitment to the principles, objectives and charter of the OIC. Bangladesh received great appreciation from the OIC countries for its initiative and principal stand in Arab and Muslim cause.¹ During the last forty-five years Bangladesh has made remarkable contributions in some specific issues and activities. It is a great honour for Bangladesh to host a full-fledged OIC sponsored University, the Islamic University of Technology (IUT). The Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation (ISSF) was established according to the proposal from Bangladesh with a view to holding periodical games among the OIC member states. Bangladesh's proposal for a Ministerial Standing Committee in 1980s to deal with emergency situation was materialized in another form by establishing an OIC Executive Committee in 2005. It played an active role with its advanced research in food security and agricultural development in Islamic countries. It had the strong advocacy in OIC in favour of the Least Developed Islamic Countries (LDIC). It remained a landmark contribution in social sector specially in the empowerment of women in the Islamic countries in the socio-economic development. Bangladesh was the first to propose the concept of an

Islamic Common Market (ICM). Bangladesh has played a unique role in some crises in the Muslim *Ummah* under the umbrella of the OIC, like Iran-Iraq War, Palestine crisis. Afghanistan Crisis, Bosnia- Herzegovina issue, combating Islamophobia et cetera. It has a strong role in OIC in favour of Muslim minorities and plights.

Bangladesh by virtue of being a member of the OIC is a member of other institutions and organs. It also played very vital role in some standing committees, affiliated, specialized and subsidiary institutions and organs holding important posts and offices. Bangladesh held the position of Assistant Secretary General of OIC for a number of terms. But unfortunately, Bangladesh has not held the position of Secretary General yet being the second largest Muslim country (now third largest). Bangladesh sought to secure the position of the Secretary General four times namely in 1979, 1983, 2000 and in 2004. The candidates from Bangladesh were Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury (1979), former Foreign Minister A. R. Shams-ud Doha (1983), former Speaker of Bangladesh Jatiya Sangsad (National Assembly/Parliament) and former Foreign Minister Humayun Rasheed Choudhury (2000) and former Political Adviser to the Prime Minister and Member of Parliament Salahuddin Qader Chowdhury (2004). Bangladesh had to withdraw candidature every time on political consideration. Even in 2004, the first ever balloting for the Secretary General, Bangladesh seemed to be more confident to win the post. But, Bangladesh defeated again that was totally unexpected to her.

In 1979, Bangladesh nominated former President retired Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury for the post of the Secretary General of the OIC. He was a well-reputed personality and held many important posts internally and externally and had a most illustrious career.² Bangladesh announced its candidature because the post was to be held by a South Asian OIC Member Country. According to the OIC charter the Secretary General is to be elected in accordance with the principles of equitable geographical distribution, rotation and equal opportunity for all member states with due consideration of competence, integrity and experience.³ The candidate of Bangladesh was the fittest one from every criterion of the charter. Prior to the election of the new Secretary General, three Secretary Generals from different regions namely Tunku Abdul Rahman of Malaysia (1971-73), Hassan Al-Touhami of Egypt (1974-75) and Amadou Karim Gaye of Senegal (1975-79) had held the posts respectively. Consequently, the new Secretary General should have

to be elected from Muslim states of South Asian region and undoubtedly Bangladesh was the rightful claimant of the post as she then enjoyed the rank of second largest Muslim majority country in the world and the largest Muslim majority country in South Asia.

It was a great opportunity for Bangladesh to achieve the post that time. But, it could not be realized due to Pakistan's stand. Pakistan had the strong reservation about the person because he played a key role in obtaining support from the Western countries for Bangladesh during the War of Independence against Pakistan in 1971. When, it looked certain that he would be elected, Pakistan put up its own candidate at the last minute, in order to frustrate and kill Bangladeshi candidature, Pakistan announced Ghulam Ishaq Khan, a senior bureaucrat (Finance Minister) of Pakistan.⁴ Since a consensus decision on the election of the Secretary General is required, a contact group was formed to resolve the issue. A deadlock caused and the name of a third candidate from Tunisia, Habib Chatty, was announced. Bangladesh withdrew her candidature in favour of the Tunisian candidate in a spirit of brotherly accommodation. Pakistan followed Bangladesh whose intention was only to sabotage the Bangladeshi candidate, and Habib Chatty was elected unanimously. It was Pakistan which blocked the entry of Bangladesh in making formal relations with the Muslim countries by threatening to cut off diplomatic relations that recognized Bangladesh. Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury also surmised the fact that his candidature might be questioned by Pakistan and pro-Pakistani segment in the OIC as his role during the War of Liberation had made him an icon.⁵ Nevertheless, he could not but accept the proposal from the President General Ziaur Rahman. Realizing the fact, he did not campaign that made the task to choose the alternative candidate easy by his opponents.

