State of the Federation Speech of BUFLA President Zia Islam

BUFLA General Assembly Meeting

September 11th, 2022

My Dear Friends, members of BUFLA Executive Committee, members of Board of Trustees, members of Advisory Council and Associate Members – As Salamualikum, Adab and Good Evening. I am Zia Islam, President of Bangladesh Unity Federation of Los Angeles. BUFLA has come a long way in its 16 years. The federation was formed in 2005 and organized the First Bangladesh Independence Day Parade on April 2nd, 2006. The day is memorable for me as that was also the day my son Zeenan was born. Since the 1st parade, we have tried to bring in other ethnicities to the parade to showcase the beautiful mosaic this great city of ours. We will continue to create bonds with all Angelinos to promote understanding between all cultures.

Since 2010, BUFLA started charity activities after it became a 501©(3). We have distributed winter clothing and food in skid row and distributed winter clothing and blanket in Blanket every year since 2010 in Bangladesh. We have helped Bangladeshi families in need many many times and during COVID, helped with food distribution for COVID affected families. We bought 10 burial plots to help families in need. We have helped fire affected people in Los Angeles, hurricane ravaged people in Philippines, earthquake ravaged people in Haiti, building collapse victims in Bangladesh and flood victims every year in Bangladesh. We have built the 1st BUFLA Polli or Village in Bagerhat and have built 20 homes in Naogaon to distribute amongst the flood affected Saotal Minority. We have built homes in Satkhira for climate change victims. We have installed 50 deep water pumps in Rajshahi and other Northern districts of Bangladesh.

Now let's introduce my team:

Mahbubur Rahman Shaheen – GS
Roshny Alam – VP
Khorshed Alam Roton – Finance Secretary
Rafiqul Hoque Raju – Organizing Secretary
Jamiul Islam Belal – PRO
Mohammed Ali Khan – Cultural Secretary

Ex-Presidents – Shiper Chowdhury, Dr. Abul Hashem, Jasim Ashrafi, Nazrul Alam, Shamsuddin Manik, Major Enamul Hamid
Charity Committee Members – Engr. Saleh Kibria, Shahid Islam, Ilias "Tiger" Sikder, Morshedul Islam

BUFLA have been instrumental in bringing Little Bangladesh to a reality. After 100 years, when we are no longer here and most of the Bangladeshi's have left Little

Bangladesh – Little Bangladesh will still remain as the tiara in our Angelinos heart. When we are no longer here – our children and grandchildren will march on these streets with the Green & Red flag of Bangladesh side by side the Star-Spangled Banner. As I envision, there will be thousands more joining this parade and make it a US National Event – just like Columbus Day Parade in New York is teaming with Italians from all over the country. And on a lighter note - we need to come up with our own terminologies like "Bada bing" or "fogget bout it" – but we still have time for that.

Bangladesh and USA have so much in common. We both fought against the British and have successfully defeated them. It took US Patriots 160 years to throw out British forces since the establishment of Jamestown in Virginia, and it took Bangladeshis 190 years to throw the British away. We both take care of our elders; Bangladeshis take care of their elders by honoring them at every step and in US FDR came up with the Social Security System. We both believe in "We are our brother's keepers, and we are our sister's keepers". And Bangladesh already has free Health Care through its Governmental Hospitals. In Bangladesh, Governmental Universities gave free education and here in California, until the Reagan era, Cal State and UC system gave free University Education to all Californians.

Now let me put my agenda for the next 2 years forward to this august gathering.

1. 1st – I am requesting all EC and Associate Members to pay their Association Dues and Office Rental dues of $300 by the end of October. This will allow to be self-sufficient in our endeavor to fulfill our rental agreement with the landlord without any help from individual members of the Federation
2. 2nd – I am keeping my pledge in our inauguration to sponsor a BUFLA Cadet Corps who will be autonomous in their objective with the Cabinet's guidance. I am proposing the following names to the Cadet Corps Committee – who are themselves fathers and mothers – to make the team a success. Also, there are a few members of the prospective Cadet Corps who I would request and speak a few words on their agenda which will be coordinated by the General Secretary Mahbubur Rahman Shaheen:
    a. Mr. Hossain Ali
    b. Mr. Mohammed Ali
    c. Moinul Haque
    d. Dr. Abul Hashem
    e. Engr. Saleh Kibria
    f. Engr. Shahid Alam
3. 3rd – We will have a quarterly newsletter spearheaded by our AC Chair Mr. Haroon Ur Rashid. I am proposing the following names to the Newsletter Committee which will be coordinated by the PRO Jamiul Islam Belal:
    a. Mr. Haroon Ur Rashid
    b. Rakib Khan
    c. Bodrul Alam Masud
    d. Ashraf Akbar
    e. Morshedul Islam

4. The parade committee will consist of the following coordinated by the General Secretary Mahbubur Rahman Shaheen:
    a. Dr. Abul Hashem
    b. Ilias Sikder
    c. Mohammed Ali Khan
    d. Mohammed Jafarullah
5. The magazine committee will consist of the following:
    a. Abul Hasnat Rayhan
    b. Nazrul Alam
    c. Anisur Rahman
    d. Monjur Chowdhury

Bangladeshis have achieved mainstream success – many of our children have become doctors, lawyers, scientists. One of our ex-BUFLA Presidents son got into Harvard as well. But we must not forget where we came from – the tiny little river tributary called Bangladesh. We got free education, free health care and a secular environment, which allowed spurring a lot of ideas, ideologies and dissent in the mix. Despite all that what BUFLA has proven to the community that we shall remain united with all our differences for a common cause – Bangladesh and to promote Brand Bangladesh to the greater Los Angeles community. We all embody the principle what our ex-President Maj Enamul Hamid stated, "Ask not what BUFLA can do for you, ask what you can do for BUFLA".

Thank you everyone. May Allah keep BUFLA unity strong forever.