



## BUFLA State of the Federation Address

by

**Dr. Abul Hashem, BUFLA-President**

August 14, 2016

Bismillahir-Rahmaanir-Raheem.

My dear respected BUFLA EC members, Cabinet members, Associate members, Honorary members, Advisory Council members, BOT, Community members at large, Media personnel and my dear Family and Friends, Assalaamu 'Alaikum.

This is my great pleasure & honor to welcome you all to the very first General Assembly (GA) meeting of the new Cabinet of BUFLA in 2016. I myself and my entire cabinet members are very much thankful to all of you for your kind presence here today. I would like to show my sincere gratitude to our BUFLA Executive Committee members for giving me the opportunity to serve you as BUFLA President. You had many other choices but you have chosen me to be the BUFLA President for the second time, and this is indeed a very big honor for me. I am very humbled to see your level of trust in me, which impressed me immensely. I am also very thankful to you for giving me a very talented, educated and promising Cabinet.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce my wonderful cabinet to you as follows:

**Vice President** Mr. Shahid Alam is a KUET graduate (Khulna), Masters from Cal State Long Beach, and is an engineer by profession and he is a very cultural minded and hard working person.

**General Secretary** Mr. Ilias Sikder is a graduate from Chittagong University and he is a very successful young entrepreneur and is a rock-solid minded person.

**Organizing Secretary** Mr. Siddikur Rahman Foisal is a very well established young Businessman.

**Finance Secretary** Mr. Sheikh Rafiqul Islam graduated from Dhaka University and he has a lot of experience in finance and so he will be handling the right portfolio.



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**Cultural Secretary** Mrs. Shahnag Bulbul is a graduate of Dhaka University, and she has a lot of experience in Cultural activities. She was the Music teacher at Lolito Kola Academy in Dhaka for 18 years. She also planned the City cultural programs of Dhaka City while Khoka was the Mayor of Dhaka City. She also served in the BUFLA Cabinet last year as the cultural Secretary.

**PRO** Mr. Maruf Khan, very young, energetic and very creative minded, an Honors graduate in Accounting from the National University in Bangladesh, Associate degree and a Diploma in Medical diagnostic Sonography from USA. He will help us with his creative ideas and organizational skills during our term.

This wonderful cabinet will give the services to you and to the greater community and together we will achieve the higher ground and take BUFLA to a new height.

As we all know that over 10 years ago in 2006, we all started a noble journey of Unity with the banner of BUFLA in the front, in order to unify the people of Los Angeles Bangladeshi community through all the various Bangladeshi Organizations of greater Los Angeles area. We had a good start then, but there were also some initial challenges and difficulties. During the first two years of BUFLA, we did not have any cabinet. In 2009 BUFLA had its first election of the Cabinet and in that historic election I was elected as the first president of BUFLA. So, BUFLA began its renewed journey.

The details of the BUFLA History is posted on the BUFLA Website at [www.bufla.com](http://www.bufla.com), and I encourage all of you to please read the full BUFLA History there on the BUFLA Website.

My dear fellow members and friends, our mission & vision are very clear. As you all know that BUFLA is a non profit, non-religious, non-political public benefit Charitable Federation of Bangladeshi Organizations. BUFLA is the symbol of unity and a model of unity among the healthy diversity of our vibrant community. We do not entertain any political statements in our platform. Thanks to all the past Cabinets, EC members and BUFLA Family members for your great contributions throughout the last decade, and as a result of which we are here today.