Bangladesh for the second time announced the name of A. R. Shams-ud Doha former Foreign Minister, as the candidate for the post of Secretary General in 1982.⁶ Bangladesh geared up all her efforts to win the election. He himself campaigned energetically throughout the Islamic world. Initially, Bangladesh received favourable reactions from friendly OIC member states to the candidature. During the Seventh NAM Summit in New Delhi, 1983, President H. M. Ershad met separately with various heads of states and governments. During their discussion, 22 OIC member countries indicated their support for the Bangladeshi candidature.

Reactions from high level contacts during the Fourteenth ICFM, in Dhaka, 1983, were also favourable to the candidature.⁷ Pakistan appeared as rival to Bangladesh this time also and announced her candidacy following Bangladesh's announcement of her candidature. Pakistan announced the name of Sharif Uddin Pirzada, Law Minister and Attorney General of Pakistan as its candidate for the post of the OIC Secretary General. Bangladesh had to withdraw candidature that time also on political consideration and the OIC finally elected Sharif Uddin Pirzada as the next Secretary General. In actuality, Bangladesh's desire was to consolidate and strengthen fraternal relations among Muslim countries based on Islamic solidarity as mentioned in the Constitution of Bangladesh.⁸ Leadership in the top positions of the leading Islamic organizations, like the OIC, is not its motto. As Bangladesh gave the Islamic fraternity as the top most priority, it did not consider to bargain in this regard. Bangladesh thus played very positive and sacrificing role in reaching agreement with regard to election of the new Secretary-General again. Such attitude was appreciated by the OIC itself.⁹

Bangladesh candidate Humayun Rasheed Choudhury, former Foreign Minister and former Speaker of Bangladesh Jatiya Sangsad, vied for the post of Secretary General of the OIC in the Twenty-seventh ICFM held in Kuala Lumpur, from 27 to 30 June 2000.¹⁰ Yasar Yakist Rvere of Turkey also contested for the post. Bangladesh deserved the post this time most for some reasons: a) that time the office was to have gone to an Asian; b) Humayun Rasheed Choudhury's high personality and experience; c) previously, Bangladesh had to sacrifice the post twice on political consideration and for the sake of Islamic solidarity, though a huge number of Muslim population lived there; and, d) he was supposed to have received support from the leading Islamic countries like Saudi Arabia.¹¹ The office finally went to an Arab, Morocco's Abdelouahed Belkeziz. The OIC leaders elected an alternative one as both the Asian candidates, Humayun Rasheed Choudhury and Turkey's Yasar Yakist Rvere were regarded as too secular.¹² Moroccan candidate became formidable against Bangladesh as Morocco enjoyed the privilege of hosting the first OIC Conference by which it was founded. It was that country which wielded the greatest influence within the OIC after Saudi Arabia.¹³

Bangladesh lost the OIC top post race for the fourth time also in 2004. Bangladesh came first on the scene proposing its candidate as none of the

country was willing to withdraw its candidate. The name of Bangladesh's candidate Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, former Political Adviser to the Prime Minister and Member of Parliament, was formally announced for the post of the OIC Secretary General during the Putrajaya Summit in 2003 by the Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.¹⁴ She sought support of the OIC countries for him referring his reputation that he was fully aware of the issues that facing the *Ummah* and had the ability to head the OIC. Bangladesh felt confident about securing the post until the election result was announced, as many Islamic countries extended their support to Bangladesh. The leading Islamic countries like Pakistan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Indonesia, Algeria and Kuwait reiterated their support to Bangladesh candidature while Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia had bilateral meeting with the leaders of those countries on the sidelines of the Tenth Summit. Bangladesh expected to win the OIC top most race that time. The expectation was reasonable and justified as more than 30 countries assured their support either in writing or verbally. Some of them promised more than once.¹⁵ But, Bangladesh was saddened at the result.

