Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan was born on Friday the 07th June of 1868 A.D. 1 (circa 24th Jaishthya 1275 B.S./13th Safar 1286 A.H.) at village Hakinpur, P.O. Bithari under Basirhat sub-division of district North 24 Parganas in West Bengal, India. The name of his father was Maulana Abdul Bari Khan and that of his mother Begum Rabia Khatun. 2 Maulana Abdul Bari Khan, an Arabic-educated personality, joined the Mujahid Movement in the Frontier Provinces. He was a student of Ḍūlāmah Sayyid Nazir Husain of Delhi (died in 1920) and stayed with him for six years. He also learned Hadith from Allamah Sayyid Nazir Husain.

Maulana Abdul Bari Khan’s handwriting was very fine. He copied ‘Shahnama’ the great Persian Epic of Firdausi; his book ‘Khush Khatt’, preserved in the Asiatic Society of

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1 The year of birth of the Maulana was 1869; vide Islami Bishwakosh, vol. I; compiled and edited by the Board of Editors, Dhaka: Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, 1986 (1st edn.); p. 75.

2 She was Rabia Khanam; vide Bangla Bhasai Quran Charcha: Dr. Mujibur Rahman, Dhaka: Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, 1986 (1st edn.); p. 110.
Calcutta\textsuperscript{1}, bears ample testimony to his calligraphy. Apart from these, Maulana Abdul Bari Khan wrote a number of books in Arabic and in Persian but those books are not available at present. His father Turab Ali Khan was a staunch disciple of Shahid Titumir and also a forefront leader of the Wahhabi Movement.\textsuperscript{2}

One of his forefathers became 'Shahid' in the battle of Balsakot (1831). Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan's mother Begum Rabia Khatun was also an accomplished as well as pious lady. Maulana Abdul Bari Khan was a 'Pir' of his time. It has been said that the forefathers of Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan were the original inhabitants of village Paigram-Kasba — some twenty miles east-south of Jessore — on the border of Jessore and Khulna districts of Bangladesh. It is also said that Maulana Akram Khan's forefathers were the inhabitants of Frontier Provinces. They migrated to Sandila (India) from the Swat-State (Pakistan) and then to Mahilabad of North Provinces (India). Thereafter they settled at Hakimpur village in North 24 Parganas district.\textsuperscript{3} It is said that one of the forefathers of Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) and that of Maulana Akram Khan were brothers.\textsuperscript{4}

\textsuperscript{1} Maulana Akram Khan: a versatile genius by Abu Jafar. Dhaka: Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, 1984 (1st. edn.); p.8. See also article: Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan by Khurshid Ahmad; 'Tahzib' (Bengali religious monthly, Dhaka; editor - Muhiuddin Shami), Pous 1380 issue, p.40.


\textsuperscript{3} Maulana Akram Khan : Abu Jafar, p.9.

\textsuperscript{4} Ibid.
Maulana Akram Khan himself admitted that his forefathers were Pirali-Brahmins. The fifth forefather of Maulana Akram Khan was Kamdeb Kushari who embraced Islam and became Kamaluddin Khan.¹ This Kamdeb Kushari was a cousin-brother to Panchanan Kushari (later became Tagore), the fifth forefather of Rabindranath Tagore. Panchanan Kushari was a domicile of Baropara village in the district of Jessore. At one time or other, the ancestors of Kamdeb Kushari and that of Panchanan Kushari came united at any rate. Later on Panchanan Kushari shifted to Calcutta and lived there permanently. Dakshin Dihi, in the district of Khulna, is an ancient place and ecologized by Hindu caste. Sometime or other it was called Payagram. The clan of Roy Choudhuri had a special fame of this village. Probably, during Turko-Afghan reign the Brahmins had received the dignitary title - Roy Choudhuri from the government. They were the Kalojagata Brahmins. Dakshina Narayan and Nagor Nath were two successful sons of this clan. Nagar Nath died leaving no issue; brother Dakshina Narayan had four sons: Kamdeb, Jaydeb, Ratideb and Shukdeb.²

The Calcuttan 'Thakur' lineage are the descendants of Bhattanarayan, and Kushari belongs to Gayen Brahmins. They had their ancient residence at Pithabhog, east to Alaipur of Khulna

¹ Jugantar (Bengali daily), 25 August 1968; p.4 (Letter of Muhammad Isha Khan of Calcutta-19).
district. By way of wedlock with the Roy Choudhuris, the Kusharis of Pithabhog turned into 'Pirali'. Rabindranath Tagore was a distinguished descendant of this very Kushari Pedigree. Panchanan Kushari, the fifth forefather of Rabindranath Tagore settled at Gobinõpur, near Kalighat of Calcutta, migrating from Khulna district (and according to other version, from Jessore district). The then Kaibartas, the Jeles and the Malos used to call these newly immigrated Brahmins as 'Thakur' (which, according to English style, is Tagore). Thencefrom the title of this lineage turned into Thakur from Kushari. Till this day the concerned people has had been affixing Pithabhog as the ancient residence for the Thakur family of Calcutta's Jorasanko. At Dakshin Dihi, there is still existing the maternal uncle's house and also the residence of the father-in-law of Rabindranath Tagore. Many a commentators opine that the early residence of Rabindranath Tagore's ancestors is at Dakshin Dihi; but this is not correct. Fact indeed that there was a deep relationship and frequent coming and going to Dakshin Dihi of Rabindranath Tagore and also of his kinsmen. The early residence was at Pithabhog and still the house has been existing there.

Kamdeb Kushari and his brother Jaydeb Kushari embraced Islam sometime in fifteenth century when King Khan Jahan Ali

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1 Tahzib (Bengali religious monthly, Dhaka) Pous 1380 issue; p.38 (foot-note).
(died 863 A.H./1459 A.D.\textsuperscript{1}) used to rule Khalifatabad (now Bagerhat of Bangladesh) of Khulna district.

Historian T. Bloch says, "One of the governors of Khalifatabad in the time of Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah I of Bengal, after the restoration of the house of Balban to the royal throne, is known to us by his title, Khan Jahan only. Popular tradition calls him Khan Jahan Ali, which the rustic tongue of the Eastern Bengalis has turned into Khanja Ali, but the addition of the word Ali is not warranted by history. In fact, we know only very little of him. According to the inscriptions on his tomb he died on the night of the 26th Dhil Hijja 863, that is the night of the 23rd to 24th October, A.D.1459, and was buried on the 25th October ...\textsuperscript{2}

The famous Pir Ali sect was originated at Paigram Kasba. A Brahmin of Jessore accepted the discipleship of Khan Jahan Ali and embraced Islam; his name was Muhammad Tahir. He was a famous man in his time. His full name was Pir Ali Muhammad Tahir \textellipsis After making intensive investigation, it is now clear that Pir Ali Muhammad Tahir was Shri Gobindalal Roy. He was known as Gobinda Thakur. He was nearest and dearest Prime Minister to the King Khan Jahan Ali, the ruler of Bagerhat and became

\textsuperscript{1} Sundarbaner Itihas: A.F.M. Abdul Jalil; Dhaka; Ahmad Publishing House, 1986 (2nd edn.); p.311.

his Prime Minister. The origin of the Pir Ali sect was at Payagram-Kasba. He worked as the representative of Khan-e-Jahan Ali at Payagram-Kasba. He was in charge of collecting revenues and of other government functions.¹