Today in my “State of the Federation Address”, I would like to mention to you a few plans that I have in my mind to improve BUFLA. By keeping this vision in our



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mind, we are thinking of making the following changes and improvements in BUFLA as follows:

**1. Bangladesh Day Parade:** Our primary goal is to present a very colorful and spectacular Bangladesh Day Parade.

**2. Organize the BUFLA office:** The space where we are sitting now, we have this space for the last three years and Mr. Shiper Chowdhury set up this office during his tenure. We thank you Mr. Shiper Chowdhury for having this space as a BUFLA office. We need to organize this office a little more. There is a bad news that the landlord has just increased the monthly rent again by \$250 dollar, making it the total rent of \$1,250 per month. This is a high rent for BUFLA, but it is still a lower rate compared to this town, and so we decided to stay here. However, there are a few things that we need to do as follows:

**A)** Fresh painting and decoration of this office room with some posters representing and highlighting the culture, natural beauty and structural Masterpieces of Bangladesh. Some of the possible selections are Special detail Topographic Map of Bangladesh, Shahid Minar, National Monument, Royal Bengal tiger, National flower, National bird and other National symbols, Curzon Hall, Dhaka High Court, Salimullah Hall, Rokeya Hall, Lal-Bag kella, Shah-Jalal airport, Dhaka Medical College, BUET, a scenic wavy river with sailing boat under bird flying cloudy sky, etc. We don't want to make it a place of politics, but we want to make the BUFLA Office a peaceful place of timeless beauty of Bangladesh because BUFLA is Bangladesh.

**B)** Computerize the office with a landline phone in which we can install an answering system to receive the guest calls so that we can call them back later on. We also want to have a computer with internet and printer to established a digital system in BUFLA office.

**C)** Install office television that works properly so that our members and guests can watch it and enjoy it when there is no meeting in session.

**D)** All Posters, Placards, Banners and other important materials should be placed and stored in a very organized way in this office, so that we can find those things very easily when we need those during the Parade and other programs and any special occasions.

**E)** A set of office supply items including a new vacuum cleaner will be purchased soon, so that we can clean the carpet promptly.



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**3. BUFLA Cabinet right and freedom of opinion:** We respect all opinions and that is why we need to hear from every one. I give the liberty and freedom to our cabinet members to talk and to give their thoughtful input during our discussion on any motion at any meeting but that input need to be meaningful and pragmatic.

**4. BUFLA Standing Committees :** We will reorganize and reform the BUFLA Standing Committees. We will not put any name who does not have any contribution. Only the people who want to give genuine services, their name will be included in that standing committee . There will be a Coordinator who is most dedicated and this Coordinator is accountable for every aspect of that specific Standing Committee. The Coordinators will call their own meetings regularly, manage all relevant activities and they will give regular updates to the President.

**5. BUFLA Scouts:** In 2009 when I was the President in my first term, I formed the BUFLA Scouts and since then it has a name but functionally it has been almost absent. I want to revive this Scouts again this year. We will recruit 15 Scouts from the youths and this 15 Scouts will carry the big flags of Bangladesh and USA. These Scouts will have their full uniform. Very soon we will send a notice for new recruitment of Scouts. I request all parents of the community to please list your youth kids with us who want to serve as BUFLA Scouts and BUFLA Volunteers.

**6. BUFLA Scholarship:** This year we will try to established BUFLA Scholarship. This scholarship will be distributed to the students of all ethnicities. The most common ethnicities of our broader community are Bangladesh, Korea, Mexico, Salvador, Philiphine etc. If we can do it, then this will help BUFLA to reach all vibrant ethnicities and American people will know more about BUFLA activities. We can pick 10 students of different categories and if we pay \$300 scholarship to each student, then we need \$3000.

**7. Job Seminars and immigration Seminars:** BUFLA is already helping the community in various different ways. We can extend our another hand to help those who are looking for jobs and immigration help. Our brother Khalid Islam has promised to help people to get jobs. All jobs information will be posted onto our BUFLA Website and people can get information there. We will have one Coordinator for this important task and. Khalid Islam can be the best Coordinator



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for this sector. Similarly we can arrange for Immigration Seminars and in this field Amy Ghosh is ready to give service. Azuka Uzo is another lawyer, a friend of mine, who is also interested to help us in this sector. Even Dr. Roy Raj can also help us in this area of service.