This was the first time Bangladesh did not withdraw its candidate from the race to secure the top the OIC post. Bangladesh lost to Turkey in a triangular fight that felt Malaysia equally. Turkey secured 32 votes while Bangladesh and Malaysia got 12 each in the first ever balloting for the Secretary General of the 57-member of the OIC. Guinea-Bissau abstained from voting. While the Turkish candidate did not receive the required two-thirds majority to be elected, Bangladesh and Malaysia withdrew infavour of Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu before the second ballot. The defeat in the OIC race in 2004 was totally unexpected to Bangladesh. Some internal and external factors were counted behind the defeat of Bangladesh candidate.

Bangladesh was not in a superior position among the Muslim world in economic, political, diplomatic, geographical and other respects so that it could certainly deserve the post of the OIC Secretary General. Bangladesh could not ignore its inherent limitations. It is neither an economic nor a military power. Only population is not the criterion of receiving leadership in OIC's top most post. It was not for Salahuddin Qader Chowdhury or Humayun Rasheed Choudhury or A. R. Shams-ud Doha or Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury but the limitations it inherently possessed created the debacle. In the past, Bangladesh candidates failed to get elected to the top position in the other international organizations. For example, Bangladesh

put up its candidates for the top job of the UN Common Fund, FAO (Food & Agriculture Organisation) and the Commonwealth, but the candidates were unsuccessful. It was not that Bangladesh candidates were not competent. As for example, Salahuddin Qader Chowdhury's deliberations at the ICFM were praised.¹⁶ But when voting took place, it was the overall country's standing and the regional or global environment that played an important role during voting. The voting pattern for Secretary General drew a clear polarization between Turkey on one side and Bangladesh and Malaysia on the other. Bangladesh could not secure the top position of the OIC three times earlier, although it was keen to obtain the position. This being the case, Bangladesh naturally knew that it was placed in a difficult position to secure the post given the contestants from Turkey and Malaysia.

Concerted campaign and negative propaganda against Bangladesh candidate launched by certain quarters at home and abroad counted for not getting the assumed votes. Some former diplomats specially raised their fingers to former Assistant Secretary General of OIC Ambassador Arshaduzzaman, who was married to a Turkish lady and whose daughter ran a story from an international news agency, for the negative propaganda and damaging prospect of winning at the last moment.¹⁷ Some countries which assured to vote for Bangladesh deviated from their promised assurance at the last moment because of the serious anti-campaign launched by some Bangladeshis specially like someone who served OIC previously.¹⁸

Turkish foreign policy had more strength in getting acceptability from the power quarter than Bangladesh's. On the other hand, Bangladesh had the limitations in foreign policy with respect of popular opinion as Bangladesh's foreign policy is guided by popular opinion. Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul, as the Chairman of the Thirty-first ICFM, played a major role in promoting his country's candidate. Turkey as the host country of the Conference where the election was held, were in the advantageous position in promoting its candidate, propagating and making diplomatic contacts. Besides, Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu's personal qualification and his pre-dominance in the OIC also contributed behind his victory. In the past, he was involved in the activities of the OIC. He served as the Director General of the Istanbul-based Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA), a wing of the OIC, in 1980. He was

also a prominent historian. He also served as the Secretary of the International Commission for the Preservation of Islamic Cultural Heritage (ICPICH), Istanbul, for seventeen years (1983-2000). He received many honours including medals from Egypt, Jordan, Senegal, and Iran for his contribution to Islamic history and heritage. He spoke fluently in four foreign languages: Arabic, Persian, French, and English. For his outstanding qualifications and experiences the OIC gave him mandate as the OIC Secretary General for two consecutive terms (2005-14). His era as the OIC Secretary General is rightly called the era of reforms and his reform programmes included the 'Ten-Year Programme of Action to Face the Challenges of Twenty-first Century, adoption of a revised OIC Charter, changing the nomenclature and emblem and so on.