O'Mally relates a story of the origin of the 'Pir Ali' Sect. Once, at the time of Ramadhan, Khan Jahan Ali while fasting, smelled a flower. His Hindu employee, who was now Muhammad Tahir saw it and said that smelling was half-eating. After a few days, Khan Jahan Ali arranged for a feast in his own house. Gobinda Thakur took a piece of cloth and put it on his nose in order to avoid the smell of meat. Khan Jahan Ali then said, "if smelling was half-eating, Gobinda had taken the food and so he should accept Islam. Accordingly Gobinda Thakur embraced Islam and became Pir Ali. Muhammad Tahir but his sons remained Hindus. He was the first of the sect to accept Islam and the people jokingly called him 'Pir Oli'. His Hindu brothers and other relatives remained Hindus but they became outcast in the Hindu society. These outcast Hindus became known as "Pirali Brahmins", "Pirali Kayasthas" etc.² There is another story current in the area. Among the four sons of aforesaid Dakshina Narayan, Kamdeb and Jaydeb joined the government service under King Khan-e-Jahan Ali. Tahir (formerly Gobinda

¹ Sundarbaner Itihass A.F.M.Abdul Jalil, pp.332-333.
² Maulana Akram Khan, a versatile genius: Abu Jafar, p.10.
Thakur, another employee of Khan-e-Jahan Ali) had no good term with Kamdeb and Jaydeb. Once during the month of Ramadan, a man came with a scented lemon and presented it to Tahir. Tahir started smelling the lemon. Kamdeb and Jaydeb burst into laughter observing Tahir to smell a lemon even in the state of fasting. Thereafter they uttered a Sanskrit Sloka, and said, 'GHRANENA ARDHABHOJANAM' (which means smelling is half-eating); 'hence your fasting is void'. Hearing this Tahir became very offended and affronted also; but remained quite unanswered. Tahir planned for revenge secretly. One day in a Muslim house meat was being cooked. With an intention to utilize such opportunity, Tahir brought Kamdeb and Jaydeb at the outside premises of that house forthwith. The two brothers tried to close down their nasal cavities with napkins. No sooner Tahir cried out with saying, 'GHRANENA ARDHABHOJANAM', "meat-smell has instilled in your nose, so you have fallen from your own religion." Tahir did not forget to make the news public. Both they accepted Islam and became Kamaluddin Khan and Jamaluddin Khan respectively. These newly converted Kamaluddin Khan and Jamaluddin Khan changed their place of residence to 'Singia' and got thereby much wealth as they became jaigirdars of that very region. Still the 'Kamal Khan Dighi' (i.e. a pond prefixing Kamal Khan's name)

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of village Sonatala, west of Bagerhat, has been bearing the memory of Kamaluddin Khan. Later on their successors spreaded over the districts of Khulna and 24 Parganas.

The Tagores belong to the Sandilya Gotra; and come of the Rahri clan of Bengal Brahmins being Bandyopadhyay. According to the 'Kula-Shastra', the Tagore family originally belonged to the Kushari line of Pithabhog. Bhattanarayan is the earliest Kushari known to us, but his son Din Kushari may be regarded as the real founder of the Kushari line. Then came Jagannath Kushari who was linked up with the Pirali family by his marriage with a daughter of Guri Sukdeb of Jessore, — one of the original Piralis. After Jagannath came Purushottam who may be regarded as the original head of the Tagore family. Sixth in descent from him came Panchanan "Thakur" who left his original home in Jessore in 1690 and settled at Gobindapur, a village on the site of the present Fort William in Calcutta. The merchants of the locality used to call him "Thakur Mashai" (Revered Sir) from which he gradually came to be known as Panchanan "Thakur". This is said to be the origin of the surname of "Thakur" or Tagore in its anglicised form. The Tagore genealogy runs as follows:

2 Maulana Akram Khan: A versatile genius. pp.11-12.
Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan is said to be the accomplished son of the 'Pirali Sect'. It is also said that the forefathers of Rabindranath Tagore and that of Maulana Akram Khan...
had blood connection. The Tagores of Calcutta were the sons of Bhattanarayan and they were Kushari Brahmins. The Kusharis had their original place of living at Pithabhog, on the eastern side of Alipur, Khulna. The Kusharis of Pithabhog established relationship with the Roy Choudhuri and became 'Pirali'. Rabindranath Tagore is one of the last members in the lineage of the Kushari sect. The Tagore family of Jorashako had their original place of living at Pithabhog (Khulna). Here the blood-connection of Rabindranath Tagore with Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan has been historically established.  

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1 Maulana Akram Khan. p.11
See also Jugantar (Bengali Daily), Tuesday, 20 August, 1968.

2 Suncar Baner Itihas (2nd. edn.): A.F.M. Abdul Jalil, p.337.
Genealogical Table

Two brothers

Dakshina Narayan Kushari

Nagar Nath (had no off-spring)

Kamdeb Kushari

Joydeb Kushari

Ratideb Kushari

Sukdeb Kushari

Embracing Islam, Kamdeb Kushari became Kamaluddin Khan.

Kamaluddin Khan

Nasiruddin Khan

Ali Khan

Turab Ali Khan

Maulana Abdul Bari Khan

Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan

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See also Letter to the editor by Md.Isha Khan, Calcutta-19 (Vide, Daily Jugantar, p.4; August 25, 1968).
Maulana Akram Khan claimed that he was the descendant of one Ali Khan. From genealogical table it is clear that Ali Khan's grandfather is Kamaluddin Khan. However, it is not clear whether the said Kamaluddin Khan and Kamdeb Kushari who accepted Islam and was renamed as Kamaluddin Khan Choudhuri (Islamic name given by Pir Ali Muhammad Tahir) is the same man. Perhaps the Maulana himself was not clear about his own forefathers. According to Akhtarul Alam, Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan admitted that his forefathers were 'Pirali Brahmins'. A few of the scholars are of the opinion that Maulana Khan's predecessors were never Hindus. They say that Jamaluddin Khan, the father of Kamaluddin Khan was a domicile of North Frontier Province. In the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlak (1325-51 A.D.) he migrated to Hakimpur of 24 Parganas and lived there permanently. It is considerably obscure that how far this proposition is correct. But most of the scholars and writers agree that Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan's distant forefathers were Hindus. Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan had two brothers and a sister. Brother Ashraf Khan died at the early stage of his life; about other brother Raqib Khan, very little is known that how long he did survive. Fatima Bibi was his sister.

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2 Tahzib monthly, Dhaka; Pous 1380 issue, p.40.
Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan received pre-primary education from his parents and primary education from the village Pathshala. His father Maulana Abdul Bari Khan was an Arabic scholar of great repute of his time. Maulana Abdul Bari Khan was an orator too. Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan learnt the Holy Quran, Shaikh Sadi's Gulistan and Bustan from his parents. Since the parents were Arabic-educated, it was quite natural that the parents would train up their children in their own line. Actually Maulana Akram Khan's primary education started in an Islamic atmosphere. Maulana Abdul Bari Khan with his son 'Akram' came to Calcutta and stayed here in a rented house near Misrigunj Masjid. It has been said that during his stay at Calcutta Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan went to the residence of Brahmo Maulavi Giris Chandra Sen with his father and visited Bhai Giris Chandra Sen frequently he got opportunities whenever. Giris Chandra Sen (1835-1910) earned reputation for translating firstly in Bengali the Holy Quran and Hadith Literature. When the Holy Quran with its Bengali translation was published for the first time towards 1885, Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan was a mere teenager. At that time he had less aptitude to understand the meaning of the Holy Quran through

1 The daily 'Azad', Monday August 19, 1968 (published from Dhaka, Bangladesh).
Arabic or Urdu. Accordingly, the Bengali translated Quran drew a line in his mind deeply and thereby he felt a need of propagating Islam through Bengali language and literature.  