**8. Affordable Homes:** Our community is very big. Lot of people are working at the minimum wage and their families are big . In Korea town area the monthly rent of one bed room apartment is about \$1,300 and two bed room apartment is about \$1,800. Lot of people do not know that there is a way that they can get the affordable housing . The Los Angeles City allocates a lot of house for this purpose and in this system if you have three people in your family then you will be allowed 3 bed room house, which you can get for a monthly rent of only \$650. BUFLA will help the community to get this affordable house and our brother Abdul Mannan can help you. He is very experienced in this sector and he has already helped a couple of dozen people. Those housings are all in down town area. Please don't hesitate to apply for it. Please contact Abdul Mannan for your affordable housing needs. He is the Coordinator for this sector.

**9. Reform BUFLA Advisory Council:** I had a dream and still have a dream that we should have a very strong and active Advisory Council (AC) but sad news is that no one tried to form a very active Council. Col. (Retd.) Omar Huda tried and formed a Council but we still have a long way to go. The BUFLA-AC is a very special window of opportunity where many of the community members with all of their talents and expertise can join BUFLA and serve the community. If we can accommodate all dedicated people of the community in this Advisory Council then we won't need to be worried about the Parade beautification and finance. Many of the good ideas, creative ideas and finance can come from the BUFLA-AC with all of the educated, talented, rich and good business personalities of our greater community.

**10. Reform BUFLA BOT:** It has been a long time since we had the 5-member full bench of the Board of Trustees (BOT). According to the BUFLA Constitution, the EC will select 5 members of the BOT, but during the last several years only two or three members are serving in BOT. This time we will try to fix this issue and form the full bench of 5-member BOT.



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**11. Initiation of BUFLA Permanent Place:** We have our BUFLA Office and we have been enjoying it during the last three years now. However, as I have already mentioned to you that the land lady has increased the rent twice this year which is against the law. In a single year they cannot increase the rent twice. Any way from now on we have to try to get a permanent place. Myself and my cabinet have the priority to establish a permanent place for BUFLA. Nothing is impossible if we show our positive feelings and start working on it, Insha Allah it is possible. This year I will be serious about this item. We are doing various Charity activities and so we should have some permanent place. Please be aware of it and give us your thoughts and ideas so that we can achieve this special goal.

**12. BUFLA Website :** We have a very modern, sophisticated and state-of-the-art BUFLA-Website which was designed and developed by Dr. Shah Alam. He spent an enormous amount of time to create it, and he has clearly demonstrated his 100% dedication for it. I would like to request every one please visit our website at [www.bufla.com](http://www.bufla.com) and try to go through all the items and pages to see everything there. It will take some time to go through all the information on the website, but believe me it is worth it. You will be amazed to see the treasure of quality and quantity of information that have been posted and stored there on the BUFLA-Website. BUFLA News item feature has been activated recently and additional special features are being developed on an ongoing basis Please give us your feedback for any further improvement of this website. We thank you Dr. Shah Alam for your beautiful creation.

**13. Community Directory:** We don't know actually how many Bangladeshi people are living in Los Angeles or even in Little Bangladesh area. We should know that, and for that we need the help of every one. It is not possible for one person or even by the Cabinet alone . In my tenure we will try to do this important task. If we can make a Data-Base, then we can use it for different purposes, specially for the Parade. It will help us to involve more people in our Parade and other activities.

**14. BUFLA Charity:** Since the formation of BUFLA in 2006, we have been celebrating our Independence day by a spectacular Bangladesh Day Parade in the Little Bangladesh Area. This Parade is our Signatory program of BUFLA, but later on we started to do a lot of other activities and BUFLA Charity is one of those activities. The Charity activities started in 2010 and here is a list of some of the



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Charity activities: Helping the devastating earth quake victims of Haiti, blanket distribution in Bangladesh, helping several victim families of Rana Plaza building collapse, Philippine Typhoon haiyan, Nepal earth quake victims, Shikrity charity, several local charity activities like helping Haq Family, Farid khan Family, Ranga family, Monzu Mia Charity, distribution of 400 packets of hot meal to the homeless people, 500 winter jacket distribution to the needy downtown people, etc.

