



Bangabandhu receiving gifts from Mao Tse Tung when he visited China in 1957.

Bangla is my mother language. Speeches should be made in one's mother language. Since people from all countries around the world know at least a little bit about the language movement of the people of East Bengal. Manik Bhai, Ataur Rahman Khan and Ilias corrected my speech. People from every country deliver speeches in their own mother languages. We are the only ones who deliver speeches in English and take pride in doing so.

None of us from Pakistan mention our domestic matters in our speeches. Because, if we are to expose the distress that happened during the rule of the Muslim League government, we will

be looked down upon by the people from other parts of the world. Many people asked us why someone from India delivered a speech in Bangla, and someone from Pakistan did the same. I said, Bangladesh has split up and one part has fallen under India, while the other has fallen under Pakistan. Many people know that Bangla is the language of Rabindranath Tagore. He is known as "Tagore" around the world. People give him enough respect around the world. I said, 55 percent of Pakistan's people speak in this language. And Bangla is one of the world's greatest languages. I noticed that even though Madam Sun Yat-sen speaks excellent English, she

delivered her speech in the Chinese language. She did not utter a single English word.

I spoke to many people in China, and many of them know English, but they won't speak in English. They speak using interpreters. We went to see Nanking University. The Vice Chancellor of the university knows English, but welcomed us in the Chinese language. The interpreter explained everything to us. I noticed that the Chancellor was slowly correcting the interpreter's English at certain points, when needed. This is called nationalism. This is called compassion for one's country and one's mother tongue.

Our session continued, and the speeches were never-ending. There was a reason for delivering that many speeches. Every day the photos of the sessions and of those who gave speeches would be included in the bulletins. Many people gave into this temptation. And my speech was given because I was to deliver a speech in Bangla.

Source: *Amar Dekha Naya Chin* (The New China as I Saw), by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, published by Bangla Academy

Translated by Mrittika Anan Rahman of The Daily Star.

**Note:** The Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, visited China in 1952. The Peace Conference of the Asian and Pacific Regions was being held and his name was given from East Pakistan to be a member of the representative team of Pakistan. He was released from prison this very year. Due to his protests during the Bangla language movement, since March 11, 1948, he was frequently imprisoned. In October of 1952 the conference was held and during this time, he recorded his experiences in China in a notebook. This is an excerpt from his notes.

# Don't attack Huq Saheb

(1943)

I remember one particular day when my father and I discussed politics till two o'clock in the morning. My father was very impressed with my views. The only advice he had for me was that I should desist from attacking Mr Fazlul Huq personally. This was also what my mother told me another day.

And the fact was Mr Huq hadn't earned the title of 'Tiger of Bengal' for nothing. The people of Bengal

had indeed fallen in love with him. Whenever I attempted to say anything to slight him I would be stopped. I remember one day when I was in a meeting that I had organized in our own union. I had raised questions such as: Why had he left the League? Why was he now against the idea of Pakistan? Why had he joined hands with Shyama Prasad Mookerjee to form a cabinet? At one point an old man, someone who held my grandfather in great esteem, who visited our house

regularly and had great respect for everyone in our family, stood up and said, 'Say whatever you like. But please don't say anything against Mr Huq. If he doesn't want Pakistan, neither do we! Who is this Jinnah? We know nothing about him! On the other hand, Mr Huq has always cared for poor people like us.'

After his speech I changed my tactics. I decided that I wouldn't blame Mr Huq directly. Instead, I concentrated on explaining to

everyone why it was important for us to fight for Pakistan. I should add that whenever we raised a black flag to show our dissatisfaction with Mr Huq, the public would assault us. At times we even had to run away from them or else were beaten up. After we had been beaten up a number of times I decided to change the content of our speeches. Previously I had made the mistake of targeting the man himself when I spoke. The result had always been disastrous for us. Instead of helping

our cause such an approach harmed it. When I began to understand that I was hurting the feelings of ordinary people I decided I would have to concentrate on explaining the causes behind our movement for Pakistan. There would be two Pakistans, as envisaged in the Lahore Resolution. One would comprise Bengal and Assam and would be called East Pakistan. It would be an independent and sovereign nation.

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**শততম জন্মবার্ষিকীতে কৃতজ্ঞচিত্তে স্মরণ করি হাজার বছরের শ্রেষ্ঠ বাঙালিকে**

মুজিব শতবর্ষ আমাদের দুর্লভ প্রাপ্তি। জাতির জনক বঙ্গবন্ধু **শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান** এর সোনার বাংলা গড়ার স্বপ্নকে পূরণ করতে, দেশকে আরও এগিয়ে নিয়ে যেতে হবে সমৃদ্ধি ও ডিজিটাল এর পথে। দেশ ও জাতির এই অগ্রযাত্রায় আমরা সব সময় সাথে আছি, থাকব।

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