Short but frequent companionships with Bhai Girish Chandra Sen were the remarkable as well as inspiring events in the future walks of Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan's life. It may not be out of mention here that Maulana Abdul Bari Khan was a man with 'tablighi zeal'. So he used to attend many a religious meetings and delivered lectures therein. Whenever he came to Calcutta, visited many scholars of different religious societies. During such visits he always carried with him his adolescent son Akram. The object was to rouse aspirations in the mind of his adolescent son and thereby to train up the son with social manner and deportment.

Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan lost his parents on the same day at his eleven years of age. The parents died at village Hakimpur, 24 Parganas following cholera. Thereafter he and his younger brother Abdur Raqib Khan had to take shelter at his maternal uncle's house at the position of orphanage. When Maulana Abdul Bari Khan was alive, he used to cherish a desire as to send his son Akram Khan at the Madrasah of Kulsuna under P.S. Mangalkot, district Burdwan.

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where Muhaddith Maulana Muhammad Ni'matullah had been teaching the Quran and Hadith. Maulana Abdul Bari Khan was student of Maulana Nazir Hussain of Delhi; and so was Muhaddith Maulana Ni'matullah. Naturally there was a close contact between these two Maulanas. Such desire of sending Akram Khan to Maulana Ni'matullah, as cherished by Maulana Abdul Bari Khan was common to son Akram Khan and also to his other kiths and kins. But that desire was not fulfilled in the lifetime of Maulana Abdul Bari Khan, father of Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan.

Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan studied at the Madrasah of Kulsuna after his father's demise. In this Madrasah of Kulsuna he studied the interpretation of the Quran, Hadith and the introduction of the Muslim Sharif very well. Here he also learnt Urdu and Persian. Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan consolidated his foundation in Islamic Theology studying in this historical Madrasah of Kulsuna. It has been stated that Maulana Akram Khan was the dearest student of Maulana Ni'matullah. The student was very respectful to this teacher till the teacher's death. Maulana Akram Khan visited him many a times at Ahle Hadith Jami' Masjid of 1, Marquis Lane, Calcutta. Whenever he met his revered teacher, came with some

\[1\] Manishi Maulana Akram Khan: M. Abdur Rahman, pp.13-14.
gifts. Thereafter he came back to Calcutta and his maternal uncle got him admitted into the Laik Jubili High School of Mirzapur Street (now Surya Sen Street) where he studied for a few months reluctantly. At that time Maulavi Kāzi Mumtazuddin Ahmed B.A.B.T., a former Additional Inspector of Schools of Presidency Division, was the Headmaster of the school. Maulana Akram Khan was very reluctant to receive English education. He preferred Arabic education, so a Maulana was appointed privately to teach him Arabic language and its literature. At this time he was married to a close relative of him. But his education went on undisturbed. He also married for the second time but after the death of his first wife.

Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan took admission in the Calcutta Alia Madrasah in 1896. At that time he had insufficient knowledge in English language; whereas he had to take admission in one of the senior classes of Calcutta 'Alia Madrasah. Maulana Bilayit Husain, a teacher of the 'Alia Madrasah, helped him much in joining the Madrasah. Sir Arl Stein was the Principal of the Madrasah. Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan had a good command over Urūd and Persian languages

1 Maulana Akram Khan: Abu Jafar, p.15.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
too. He used to compose poems in Persian and in Arabic alike. Sir Arl Stein, the Principal of the Madrasah, was a very learned man; naturally he had a great love for learning. He found his student Akram Khan with sound knowledge in Urdu, Arabic and Persian along with the skill of extemporization in the languages mentioned above. He loved him much for this. Once, in a certain occasion a Royal dignitary from Turk paid an academic visit to the Madrasah Alia of Calcutta. Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan was reading in that Madrasah. The students of the Madrasah arranged for a felicitation meeting with that dignitary. For that occasion, the students fixed up as they would forward a citation (i.e. an address of honour) to their honoured guest. Akram Khan was entrusted with the composing responsibility. Maulana Khan wrote the citation in chaste and rhythmic Arabic. It was very readable, lucid as well as pleasant from the composing point of view. Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan recited the same; all present became pleased as well as charmed and praised its poet high. Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan studied in the Madrasah Alia of Calcutta for four years. He passed the Fazil examination in 1900 from the Institution.

1 The Tahjib Monthly, 2nd year, 1st. issue, Pous 1380 - article 'Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan' by Khurshid Ahmad (p.41).
2 The Degree was also called F.M. i.e. Fakhrul Muhaddithin.
3 According to other version of opinion, he passed the Fazil examination in 1901. See Bangla Muslim Granthapanji, Ali Ahmad ed. Bangla Academy, Dhaka, 1985, p.11.
with second class marks. In those days Title classes for the Degree of M.M. (the oriental Madrasah degree denotes 'Mumtazul Muhaddithin') were not held under the auspices of Calcutta Alia Madrasah. Long sixteen years after his passing of the then final examination (i.e. Fazil), the Title classes were installed. Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan was very much interested in playing games and sports rather than devoting himself to textbooks all over the year. He was fond of football playing; mostly he played as a goalkeeper. Only before some days of examination, he used to devote himself to serious studies. He was a stern supporter of the 'Muhammadan Football Team and a founder member of the Muhammadan Sporting Club' established by Maulana Abdul Gafur. He could speak fluently in Bengali and Urdu.

During his student life, Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan could perceive fully that the English ruling class has been preaching the Christian faith among the Muslims of Bengal. The state power was in favour of the Christian community. He could not sit idle in the moment of such a national crisis. He joined the Muslims against the anti-Islam propaganda of the Britishers and moved from place to place in order to protest against the spread of the Christian faith. He also

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1 The Tahjib monthly, Pous 1380, p.41.
wrote a number of pamphlets in Bengali and Urdu and publicized them widely. Moreover, he wrote a number of articles in the Muhammadi Akhbar established by Maulana Qâdi Abdul Khaliq. In his fiery speeches Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan used to point out clearly that the main object of his movement was to force the Britishers to leave the country so that their anti-Islam propaganda would come to an end.\(^1\) With an intention to emancipate Islam from the grasp of the Christians, Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan thus preferred the profession of journalism and also writing of books.

**Career & Activities**

Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan's long life of one hundred years is full of multi-dimensional as well as versatile activities. In the fields of literature, journalism, social welfare and in Indian politics the Maulana has his ample contributions.

When Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan was a student of Calcutta Alia Madrasah, he found that there was no scope to learn Bengali language in the Madrasah. He could not tolerate it. He appealed to other students for a joint action with a

\(^1\) Maulana Akram Khan : Abu Jafar, p.18.
view to force the authority for inclusion of Bengali in the Madrasah curricula.¹ For this he worked day and night, arranged meetings in the Madrasah campus in which he delivered fiery speeches and urged the guardians to support the movement. In the long run he came out with complete success. The Madrasah authority included Bengali in the syllabus of the lower classes.² Maulana's struggle for truth and also for the right cause started with the aforesaid incident which happened in the course of his student life.³

**As a journalist:**

1780 is a very significant year in the history of Indian journalism. Before 1780 there were no printed journals in the country. The history of Indian journalism can be divided into three major divisions. The first division covers the period starting from 1780 and ending towards 1899 or 1900 A.D. The second division comprises the periodicity with effect from 1900 upto 1947 the year of the country's independence; and the third division, starting from 1947 to the date.

Bengal Gazette, India Gazette, Calcutta Gazette, The Bengal Harkara were the important newspapers, all in English,

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¹ Maulana Akram Khan: Abu Jafar, p.15.
² Ibid, p.16.
³ Ibid.
prevailed in the eighteenth century India. In 1782 Bengal Gazette was censored by Warren Hastings. Lord Wellesley imposed censorship over the newspapers in 1799 following frequent agitations with the ruling class. It may not be out of mention that these journals were not published from the commercial point of view. To serve the countrymen by displaying the happenings was the sole object of these journals. The censorship, at that time, was so strong that most of the columns of a newspaper were marked 'star' and the spaces were blank.1 The first Bengali newspapers were 'The Digidarshan' monthly, first published in April 1818 and 'The Samachar Darpan' weekly, published firstly in May of that year. Both the newspapers were published by the Srirampore Baptist Mission of Calcutta. It is clear that the aforesaid periodicals were published by the Christian people out of their missionary zeal. So, to say, the first general Bengali newspaper was 'the Bangla Gazette' first published in June, 1818 by the Bengali speaking people; its publisher cum editor was Ganga Kishore Bhattacharya. The 'Gospel Magazine' (December 1819) was published by the Baptist Missionary Society. Raja Rammohan Rai (1772-1883), the great Hindu Social Reformer, organized the Brahma Samaj Movement. He published a journal, the 'Brahman Sebadhi', in September, 1821 as to answer to the Samachar Darpan published

by the Christians. 1 'The Sambad Koumudi' was another Bengali newspaper which started its publication in December, 1821. The Bengali weekly Amritabazar Patrika 2 was published in February, 1868 - the year in which Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan was born.

The Bengali Muslim journalism was started by the 'Jnan Dipika' whose editor was Maulavi Ali. 'Jagaduddipak' weekly was another journal, published in 1864, edited by Maulavi Rajab Ali. Mir Musharraf Husain (1847-1911) edited and published the 'Azizun-Nihar' Monthly in 1874. He edited another fortnightly, 'Hitakari' by name, in 1890. The 'Ahmadi' and the 'Sammilani' were two Bengali Muslim fortnightlylies first published in 1874 and 1887 respectively. Among the Bengali journals, edited by the Muslims, the 'Sudhakar' weekly, edited by Shaikh Abdur Rahim was most prominent of the period. Many Urdu journals stopped their publications following the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. 3 Towards 1857 only twelve journals of different languages were seen alive. But the circulation of these journals became increased. During 1853 in North-West Provinces, there were thirty-five journals with the total circulation

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2 This Bengali weekly turned into English journal following the vernacular Press Act of 1878; vide - Bharater Sambadpatra: Tarapada Pal, p.98.

3 Ibid, p.86.
of 2,216 copies: but in 1858 there were only twelve journals, yet the circulation number was 3,223. Among twelve journals alive at the time of the Sepoy Mutiny, only one was edited by a certain Muslim. Upto the Sepoy Mutiny (1857) the then existing journals were mainly engaged with the writings on social reforms viz. widow marriage, woman education, early marriage prohibition, educational reforms and the like. The Bengal Recorder weekly, published in 1849, by Giris Chandra Ghosh was short lived. Later on, Harishchandra Mukhopadhyay took shouldered up its responsibility and published it renaming as the 'Hindu Patriot'. In a very short span of time the 'Hindu Patriot' became the first Indian National Newspaper. The 'Hindu Patriot' had its excellency for precursory in the field of bold journalism in support of National independent movement. The Hindu Patriot published articles profusely on the oppression of the ruling class over the native indigo farmers and thereby tried to rouse national sentiment for independence. In 1861 Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891) took over the charge of The Hindu Patriot when Harish Chandra Mukhopadhyay died in the age of only 37 years due to hard labour in the

1 It is also called the first war of independence.
2 Bharater Sambadpatra: Tarapada Pal, p.86.
3 Ibid, p.83.
4 Ibid. . . .
cause of freedom movement.\textsuperscript{1} Kaliprasanna Sinha, Krishna Das Pal, Jatindra Mohan Thakur, Michael Madhusudan Datta - all were editors of the Hindu Patriot one after another. The newspaper lost its popularity gradually and stopped publication towards the end of the second decade of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{2}

'Islam Procharak' was very effective Bengali monthly, published firstly in 1891. Its editor was Muhammad Riazuddin Ahmad and the journal was divinely dedicated to the welfare of the Bengali Muslim Community. 'Mihir' was a religious monthly of the Muslims, edited by Shaikh Abdur Rahim, published initially in 1892. Later on Shaikh Abdur Rahim's another Bengali weekly, the 'Sudhakar' became merged with the Mihir monthly and became 'Mihir-O-Sudhakar' and began to publish being weekly. The 'Hafiz' monthly edited by Shaikh Abdur Rahim, first published in 1897, the 'Kohinur' monthly, published from Faridpur, and edited by A.K.M. Muhammad Raushan Ali, the 'Nabanur' monthly edited by Sayyid Imdad Ali. The 'Muhammadan observer' weekly, 1894, The 'Muslim Chronicle' weekly, the 'Dhaka Prokash' weekly (1871), the 'Nurul Islam' (1900) edited by Mirza Yaqub Ali, the 'Islam' (1900) edited by Muizuddin Ahmad and the 'Procharak' were Bengali Muslim newspapers as well.

\textsuperscript{1} Bharater Sambadpatras Tarapada Pal, pp. 101-102.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid, p. 103.
as newspapers published up to 1900 A.D. Bengal. In this way we find that towards the end of the nineteenth century (1900), there were, the statistics shows, nearly one thousand and fifty (1050) journals, coming out from the then India.

From the beginning of the twentieth century A.D. up to the end of its fourth decade the magazines and journals in the country published from the Muslim enterprises, were more or less one hundred (100). Almost all the journals and newspapers mentioned above were published to satisfy the Muslim missionary impulses. There were some variations also. These journals served the country along with the others. Specially the journals edited by the Muslim personalities were endowed with the upheaval of the Muslim section of the Indian people. They also strived hard for retrieving the deteriorated Muslim culture which were being juxtaposed in many ways with the Christian belief, formulated by the ruling class and also by the Hindus who occupied the majority priority. The 'Islam Prochaska' and the 'Al-Islam' (1915) edited jointly by Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan and Maulana Muniruzzafaman Islamabadi showed their earnest zeal for the upheaval of the Muslim community.