On the contrary, Salahuddin Qader Chowdhury's candidature generated considerable controversy in home and abroad although he was a renowned political figure. In the previous times, those who held this post had solid diplomatic background. Even, all the candidates that Bangladesh fielded for the post before him had background of international contacts. Salahuddin Qader Chowdhury did not possess any international experience which was considered necessary.¹⁹

Turkey's strategic location also helped it to win votes. Geographical rotation of an international post plays a significant part in election. In the past, candidates from Africa, Arab countries, South Asia and South East Asia occupied the post. In the OIC, Malaysia (South East Asia), Egypt, Senegal, Tunisia, Niger, Morocco (Africa) and Pakistan (South Asia), held the post of the Secretary General from 1970 until that date. Turkey was left out. Turkey canvassed that its candidate was well placed in the context of geographical rotation.²⁰ Turkey is a bridge between the Middle East and Europe. It is an active member of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation). Turkey maintained good diplomatic and strategic relations with Israel. Egypt and Jordan also had diplomatic relations with Israel at that time. It helped Turkey to convince the pro-Israeli or pro-American Muslim states. On the other hand, many members of the OIC envisaged that Turkey, a neighbour of Iraq, Syria, and Iran, would be able to play a meaningful role for the OIC with respect to the Middle East issues specially in reconciling the disputes between the Israelis and the Palestinians. The OIC member states thus took the geo-political advantage of Turkey into consideration.

Saudi Arabia, the most influential member in the OIC, had given support to Bangladesh candidate. But unfortunately, the Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia himself could not attend the Conference.

Commitment to a candidate by a country is often illusory in diplomacy. A country's stand changes with the changing situation in the regional and global world. Secret ballot often offers an escape to alter a country's position at the last minute. Diplomatic experience demonstrates that a commitment, even written, cannot be fully relied upon. In the polite but wily diplomatic world, it is not uncommon that a country may change its position at the time of its voting, despite its previous commitment.²¹

Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury viewed about Turkey's win as major victory of pro-Israeli camp. The statement was completely his personal opinion and the government's stand was not like that.²² It would be misleading to say that the election result demonstrated a sharp polarization between pro-Islamic and secular or pro-NATO blocs (Turkey is the only the OIC country in NATO), or to say lack of diplomatic maneuvering and even to say machinations of pro-Israeli camp.²³ The changing global circumstances might have influenced some blocs to switch side at last minute.²⁴ Bangladesh' diplomacy failed to gauge the mood and temper of the Islamic world in this respect.

The defeat of Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury roused a sharp reaction from the main opposition party, Bangladesh Awami League, condemning the government for wrong selection of the candidate. AL considered the defeat as the shame for the nation. AL triggered a war of words with the government party in the Parliament on 16 June, 2004. Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina said, "We had prospect for securing the post for this term but all prospects were marred with the nomination of a war criminal, terrorist and arm-smuggler." On a point of order Awami League member Suranjit Sengupta said, "As a nation we are shocked that Bangladesh got a drubbing securing only 12 votes against Turkey which bagged 32 at the balloting. Instead of going for consensus, Bangladesh contested the election and return with bronze medal instead of gold. The country's image was tarnished." Sheikh Hasina added (while addressing the newly elected Sherpur Bar Association leaders), "If Bangladesh would nominate an honest and fair person for the post, the country would not be defeated." She also added, "People will never forgive Khaleda Zia for spending Tk. 100 crore. Despite the Foreign Ministry has said they spent only 20 crore,

the actual cost for the election would be more than Tk 100 crore.....This defeat threw the country into a deep shame.”

There was also counter statement from the government party. BNP leader K M Obaidur Rahman and Health Minister Dr. Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain (on 17 June in Parliament) argued that “It was not S. Q. Chowdhury but Bangladesh that was the candidate. So, the opposition should not take any pleasure in the defeat of Bangladesh.” K M Obaidur Rahman said, “There is nothing to be ashamed as Bangladesh got the same vote as secured by a rich country like Malaysia. However, we are all hurt.” He observed that although Bangladesh was defeated after contesting the election with prestige that opened up a way of victory. Health Minister Dr. Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain clobbered Awami League for hosting dinner for envoys of the Islamic countries in Dhaka and sending former diplomat Arshaduzzaman to Turkey for campaigning against Bangladesh candidate. He said, “By doing so, the opposition virtually campaigned against Bangladesh and tried to portray the country as terrorist and supporter of Al-Qaida and Laden.”