During the last 3 years, I was the Charity Committee Coordinator and during that period we did a huge amount of Charity work which has lifted up the image of BUFLA to a new height.

The fact is that for all of our Charity activities during the last several years, all the money came from the donation by our members. BUFLA has the 501(c)(3) tax exempt status and we should effectively explore the Charity funding potentials from the Federal, State, County and City Offices, as well as from the Corporate funding for Charity. Now Shiper Chowdhury is the Coordinator of the Charity Committee. In his two years of tenure, there is a huge possibility that Charity will flourish more which will help BUFLA to flourish in serving the humanity. Last year at the BUFLA-Charity fundraising dinner program I declared that in the year 2020 insha Allah we will do a million dollars Charity in BUFLA. All the Charity Committee Members should have that target and goal to achieve.

**15. Meet the Public & Organization:** In 2009 when I was elected as the first President of BUFLA, I did a huge Public Relations (PR) activities. I met with many of the organizations, the community leaders, many community members and also the Press. This year I have in my mind to unify the three Hindu organizations into one and then get them into BUFLA. Beside that I will try to bring Noakhali Samity and BMANA into BUFLA. I will also try to get the organization of Paris. I will sit down with a few organizations who may be showing less interest to stay with BUFLA. I will try to know the fact from them and then try to resolve any issues. In my tenure I will be very careful about the approval of any organization to join BUFLA. We already know how many organization are there outside of BUFLA. False proliferation of Organization is totally unacceptable. As I said about 7 years ago that BUFLA criteria is Quality and not Quantity. I will also not entertain any personal issues during this term. BUFLA is a big family now where we all get together as families from time to time. So we should be very careful about the



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environment. We always maintain a good quality environment at BUFLA and we must always continue to do so. We will not allow anyone to pollute the environment. Polluter will be immediately expelled from BUFLA. BUFLA is not a place to do any type of violence. Violator will be punished and expelled from BUFLA right way. BUFLA is a place where a lot of good people have assembled here to form a very healthy environment. I have learned lot of good things in the BUFLA environment, and I am still learning. If someone wants to learn some good things then they should come to BUFLA and learn it. We are maintaining a very high level of democracy, accountability, transparency and discipline in BUFLA.

**16. Lotus Festival:** As you know that Los Angeles City officials have announced Bangladesh as the host country for the Lotus Festival for 2017 and BUFLA is the Host Organization (Federation) on behalf of Bangladesh to host this grand event on July 8-9, 2017, Saturday and Sunday. This is the largest community festival of the city of Los Angeles at the ECHO park and we are very excited about this great opportunity. We plan to present the best of Bangladesh as well as facilitate the best of other ethnic groups at this mega festival and we need all of your suggestions, ideas and help to achieve our high goal at this high profile event on July 8-9, 2017.

**17. Sponsors:** We have several good sponsors for BUFLA from the very beginning, who have always been with us and have helped us. Among the major sponsors, we have Belayet Hossain bhai of Dhaka Home has always helped us in his good time, and even during any bad time he still helped us and he never left us. Thank you Belayet bhai for your continued help. Another sponsor Mr. Moazzem Hossain Chowdhury has been very kind to help us and give us a big support during the last three years. We thank you Moazzem Bhai for your generous contribution. Our another sponsor Dr. Kali Pradip Chaudhuri has always been with us but I believe this time he is going to show some Charismatic role in BUFLA Parade. We thank you Dr. KPC for your ongoing generous support and encouragements. We also thank Mr. Saiful Haq for his generous sponsorship during the last two years . I am also thankful to every donor, every advertisers and all of our well wishers. In this current term, I want your true cooperation with full support and help. Together we can have a very colorful and spectacular Parade this year. That is our primary goal.

God bless America, God bless Bangladesh and God bless BUFLA.