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3 Ibid, pp.40-41.
In its opening issue, Al-Islam of 1915, Ismail Husain Siraji says, "there is no other way than the introduction of national history and the lives of the great personalities as to enliven as well as regenerate the 'corpse' of the Muslims ....... O the Bengali Muslim literate! be careful, be alert and nimble, do not get confounded in course of imitation. Never serve literature infringing the principles of Islam."¹ This was the mainstream of the early twentieth century Muslim journalism. Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan started his career as a journalist in the weekly 'Ahl-e-Hadith'. He was in charge of editing the paper.² Later on he joined the 'Akhbāre-Muhammadi' bi-weekly as an Assistant Editor. Maulana Qādi Abūl Khaliq was publishing the 'Akhbāre-Muhammadi' from Calcutta since 4 June 1877.³ From 29 March 1878 the paper was converted into a weekly. After the 86th issue of its publication, the paper ceased to publish due to some pecuniary inconvenience. Akhbāre-Muhammadi was a bi-lingual paper and was simultaneously published in Bengali and Urdu (i.e. in the same page there were two columns — one for Bengali and the other for Urdu⁴. Maulana Muhammad Akram

¹ Dainik Sangram; 17 January, 1985, p.41.
³ Ibid, p.20.
Khan used to contribute articles in the journal. His task, as the Assistant Editor, was to translate the Bengali articles into Urdu and vice versa. It has been stated that he used to contribute anti-Christian articles to the 'Akhbâre-Muhammadi' when he was a student in the Calcutta Alia Madrasah.¹

Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan passed his Fazil Examination from the Calcutta Alia Madrasah in 1900. Then many offers came to him requesting him to be the 'Mudarris' (teacher) from sundry Madrasahs of Bengal. But he respectfully rejected those offers. He thought that the only way to uplift the backward community, in which he himself belonged, was to circulate a strong Bengali newspaper. He also thought that the proposed paper would be free from any kind of prejudice or biasness and would be a balanced one in reflecting the existing society and Islam. He was fully aware of the journalistic situation prevailed in the then jurisdiction of Bengal and also of India. There were newspapers and other periodicals published from the Hindu, the Christian and the Muslim enterprises. It has been stated earlier that towards the end of the nineteenth century (i.e. nearby 1900 A.D.) there were more than one thousand newspapers and periodicals

¹ Maulana Akram Khan, p.20.
over the country. Notwithstanding he felt necessity of a separate news-magazine. Here lies Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan's speciality. However, he became determined to publish a news-magazine and thus start his career. But he had no money with him by which he could publish a journal. So, from Calcutta, he went to his native village Hakimpur with a view to arranging for money. He stayed there for few days but failed to arrange money. Moreover, his near and dear ones discouraged him to go for publishing journals. He did not accept their advice. He was determined to his mission. One day his friends of village Hakimpur planned for a picnic. The subscription for the same was fixed at the rate of rupee one per capita. Maulana Khan had only thirteen paise in his pocket. So he requested his aunt (mother's sister) to give him one rupee. She gave him the amount. But Maulana Khan had another plan with the rupee. He left the village with a capital of rupee one and paise thirteen only for Calcutta without joining the picnic party. Fortunately he met a businessman who requested him to prepare for a 'Faraiz' in Bengali. Maulana Khan prepared that Faraiz and the businessman paid him rupees fifty as remuneration. Depending on

1 Maulana Akram Khan ... : Abu Jafar, p.20.
2 'Faraiz' are such branch of Islamic law which deals in the distributive shares in estate of a deceased Muslim: 'Ilmul-Faraiz' is the law of descent and distribution.
3 The amount was Rs. sixty; vide 'Tahjib', Pous 1380, p.43.
this money of meagre quantity he ventured to publish the first issue of the journal 'Muhammadi'. The 'HITABADI' and the 'BANGABASI' were very effective and widely circulated Bengali journals in the then Bengal. The Bangabasi weekly, first published in 10 December 1881, was edited by Jnanendra Lal Ray and the Hitabadi weekly, first published in 30 May 1891 was edited by Acharya Krishnakamal Bhattacharya. The literary division's charge was under Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore got inspiration of writing short-stories from within the purview of this Bengali weekly. Eventually the Hitabadi became the leading news-magazine of the time.¹ Hitabadi and Bangabasi published articles which were sufficient for mud-slinging the Muslim community.² Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan used to read regularly the issues of the Hitabadi and the Bangabasi very carefully and felt deep concern over the fact. As a matter of fact he felt necessity of a national newspaper through which he would be able to publish the rejoinders to the false propaganda against the Muslims and Islam alike. He also intended that by the proposed newspaper he would be able to let the government know the grievances, also the miserable conditions of the minority Muslim community. In such a situation Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan found Maulana Qādi Abdul Khaliq,

¹ Bharater Sanbadpatra; Tarapada Pal, p.122.
² Tahjib monthly; Pous 1380, p.42.
a resident of north Sealdah of 24 Parganas district who was publishing 'Muhammadi Akhbar' since 1877. Later on the publication of the Muhammadi Akhbar was stopped. Maulana Qadi Abdul Khaliq gave him a file containing some old copies of the Muhammadi Akhbar with a request to publish it thenceforward regularly. This was the birth history of the name 'Muhammadi'. Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan published the first issue of a journal, naming it after 'Muhammadi' from a hired press. The press-owner declined to print its second issue out of some reason unknown. Thereafter owner of the Basumati Press was approached. He agreed firstly to publish Muhammadi's second issue but lastly refused. Thereafter the Muhammadi was being published irregularly with the frequencies of monthly, fortnightly and weekly till 1910. The first issue of 'Muhammadi', according to Dr. Abul Qasim, was first published in 1901 as a quarterly. And according to Dr. Anisuzzaman, Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan started his career as an editor of the Monthly 'Muhammadi' in 1903 and in 1908 he published the weekly 'Muhammadi'. Muhammadi, from its starting issue acted as the mouthpiece of the Muslims in mass; and its editor, Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan

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1 Tahjib: Pous 1380, p.42.
2 Manishi Maulana Akram Khan: M. Abdur Rahman, p.18.
created practically a number of Muslim writers and encouraged others for taking part in the movement for reawakening the only backward community, the Muslims, thereby.¹

Al-Hājj Muḥammad ‘Abdūllāh (1840-1920) of Kushtia district, a famous oil merchant, owned a printing press, the Alṭafī press—named after Ḥaji Alṭafī Ḥusayn, father of Maulana Yahyā and the sister’s son of Al-Hājj Muḥammad ‘Abdūllāh, at Benepukur Lane, Calcutta.² He wanted to publish a monthly paper. Muḥammad ‘Abdūllāh was one of the friends of Maulana ‘Abdūl Bari Ḥan, father of Maulana Muḥammad Akram Ḥan. Muḥammad ‘Abdūllāh found Akram Ḥan to be the suitable person for the job. On the other, Maulana Muḥammad Akram Ḥan was also looking for the opportunity to work in a journal. So he accepted the offer gladly. In 1903 ‘Muḥammadi’ was published from the Alṭafī Press with the name of Muḥammad Akram Ḥan as its editor. The owner of the Press gave Maulana Muḥammad Akram Ḥan Rs 15 (fifteen) as monthly salary. Shaikh Habibur Ṭahmān Sahityaratna was its Assistant Editor. The monthly ‘Muḥammadi’ was first printed on 18 August 1903 by Munshi Karim Bakhsh from 1, Haq Lane, Tantibagan, Calcutta and published by its proprietor Muḥammad Abbas Ḥan Ali.

