



**Professor Ahmad Shamsul Islam**

(6 August 1924 - 14 April 2025)

On 14 April 2025, the first day of Bangla Year 1432, we lost Professor Ahmad Shamsul Islam - a fellow botanist, a former president of Bangladesh Botanical Society, and the founding Chief Editor of *Bangladesh Journal of Botany*. Over the past eight decades, Professor A.S. Islam inspired numerous biologists and their institutions around the world through his passion in teaching, pioneering research, prolific writing, outstanding mentoring, and by establishing novel research and academic programmes, learned societies, and scholarly journals.

Professor Islam was born on 6 August 1924 in Medinipur, West Bengal. From the Presidency College in Calcutta, he secured bachelor's degree in Botany with honours in 1945. Two years later, he obtained a master's degree from the same institution with specialisation in Genetics and Plant Breeding. In 1954, Professor Islam received a Ph.D. from the University of Manchester, UK for his work on seedless strawberry breeding. He was also awarded Currie Memorial Prize for this outstanding work.

Before joining the University of Dhaka as a Lecturer (1948-50), Professor Islam started his career as a Scientific Officer at Bangladesh Jute Research Institute (1947-48). He was a Professor of Botany at the University of Dhaka (1970-86), Chairman (1971-73; 1981-84), and a Supernumerary Professor (1987-92) of the Department of Botany.

Professor Islam also taught and guided research students at the University of Sind (1955-1970), the University of Dar-es-Salaam (1973-75), and the University of Kenya (1975-77). Besides, he worked at the University of Cornell (1961-62), the University of California (1962-63), the University of Tokyo (1970), and the University of Nottingham (1980, 1984). Later in his career, he worked as an honorary faculty member in the Department of Botany, University of Texas (1993-2005). Professor Islam also coordinated the establishment of Biotechnology Programme at the BRAC University (2006) in Dhaka.

One of the most commendable achievements of Professor A.S. Islam is the establishment of Plant Breeding and Tissue Culture Laboratory in the Department of Botany of the University of Dhaka. In his professional career, he guided about 20 doctoral researchers and numerous master's and M.Phil. theses. Over those years, he also conducted many research projects to improve many food and cash crops, including jute, barley, aubergine, tomato, sugarcane, rice, ipilipil, cotton, and kenaf.

An outstanding writer and editor, Professor Islam published over 100 papers and authored two textbooks: *Fundamentals of Genetics* (1982) and its Bangla version *Bangshagatibidyar Mulkatha* (1985). He was the Chief Editor of *Plant Tissue Culture* (Bangladesh). He was also the Editor of

*Sind Univ. Sci. Res. Journal, Pakistan Journal of Botany, Dhaka Univ. Stud. Sci., and Dar-es-Salam Univ. Sci. Res. Journal.*

Professor A.S. Islam was associated with many learned scientific societies. He was the President of Bangladesh Association for Plant Tissue Culture (BAPTC) and was a Fellow of Bangladesh Academy of Sciences (BAS). He was the General Secretary of Bangladesh Association for Advancement of Science (BAAS) and a Fellow of Islamic Academy of Sciences.

In recognition of his contributions to education, science, and development, Professor Islam received numerous awards. He was awarded President's Gold Medal (1984) for his contribution in agriculture and received Ekushey Padak (the prestigious Martyrs' Day Medal) (1987) in education. He was awarded Bangladesh Academy of Sciences' Award (1987), Honourary DSc degree from Viswa Unnayan Samaj of India, Gold Medal by Bangladesh Botanical Society (1997), Lifetime Achievement Award by GNOBB (2017), and honoured as an eminent botanist by the Dhaka University Botany Alumni Association (DUBAA) in 2022.

Professor Islam and his wife were successful parents who now live through their children. Their eldest son Dr. Yusuf Mahbubul Islam is the Vice Chancellor of Southeast University in Dhaka; daughter Dr. Zeba I. Seraj, who was a Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at the University of Dhaka, is currently a UGC Professor in Bangladesh; and youngest son Khalid Wahidul Islam in a computer scientist working in San Francisco, USA.

On 6 August 2024, family and well-wishers of Professor A.S. Islam celebrated his 100 years - a century full of numerous outstanding incidences and scientific developments in the region Professor Islam was born and around the globe. He showed outstanding leadership in being a pioneer in so many ways even well into the last decades of his life. A great educator, scholar, scientist, administrator, mentor, and thought leader, Professor Islam touched so many lives with his honesty, intellect, simplicity, spirituality, and, of course, humour.

We pray for the departed soul of Professor Ahmad Shamsul Islam. May Allah grant him Jannah.

**Professor Dr. Md. Abul Bashar**  
Chief Editor  
Bangladesh Journal of Botany