Nevertheless, there were some positive achievements for Bangladesh and the OIC through the election. Bangladesh contested the election against the two economic giants in the Islamic world. That is a great achievement of foreign policy of Bangladesh. Bangladesh attached more importance to establishment of election process than the shocking defeat of Bangladesh. This was the first-ever secret balloting in electing the Secretary General in the history of the OIC. Impediments to choosing a Secretary General of OIC were removed. Bangladesh initiated the process of democratization and transparency in electing the Secretary General instead of selection.²⁵

In conclusion, it can be said that being the second or third largest Muslim country in the world Bangladesh can rightfully deserve to secure the position of the Secretary General of the OIC at least once during her membership for more than four decades. Bangladesh ran in quest for the OIC Secretary General four times so far. The efforts proved fruitless. Bangladesh failed to get elected because every time Bangladesh had to face formidable candidates. Bangladesh for the first time nominated former President retired Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury for the post of the Secretary General of the OIC. But Pakistan blocked the wining of the candidate of Bangladesh by putting up its own candidate whose intention

was only to sabotage the Bangladeshi candidate, who had a great involvement in the War of Independence. Bangladesh finally withdrew her candidature in favour of the Tunisian candidate in a spirit of brotherly accommodation. Bangladeshi contested for the OIC top job for the second time by announcing her candidate A. R. Shams-ud Doha. Though the reactions from the member states were favourable to the candidature of Bangladesh and it geared up all her efforts to win the election, Pakistan appeared as rival to Bangladesh again. Bangladesh in order to consolidate and strengthen fraternal relations among Muslim countries gave up its rightful claim again. Bangladesh candidate Humayun Rasheed Choudhury also deserved to secure the job, but he had to sacrifice on political consideration in favour of Morocco's candidate. Bangladesh seemed to be more confident than before with its candidate Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury in the first ever secret balloting for the post of Secretary General of the OIC. But, Bangladesh was saddened at the result that was totally unexpected to her. There were many internal and external factors behind the debacle. The economic, political, diplomatic, geographical and strategic disadvantages of Bangladesh; resolute campaign and negative propaganda against Bangladesh candidate; strength of Turkish foreign policy and Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu's personal qualification and his predominance in the OIC; controversy on Salahuddin Qader Chowdhury's candidature, Turkey's strategic location; absence of the Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia in the Conference, the core supporter in favour of Bangladesh's candidate; and so on, played roles for defeat of Bangladesh's candidate. The defeat of Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury roused a sharp reaction from the main opposition party, Bangladesh Awami League, considering the defeat as the shame for the nation and condemning the government for wrong selection of the candidate. Nevertheless, contesting the election against the two economic giants in the Islamic world, i.e. Turkey and Malaysia, and establishment of election process were the positive outcomes. Bangladesh initiated the process of democratization and transparency in electing the Secretary General of the OIC instead of selection. If the process pursues, Bangladesh is expected to achieve the top post of the world's highest Islamic body in the near future.