¹ Maulana Akram Ḥan: Abu Jafar, p.22.

² Ḥaji Alṭafī Ḥusayn was the owner of the Alṭafī Press; Maulana Muḥammad Yahyā (1891-1988) was a son of Ḥaji Alṭafī Ḥusayn, the owner of that press; Maulana Yahyā was interviewed at his residence at IA, Noor Ali Lane, Calcutta-14 (Tantibagan) on 17-2-1985.
(1859-1932). The name of Maulana Abbas Ali, along with that of Maulana Akram Khan, was connected with the founding history of the 'Muhammadi'. He was associated with this 'Muhammadi' for a long period of time.\(^1\) The Editor of the paper was Maulana Akram Khan. Al-Hājj Abdūllah became its proprietor from the second issue. After the fifth issue, the paper was ceased to its publication on 19 January 1904. It reappeared on 6 November, 1927.\(^2\) The 'Muhammadi' monthly was printed and published by Janāb Khairul Anam Khan from Muhammadi Press, 29 Upper Circular Road, Calcutta from 1927 onwards. Maulana Muhammād Akram Khan was its editor. Later on its office was taken shifted to 86A, Lower Circular Road, Calcutta and lastly to Dhaka in 1948. After the publication of the second issue of its 21st year, the news-magazine ceased publication for two years and reappeared from Dhakeswari Road, Dhaka with continuation as the third issue of the 21st year. Muhammad Muniruzzaman Islamabadi, S. Wajjīd Ali, Shahādat Husain, Ghulam Mustafa, Qādi Qadīr Ahmad Choudhuri, Sayyid Muhammād Nazir, Abu Ubaidullah Choudhuri, Muhammad Habibullah Bahar, Qādi Nazrul Islam and others were the regular contributors to various issues of the 'Muhammadi'.\(^3\)

\(^1\) Tahjib — the Islami cultural and literary Bengali monthly, 2nd. year, 1st issue, Pous 1380, p.44 (foot note).

\(^2\) Maulana Akram Khan: Abu Jafar, p. 22. 
See also: Muslim Banglar Saṃayik Patra: Anisuzzaman ed., p.121.

\(^3\) Muslim Banglar Saṃayik Patra: Anisuzzaman ed., pp.504-539.
Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan wrote a series of monographs in different issues of the 'Muhammadi'. A few of them are mentioned after English translation. Below is a list facing the issue number of each article:

1. Rights and dignity of women in Islam - 1st year 2nd issue.
2. New era or new disaster - 1st year 5th issue.
3. Problems and Solutions - 1st year 9th issue.
4. Victory for Muhammad, Victory for Mustafa - 1st year 12th issue.
5. In memory of Muhsin - 2nd year 3rd issue.
8. Characteristics of Mustafacharit - Do

In 1928 he published an annual volume of the Muhammadi.¹

Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan had the credit of editing and publishing nearly half-a-dozen newspapers in different languages including Bengali, Urdu and English. In 1915 the Maulana in collaboration with some leading personalities of the then Bengal published 'AL-ISLAM' - a religious Bengali monthly. Besides, the Daily 'Zamana' in Urdu (1920), the 'Sebak' - first weekly, then daily, the 'Muhammadi' daily (temporarily published in absence of the 'Sebak' daily 1921),

the monthly 'Muhammad!' (1927), the 'Azad' daily (1936) and the English weekly 'Comrade' (1946).

**As a politician:**

Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan's political life actually began from the movement against the partition of Bengal (1905). The Maulana worked with the top-ranking leaders of India during the movement and became known to all as a spirited political worker. Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan, Maulavi Abul Qasim (Burdwan), Mujibur Rahman Khan (editor, the 'Mussalman') and Barrister Abdur Rasul (Cumilla) were against this partition. However, the Maulana became well-known to the nationalist people and a section of the Muslims. In December 30, 1906 the All India Muslim League was formed at Dhaka. It was formed with the primary object of protecting and advancing the political rights of the Muslims. The Maulana worked day and night in its incepting conference and was recognised thereby as one of the founder-members of the League. He also participated in the 'League-Congress' Annual

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1 Maulana Akram Khan: Abu Jafar; Comp.ed. Dhaka: Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, 1996. (lst. edn.); Article by Divan Muhammad Azraf, p.84.

2 Ibid.

sessions simultaneously held at Lucknow in 1916. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, presiding over the League session, made a strong plea for unity: the Congress accepted the offer of good will and friendship. In history it is known as the Lucknow Pact (1916). After the first world war, the Khilafat movement was started in the country. The Maulana joining this Khilafat movement proved himself as a seasoned politician. He was also elected Secretary of the Khilafat Committee of Bengal. 'Khilafat Day' was observed in October 27, 1919 and a body, known as the 'Khilafat Conference' was instituted at a joint meeting of the Hindus and Muslims in November 23, 1919 in Delhi. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi also launched his non-violence and non-cooperation movement in September 8, 1920 in collaboration with the Khilafat movement. During December 1921 and January 1922 about thirty thousand (30,000) people - both from Hindus and Muslims, were put into jail. Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan joined the movement. To propagate the causes of the Khilafat and non-cooperation movements, the Maulana published daily Zamana in Urdu and daily 'Sebak' in addition to his 'Muhammad' — both monthly and weekly. The Maulana was arrested and put into jail for one year following his inciting

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1 Maulana Akram Khan; a versatile genius: Abu Jafar, p.52.
2 Ibid.
journalism through his daily 'Sebak'. The deposit money for
the paper was confiscated; the paper's publication was
stopped. Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan gave a fiery speech
in a conference of the Khilafat Committee held at 'Ahsan
Manjil', Dhaka in 1920. During this time his contribution
to the Khilafat movement was highly appreciated by other
leaders viz. Maulana Muhammad Ali, Maulana Shauqat Ali,
Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Maulana Muniruzzaman Islamabadi
and the like.

The Maulana joined the Swaraj Party of C.R. Das,
A.K. Fazlul Haq, H.S. Suhrawardy and other Muslim leaders
of Bengal entered into a pact in 1923 which came to be known
as Bengal Pact. In June 1924 a conference of the Bengal
Provincial Congress was held at Shirajgunj of which Maulana
Muhammad Akram Khan was elected President. In the conference
the aforesaid 'Bengal Pact' was unanimously passed. In 1925
C.R. Das died: soon after his death the Hindu-Muslim unity
in Bengal was disrupted following the communal riots in
Calcutta, Dhaka and other places. The appeal of the 'Bengal
Pact' was also lost. In the long run, in 1929 a conference
of the Congress was held at Krishnanagar under the headship
of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose where this historic 'Bengal Pact'

