

PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. 757/82

CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
DACCA, BANGLADESH

2 April 1982

*Subject filed on:
Bangladesh, May '79,
UK/Bangladesh Relations*

Excellency,

May I have the honour of addressing you this letter with the purpose of conveying to you my warm and sincere greetings, and best wishes and to keep you informed about the latest developments in my country.

Excellency, perhaps you are aware of the circumstances under which Martial Law had to be promulgated in my country. In every sphere of national life, Bangladesh was confronted with a crisis situation. Our political, social and economic life had come to a standstill. The adverse effect on development activities was colossal and the confidence of investors, both foreign and domestic, was shaken. The people had totally lost faith in the political leadership, rendered ineffectual by corruption and internecine strife. With our ninety million mouths to feed, we were threatened with a food crisis of gigantic proportions. In other words, ever since the tragic demise of President Ziaur Rahman, the state of the country had been deteriorating progressively from bad to worse. Of late, the pace had grown more rapid.

It was a situation where the progressive elements could not but intervene if a national calamity had to be avoided. It was my own firm belief in democratic values and ideals, a belief that is shared by a vast majority of our people including our armed forces, that had prevented me from intervening till the situation had become totally untenable. We still retain this belief. I wish to take advantage of this opportunity to reiterate to you that it shall be my utmost endeavour to restore, as soon as possible, a truly democratic system that will reflect the hopes and aspirations of our people.

May I submit to you, Excellency, that the foreign policy objectives of this Government will be to consolidate our independence

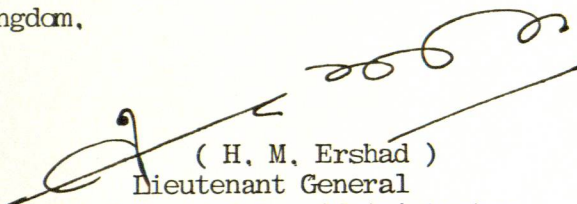
and sovereign to develop friendly bilateral, regional and international cooperation with a view to accelerating our social, political and economic development, and to cooperate with the international community in promoting the cause of peace, freedom and progress.

In pursuing these objectives, we will be guided by the principles of scrupulous respect for sovereign equality of all nations, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, peaceful settlement of all disputes, and the right of every nation to determine the form of its social, political and economic system. We shall honour all our treaties, agreements and commitments and shall strictly adhere to the principles of the U. N. Charter, the Non-aligned Movement, the Organization of Islamic Conference and the Commonwealth of Nations. We shall make efforts to foster and strengthen our bilateral relations with all countries in general, and our neighbours in particular. In the international economic field we shall strive to bring about a harmonious North-South relationship based on the spirit of Cancun. Regionally we will continue with the Late President Ziaur Rahman's initiative to forge economic cooperation among the states of South Asia. Our role in the international arena will, in general, be balanced and moderate, though our voice will be heard when and where needed.

Excellency, it is with deep satisfaction that I have been observing the growing bilateral relations between our two countries. It is my fond and cherished hope that our traditional bilateral cooperation based on deep historical and cultural ties will widen and deepen further. We gratefully acknowledge the assistance you have been rendering in the development of our economy and in providing our people with a better quality of life. Indeed, this is the sphere in which this Government intends to concentrate its activities. It is the fervent hope of our people that you will continue to give us your support, sympathy and friendship as you always have. I

would be grateful for an opportunity to welcome you in Bangladesh at a mutually convenient date. I hope it will be possible for you to come soon.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration. I pray for your long life, personal health and happiness, and for the progress and prosperity of friendly people of the United Kingdom,



(H. M. Ershad)
Lieutenant General
Chief Martial Law Administrator

Her Excellency
The Right Honourable Margaret Thatcher, MP
Prime Minister of the United Kingdom,
LONDON.