Notes and References

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2. Abu Sayeed Chowdhury (1921–1987) was a jurist and the President of Bangladesh. He held the positions of the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Dhaka and resigned from the post as a protest against the genocide in East Pakistan by the Pakistani army. He became the special envoy of the provisional Mujibnagar Government. He was the first High Commissioner for Bangladesh to the UK. After independence, he was elected as the President of Bangladesh and resigned to become special envoy for external relations with the rank of a minister. He was included in the cabinet of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as minister of ports and shipping. After Bangabandhu was assassinated, he became the minister for foreign affairs in the cabinet of President Khondaker Mostaq Ahmad. He was the Chairman of the UN Human Rights Commission and a member of the United Nations Sub-committee on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.
3. See, *The OIC Revised Charter*, Chapter XI, Article 16
4. *Coordination Meeting of the OIC Foreign Ministers, New York, 1983: Brief for Bangladesh Delegation*, International Organization Wing, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dhaka, 1983, p. 8
5. Arshad-uz Zaman, "OIC and Bangladesh: Anniversary thoughts", *The Daily Star*, July 9, 2005
6. Aminur Rahman Shamsud Doha (1929–2012) was a politician and Foreign Minister of Bangladesh. He previously served as Ambassador to Yugoslavia, Iran and the UK, and was Minister for Information. He played a leading role in organizing the 14th Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference of the OIC in Dhaka in 1983. In the general election of 1970, he contested a seat from Rawalpindi on an Awami League ticket. At the time, he founded a weekly newspaper, *Inter Wing*, and because of its anti-government character, he was thrown jail three times.
7. See, *The Fourth Islamic Summit Conference, Casablanca, Morocco, 16-18 January, 1984*, International Organization Wing, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dhaka, 1983, p. 10
8. Article 25, Clause (2) of the amended Constitution of Bangladesh, 1977
9. See, *The Final Communiqué of the 15th ICFM, Procedural And Organization Matters*
10. Humayun Rasheed Choudhury (1928–2001) served as chief of the Bangladesh mission in New Delhi during the Liberation War of Bangladesh. He also served as a diplomat in Italy, Iraq, France, Portugal and Indonesia and as ambassador to West Germany, Saudi Arabia and the United States. He held the office of Foreign Minister (1985-86). He was elected a member of the Jatiya Sangsad in 1986, 1988 and 1996. He was elected President of the 41st session of the UN General Assembly in 1986. He was a member of the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London. He was Speaker of the Bangladesh National Parliament from 1996 to 2001.
11. Arshad-uz Zaman, "Vying for the post of the OIC Secretary General", *The Daily Star*, July 10, 2003
12. *Impact International*, 2001, Posted in: <http://www.salaam.co.uk/knowledge/impact/Vol31No8p48.pdf>
13. Arshad-uz Zaman, *op.cit.*
14. Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury (1949–2015) was a politician, minister and member of parliament (six-term) and member of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) Standing Committee. He served as the adviser of parliamentary affairs to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia from 2001 to 2006. He was convicted for war crimes during the War of Independence in 1971 and sentenced to death by the International Crimes Tribunal of Bangladesh. He was put to death by hanging in Dhaka on 22 November 2015.

15. Bangladesh seemed to be more confident in winning the election when Foreign Secretary Shamser Mobin Chowdhury told reporters on 20 November, 2003, immediately after concluding the 10th Summit, "We have every reason to feel confident to get the job. More than 25 countries have already given their written or categorical verbal assurance of backing Bangladesh in run for the next Secretary General." Ambassador Osmani told BSS on 17 June 2004, "Our expectation to win the OIC Secretary General post was reasonable and justified as more than 30 countries assured us of their support either in writing or verbally."
16. Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan while talking to newsmen on 18 June, 2004, at Zia International Airport after returning home from 31st ICFM, said, "Had there been vote on the merit of candidate's deliberations, we would have secured 98 percent votes."
17. "Former diplomats blame Negative campaign against Dhaka's OIC candidate", *Bangladesh Observer*, June 17, 2004, Dhaka
18. Ambassador Osmani pointed out in this respect (while talking to BSS on 17 June 2004), "In the past also Bangladesh won UNSC seat as almost all the countries who promised us their support had cast their votes in favour of Dhaka during President Zia's time in the late 1970s, but regretted that this time some countries deviated from their promised assurance at the last moment."
19. Arshad-uz Zaman, *op.cit.*
20. Harun ur Rashid, 'Why did Bangladesh lose the OIC race?', *The Daily Star*, Editorial, June 23, 2004
21. *Ibid.*
22. See, "Israel theory was SQ CHy's, not Govt's", *the Daily Star*, 20 June 2004
23. Salah uddin Qader Chowdhury said in a reaction while talking to UNB over phone from Istanbul on 16 June, 2004, "It is a major victory of pro-Israeli lobby." He added, "The OIC and Israeli flags will now fly in Ankara." Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan disowned S. Q. Chowdhury's view that his defeat was tantamount to a major victory of certain pro-Israeli bloc.
24. Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan in this respect said (while addressing a crowded media conference at Foreign Ministry), "A small number of key players within the OIC used to do some backstage negotiations to decide the destiny of secretary general hopefuls."
25. Salah uddin Qader Chowdhury in this respect said, "It is a welcome development that the organization like the OIC could come out from the control of backroom play. All credit goes to Bangladesh and Malaysia that those who used to control OIC were forced to go to democratic practice and election."