1 Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan: Diwan Abdul Hamid, Dhaka:
was burnt into ashes.¹ On this event, the Maulana plunged into grief. Like other Muslim leaders, he left the Congress in 1929. For, he clearly understood that the Congress was not the proper platform for the Muslims. It was under the headship of Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan the 'Nikhil Bongo Proja Samity' (All Bengal Tenants' Association) was incepted in 1929. Sir Abdur Rahim was selected its President and Maulana Akram Khan Secretary. It was renamed as 'Krishok Proja Party' (Farmers' and Tenants' Party) in 1936. After the formation of this 'Party', the Muslim leaders assembled themselves under the 'Krishok Proja Party' while the Hindu leaders joined and supported to Congress in order to protect the interests of the Zamindars. Observing the political situation of this time, J. M. Sengupta became aggrieved and said, "from this day the Congress lost the confidence not only of the Muslim Bengal but also of the tenant general."²

Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan joined once again the Muslim League in 1936. He took up the responsibility of popularising the party program among the masses of Bengal. Accordingly he moved from place to place and appealed to the people to come under the banner of the Muslim League. Moreover,

¹ Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan: Diwan Abdul Hamid, p.21.
² Ibid, pp.22-23.
he published the 'Azad' (31 October 1936) with its daily frequency which used to carry the message of the League in every nook and corner of the country. In connection with the general election of 1937, the Muslim politicians of Bengal formed the 'Bengal United Party'. Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan resigned from the 'Krishok Proja Party' and joined the 'Bengal United Party'. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the President of the All India Muslim League, came in Calcutta in 1936 and on his request the aforesaid 'Bengal United Party' merged into the Muslim League; like other leaders, the Maulana also came under the banner of the Muslim League and was elected a member of the 'Bengal Executive Council' in a general election of 1937.\(^1\) Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan became the President of Muslim League in Bengal in 1941.

The Muslim League in its eighth session held in Bombay (December 30, 1915 to January 1, 1916) formed a committee to formulate a scheme of reforms. The Maulana was selected one of the members of that committee from Bengal. He also joined the Lucknow conference of the League (1940) where he supported the Lahore resolution.\(^2\) He became the president of the Bengal Muslim League in 1941 and remained in the post till 1951. In its Provincial Council Session (held in


\(^2\) Maulana Akram Khan; a versatile genius: Abu Jafar, p.56.
November 1945), the Maulana was selected a member of the 'Parliamentary Board' of the Muslim League. In 1951 he resigned from the Presidential post of the Bengal Muslim League and became a Vice-president of All Pakistan Muslim League. He did his best for the betterment of the people of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) through the constituent Assembly of Pakistan. He also ensured their legitimate rights. After the victory of the United Front in 1954 election of East Pakistan, he wanted to revive the image of the Muslim League but could not continue his efforts following the proclamation of Martial Law in October 1958. He also tried his best to unite the bifurcated Muslim League but failed. He did not join the Muslim League convention headed by Ayyub Khan. In the later part of his life the Maulana retired from active politics.

The Muslim League organised a conference (April 9, 1946) in Delhi with a view to discussing the opinions of the League representatives on the issue of the areas of undivided India to be included in the proposed territory of Pakistan. When the question of Bengal was raised, an influential leader of Bengal opined in the sense that 'East Bengal should not be included with Pakistan'. Muhammad Ali Jinnah was in the

1 Maulana Akram Khan; a versatile genius: Abu Jafar, p.56.
Chair. It was Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan, President of the Bengal Muslim League, who vehemently opposed the remark made by the leader and requested Muhammad Ali Jinnah to include whole Bengal with Pakistan. The later, however, made his decision partially in favour of the Maulana. It was, rather, a historic deliberation between Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan and Muhammad Ali Jinnah.1

As a writer:

Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan was a prolific writer too. His literary works were research oriented and thought provoking in character. He wrote and translated a series of books relating to different faiths including Islam, Christianity and Hinduism. He was well-versed in Arabic, Bengali, Urdu, Persian, Sanskrit and in English. He could understand English well but had no practice of writing it. His main publications were:

(i) 'Mustafa Charit' (i.e. life of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him).

(ii) 'Karagarer Sanghat' (gift of the jail; being the Tafsir of the 30th part of the Holy Quran).

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(iii) 'Samasya-0-Samadhan' (problems and their solutions).

(iv) 'Muslim Bonger Samajik Itihas' (A social history of the Muslim Bengal).

(v) 'Quran Sharif: Bangla Anubad-0-Bistarita Tafsir' (Bengali translation and detailed Tafsir of the Holy Quran) - in 5 vols.

(vi) 'Kukti-0-Islam' (Salvation versus Islam).


(viii) 'Mishro-0-Swatantra Nirbachan' (Election procedure — joint and separate).

(ix) 'Mustafa Chariter Boishistya' (Characteristics of the life of Mustafa).

(x) 'Back to the Quran' — in Bengali.

(xi) 'Islamer Rajyashasan Bidhan' (Basic principles of the Islamic Constitution).

(xii) 'Baitul Mal Tahwil' (Baitul Mal Fund).

(xiii) 'Romzaner Sadhana' (Perseverance in the Ramazan fasting).

And others.
The Maulana's well-known books are his 'Mustafa Charit' and 'Tafsir of the Holy Quran'. His 'Mustafa Charit' was the fruition of his fourteen years toilsome labour. In the book the Maulana presented his arguments very clearly and logically based on authentic traditions. It is a big volume and has made the Maulana immortal. His translation and Tafsir of the Holy Quran earned for him name and fame. The Pakistan President Ayyub Khan rewarded him with taka ten thousand (10,000 TK.) for completing the Tafsir of the Holy Quran. The Maulana could write poems too. He could write poems in Arabic, Persian and in Bengali. He wrote his famous satiric poem — 'Madrasa Sangbad' (denotes 'Madrasa news') comprising 29 lines in 1910 on the farewell occasion of Mr. E. Denison Ross, the then Principal of Calcutta Madrasah.¹ His another poem, 'Ya Muhammad Anta Rasulullah' in Bengali was first published in the Daily 'Azad' of May 23, 1937. The poem was reprinted in the Daily 'Azad' of March 14, 1976.²

Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan wrote hundreds of articles and dissertations throughout his life and published those in various journals and periodicals. Those articles

1 Banglar Protibha : Dr. Abul Qasim Calcutta: Muhammadi Book Agency, 1347 B.S./1940, 1st. edn. pp.11-12.
2 Maulana Akram Khan; a versatile genius: Abu Jafar, p.49.
are not collected and published in a book-form so far. The Maulana wrote so many articles on social reforms, refuting anti-religious activities of some of the Muslims and presented Islam in a scientific manner. He also directed his powerful pen against some of the adherents of different faiths: for this reason he was called 'Akraman Khan' ('Akraman' means attack). The orthodox Muslims also criticized him for his progressive views. He expressed his ideals and principles in a number of speeches made on different occasions. The Maulana was awarded with the 'Pride of Performance Medal' by the then President of Pakistan for his literary contribution. President Ayyub Khan rewarded him with Taka 10,000 for completing the translation of the Holy Quran.

Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan played a historic role for the development of Bengali language and its literature. He started his career as a journalist and in course of time published half-a-dozen periodicals and morningers in Bengali. The writers, poets, essayists and the journalists found a suitable forum to get their writings published and enriched thereby Bengali language and its literature. He not only inspired those writers but also contributed himself much to

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1 Maulana Akram Khan: a versatile genius, p.49.
2 Ibid, p.45.
develop Bengali language and its literature. There was no other Arabic educated Maulana in Bengal than Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan who sincerely devoted himself to the cause of the language. His innumerable articles and some twenty books — all written in Bengali are the proof of his love for Bengali language. When the Maulana was a student of the Calcutta 'Alia Madrasah, Bengali was not included in the syllabus; he strived, fought for its inclusion and in the long run became successful. The then Madrasah authority included Bengali in the syllabus of the lower classes. This was one of his historic achievements for which he deserves special honour.1 In the March 1949 the 'East Bengal Language Committee' was formed by virtue of a direction of the then Pakistan Government. Total members of this committee were nineteen (19). The President of the committee was Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan.2 The members included Habibullah Bahar Choudhuri, Dr. Muazzim Husain, Dr. Muhammad Shehidullah, Babu Ganesh Chandra Bose, Dr. Inamul Haq and others.3

1 Maulana Akram Khan; a versatile genius, pp.59-60.
3 Ibid.
Soon after the establishment of Pakistan in 1947, the 'Pakistan Educational Conference' made analysis of the situation and put forth its recommendations for educational reforms. 'In 1949, the Government of East Bengal appointed a high powered committee by the name of "East Bengal Educational Systems Reconstruction Committee" with Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan (1868-1968) as its President. The committee submitted its report in 1951.

Going through the writings of Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan one can easily understand that he had a mastery over several languages viz. Arabic, Bengali, Urdu, English, Sanskrit and Persian. His 'Mustafa Charit', 'Tafsirul Quran' and different articles in the 'Muhammadi' both monthly and weekly would bear testimony to the proposition mentioned above. He edited and published the Urdu Daily 'Zamana'. He published the English weekly 'Comrade'. So many extracts of different languages taken from various books have been paraphrased by the Maulana in his 'Mustafa Charit'. His writings tend to modernism. He was a progressive writer. Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan was in favour of imparting education through the mother-tongue of the people. He used

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2 Ibid.
to say, "The medium of instruction should be the country's permanent and general language in order to enable the commoners of that country to have access to knowledge and to make it permanent." Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan was posthumously awarded with the 'Svachinota Dibas Puraskar' 1981 (i.e. Independent Day Award), awarded by the Bangladesh Government for his outstanding contribution to the field(s) of Journalism, Literature and Politics. The award carried a citation along with Taka 25,000 in cash.

As a social worker and reformer

Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan worked hard during his whole life for uplifting the society. He had been seen moving from place to place and to see in person the condition of the people of the rural areas. He did his best to solve their problems in times of crisis. He used to extend his generous hands for ameliorating the afflicting condition of the oppressed persons. He used to help the oppressed class of people irrespective of caste and creed. At the time of Tripoli and Balkan wars he collected more than one

1 Maulana Akram Khan; a versatile genius; Abu Jafar, p.62.

lakh rupees from different parts of the country and sent the amount to the "Turkish Fund." During the crisis period of the Muslims he collected nearly forty thousand rupees and sent it to Turkey. During the communal riot that broke out in Bihar on an occasion of the 'Eid-ul-Azha' he personally visited the riot affected areas. Later on he collected some thirty thousand rupees from Bengal and distributed those along with rags, clothes, foodings etc. among the distressed persons. A "Relief Fund" was constituted under the Chairmanship of Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan following the atrocity caused by the 'Uria Regiment' at Kaharpara village near Jalalabad in Chittagong around 1945 in which the village was burnt into ashes, one killed, injured many others and at least three girls were raped. The Maulana's second son, Sadrul Anam Khan was selected its treasurer. A huge fund was collected to help the distressed villagers of Kaharpara; but some people were of opinion that the fund was not utilised properly for which it was created. He went to see in person the blood-stained mud of Jalianawalabagh in Punjab during the Khilafat and non-cooperation movements.

1 Maulana Akram Khan: a versatile genius, p.64.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid, p.65.
Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan was a social reformer too. He saw exploitation, superstition, fanaticism, communalism and some other mischievous elements which caused age-long deterioration in the human society of the country, specially of Bengal. In order to remove such ill-boding elements from the society the Maulana tried his best throughout his life. And for this he has had been criticised bitterly by the people of different faiths. He was very much liberal to his critics; but firm he was in his ideals. He was always eager to talk even with the commoners. He was too much interested in discourses which included politics, economics, religion, literature and society. He was an idealist and very much hopeful of a better future. Throughout his life the Maulana directed his thinking towards an ideal, a definite goal for the betterment of the nation.¹

As a sportsman

Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan was a sportsman too. He was one of the founder-members of the 'Muslim Sporting Club of Calcutta' towards 1900 A.D.² Later on this very

¹ Maulana Akram Khan; ... p.66.
club was merged with the famous 'Muhammadan Sporting Club' whose founder was Maulana 'Abdul Gafur. Ghaznafar Mirza, Saidu Sr., Saidu Jr. and Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan were the then prominent players of the club. The Maulana used to play generally as a Goalkeeper; sometimes he was seen in the half line. The 'Muhammadi' weekly, the 'Muhammadi' monthly and the 'Azad' — all edited by Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan used to communicate to the people the victorious tidings of the said club. Once Abbas Mirza, formerly captain of the 'Muhammadan Sporting Club' remarked, "... The 'Azad' played a constructive role and advised us regarding team selection, sports and other problems of the club. ... I have preserved all the illustrious paper-cuts related with our sports. ... I could recall Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan's football playing days. ..."

The death:

Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan was a centenarian (1868-1968). He spent four-fifth (1868-1948) of his life

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1 Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan: Diwan Abdul Hamid ... p.41.
2 Ibid.
in present day's India and the rest one-fifth (1948-1968) in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh he lived in his own residence situated at the Dhakeshwari Road of Dhaka from where he used to publish the daily 'Azad' and the monthly 'Muhammad' along with other books of his. Both in his Calcutta and Dhaka residences he had a rich library of his own. He used to spend maximum time in his library of his Dhaka residence. In his nineties he used to attend public meetings rarely. The Maulana was felicitated on 7th June 1968 on the occasion of his 99th birth anniversary at his 'Azad' office of Dhakeshwari Road, Dhaka.¹

Maulana Muhammad Akram Khan died in Dhaka (East Pakistan, now Bangladesh) on Sunday the 18th August 1968 at 6.05 P.M. He had reached the grand old age of 100 years.

He left two out of his four sons and four out of his six daughters² and a host of grandchildren and other close relatives and friends. Two sons and two daughters died before the Maulana's death. The Maulana married twice: when one wife died he married again. In 1928 he performed Hajj.

² Four sons were: Khairul Anam Khan, Saiful Anam Khan, Badrul Anam Khan and Qamarul Anam Khan; six daughters were: Baziga Khanam, Zakira Khanam, Bashira Khanam, Sabira Khanam, Shakira Khanam and Sähila Khanam.
Next day (i.e. Monday, 19th August 1968) at 2-00 P.M. the 'Salātul Janāzah' for the Maulana was observed at the Outer Stadium of Dhaka. Maulana Muntasir Ahmad, Imam of the Bongshal Mosque, led the 'Salātul Janāzah'.¹ Later on in the afternoon of the day the mortal body of the Maulana was laid down in a grave of the Bongshal-Malibagh graveyard attached to the Bongshal-Malibagh Mosque, 182 Bongshal Road, Dhaka-1.²

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² The Researcher has made a visit to the grave of the Maulana on 04th June 1989.