

## **Let us usher in New Year 2011: A Year of Hope & Expectation!**

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In ancient days, there was no New Year. They used to say 'in the tenth year of the reign of Emperor such and such'. When a new Emperor comes, the clock is reset: It is year one. On it goes until the Emperor dies and his reign ends. Then a new Emperor and a new calendar.

The Gregorian calendar year of 2011 is the most widely used calendar in the world today. The Gregorian calendar year of 2010 closes on 31 December and a New Year dawns on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2011.

It was first decreed by Pope Gregory XIII, after whom it was named, on 24 February 1582. The Gregorian calendar modifies the Julian calendar's regular four-year cycle of leap years.

The last day of the Julian calendar was Thursday, 4 October 1582 and this was followed by the first day of the Gregorian calendar, Friday, 15 October 1582.

The Gregorian solar calendar is an arithmetical calendar. It counts days as the basic unit of time, grouping them into years of 365 or 366 days; and repeats completely every 146,097 days, which fill 400 years.

### *New Year's Resolutions:*

The New Year is always a time out with the old and in with the new in mind. New Year is like a fresh, empty canvas. It is up to us what we "paint" on this canvas of the year 2011.

A lot of people create New Year's resolutions and declare to friends and family what they'd like to accomplish in the year ahead. In fact, most of New Year's resolutions have lasted, on average, may be a week or two.

New Year's resolutions can be very positive resources. They can provide an opportunity for us to evaluate our progress in life. What we did last year and we can do this year. They can invigorate our lives with inspiring challenges and wonderful experiences to look forward to.

Just because things haven't worked out well in the past with respect to New Year resolutions are no reasons to assume they never will. New Year's Resolutions are wonderful mechanisms for creating new and exciting time ahead.

### *Events in 2010*

The Year 2010 saw war, grief, and achievement. The year saw worsening wars in Afghanistan, increased terrorists' attacks in Pakistan together with the Supreme Court at loggerheads with the Zardari government and derailed Indo-Pakistan peace process, more authoritarian attitude of elected Sri Lanka government, unresolved Israeli-Palestinian conflict even under the Obama

administration, Iran-US battle of words on nuclear programme, wide distrust between US- Latin American Left- governments among others.

The year saw repair of Russia-US relations, with the US Senate's ratification of START to reduce nuclear weapons and missiles, consolidation of Indo-Russian relations with the visit of Russian President Medvedev to India on 21st December. The explicit support of leaders of UK, US, France and Russia and the tacit support of China --all permanent members of the UN Security Council-- during their trips to India in 2010 has assured India its seat as a permanent member of the Council.

G-20 forum took a central stage in Seoul addressing some of the burning global issues. Chinese Prime Minister praised Pakistan for taking actions against terrorism and his visit on 17-18 December 2010 and has elevated their relationship to a new level of strategic importance.

All hopes for a binding reduction of greenhouses gas agreement have revived in Cancun Global Climate Conference and world leaders insisted that the climate deal clinched at Cancun must be given a concrete shape next year in Durban (South Africa).

It was again in November 2010 in Indonesia President Obama touched on several themes in the speech, namely, his administration's attitude towards Islamic World, wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, democracy, religious freedom, women's rights and economic development and opportunity. Obama has declared that America has a common cause with Islam and never will be at war with the faith — an overture intently watched by the Muslim world and welcomed by them.

"America and Islam are not exclusive," he said, "and need not be in competition. Instead, they overlap, and share common principles of justice and progress, tolerance and the dignity of all human beings."

It was a year Bangladesh people witnessed active diplomacy. Prime Minister visited China in March, South Korea in May and Japan in November and strengthened bilateral relations and economic cooperation. Interaction with African countries has increased and there is a possibility of taking lease of land from some African countries for Bangladeshi farmers to grow crops for Bangladesh.

Bangladesh topped the list of countries of the UN peacekeeping missions with more than 10,000 peace keepers in 13 countries. Bangladesh's environmental woes have been publicized by the leaders in various regional and international forums.

Some actions of the government are perceived as good and some are seen as controversial and the confrontational politics regrettably continues in the country.

The boycott of parliament by a major opposition party has continued and the government and the opposition blame each other for such stalemate. Public seem to be confused on their stances and their hope for a harmonious political environment has not been fulfilled.

*Year 2011:*

To predict the likely events in national, regional and international scenes for 2011 is difficult because it is basically a guess work. Events are going to happen whether one likes it or not. However one may conceive some of one's wishes with a pragmatic attitude.

The people expect deficit of electricity will sharply reduce, basic consumer goods such as rice, lentils and cooking oil be available at a reasonable affordable price and traffic jam be reduced by adopting innovative methods. There will be harsh action against violence on women and all citizens irrespective of gender are able to carry on their work peacefully. Especially female students should not be a target of violence or harassment.

In 2011, Bangladesh stands at a crossroads because it all depends on how political parties conduct themselves during the coming year and whether all parties accept the environment, characterized by mutual tolerance and respect.

People are eagerly waiting for the War Crimes trial in Bangladesh and hope that extra-judicial killings will end.

People expect good governance from an elected government. Governance ordinarily means the process of how decisions are made and how decisions are implemented. Transparency is the hallmark of good governance.

People expect elected leaders must shun direct or indirect influence of relatives, friends and party followers and must not engage themselves in appointing individuals to positions responsibility regardless of merit.

The New Delhi visit by the Prime Minister last year will have impact on Bangladesh-India relations and hopefully some of the outstanding issues such as the agreement on sharing of waters of Teesta River, completion of border demarcation including the exchange of enclaves, opening of border hat bazaar and access of Bangladeshi goods without non-tariff barriers will be achieved.

In South Asia, political situation remains uncertain in Nepal and Afghanistan. The future Pakistan government remains fragile after two coalition partners have withdrawn support from the government at the end of 2010. Sri Lanka has to convince the international community that they did not commit any international crimes against Tamil rebels.

The Bhutanese refugees, sheltered in Nepal, may receive due justice from dialogue between Nepal and Bhutan about their repatriation. Maldives government will remain unstable because the ruling party of the President lost its majority in the parliament.

In the Middle East, the Israeli-Palestinians negotiations may not find a mutually acceptable solution unless new settlements of Israelis are stopped in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. A new war between Hezbollah in Lebanon and Israel may erupt. Iraq's unity government will remain unstable because of sectarian tensions.

In the northeast Asia, hopefully South and North Korea may achieve a deal to their mutual interests to keep the Korean peninsula peaceful through dialogue.

The new government of Japan led by Naoto Kan would bring reconciliation with China. Asian countries need to build deeper and more effective relationships with China. In the first instance, this needs to occur between governments by engaging China in multilateral and regional institutions, and at a bilateral level. All should ensure that China rises peacefully and is fully integrated with security with other global powers.

In Africa, hopefully civil wars in Congo and Somalia will end. On 9<sup>th</sup> January the referendum in South Sudan may emerge a new African country. The New Partnership for Africa's Development—a blue print for Africa, will be implemented, according to free market specialists, on the basis of “three” opens—open economy, open societies and open governments.

In Latin America, the tension between the US and left-wing government may likely to remain in the coming year.

The New Year 2011 hopefully will be much better for people across the world. Global stability, resurgence of global economy and an interactive global order will be hopefully in place and promote economic progress, prosperity and peace for all.