

HISTORIC MUJIBNAGAR DAY

16 April 2000

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বাণী

মাহান মুক্তিযুদ্ধের স্মৃতি বিজড়িত মুজিবনগর দিবস উপলক্ষে আমি দেশবাসীকে
জানাই আত্মিক অভিনন্দন।

১৯৭০-৭১ সনের সাধারণ নির্বাচনে পাকিস্তান জাতীয় পরিষদে আওয়ামী লীগ
নিরঙ্গন সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠতা লাভ করলেও তাদেরকে সরকার গঠন করতে না দিয়ে
সে বছর ২৫ মার্চ দিবাগত রাতে সামরিক সরকার তৎকালীন পূর্ব পাকিস্তানের
জনগণের ওপর অতিরিক্ত সামরিক অভিনন্দন তৈরি করে। ইই পরিস্থিতিতে ১৭
এপ্রিল স্বাধীন বাংলাদেশের অস্থায়ী সরকার আনুষ্ঠানিকভাবে গঠিত হয় এবং
সেই সরকারই স্বাধীনতা যুদ্ধ পরিচালনা করে। জাতি তাই কৃতজ্ঞতে
স্বাধীনতা আলোচনার অবিসংবাদিত নেতৃত্বে জাতির জনক বস্তব শৈখ মুজিবুর
রহমান এবং জাতীয় চার নেতা ও মুজিবনগর সরকারের অস্থায়ী রাষ্ট্রপতি সৈয়দ
নজরুল ইসলাম, প্রধানমন্ত্রী জনাব তাজউদ্দিন আহমদ, অর্ধমন্ত্রী ক্যাটেন এম.
মনসুর আলী ও স্বরাষ্ট্র ও ত্রাণমূলী জনাব এ. এইচ. এম. কামারুজ্জামান এবং
সংপ্রতি মন্ত্রী, মুক্তিযোদ্ধা, নেতা ও কর্মসূদের কথা গভীর শুভার সঙ্গে স্মরণ
করে।

স্বাধীন ও সার্বভৌম বাংলাদেশ সরকার প্রতিষ্ঠার আনুষ্ঠানিক দিন আমাদের
জাতীয় ইতিহাসে সমৃজ্জল হয়ে আছে।

বিচারপতি সাহাবুদ্দীন আহমদ

THE PROCLAMATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Mujibnagar, Bangladesh, Dated 10th of April, 1971

WHEREAS free the elections were held in Bangladesh from 7th December, 1970 to 17th January, 1971, to elect representatives for the purpose of framing a Constitution.

AND

WHEREAS at these elections the people of Bangladesh elected 167 out of 169 representatives belonging to the Awami League.

AND

WHEREAS General Yahya Khan summoned the elected representatives of the people to meet on the 3rd March 1971, for the purpose of framing a Constitution.

AND

WHEREAS the Assembly so summoned was arbitrarily and illegally postponed for an indefinite period.

AND

WHEREAS instead of fulfilling their promise and while still conferring with the representatives of the people of Bangladesh, Pakistan authorities declared an unjust and treacherous war.

AND

WHEREAS in the facts and circumstances of such treacherous conduct Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the undisputed leader of the 75 million people of Bangladesh, in due fulfillment of the legitimate right of self-determination of the people of Bangladesh, duly made a declaration of independence at Dacca on March 26, 1971 and urged the people of Bangladesh to defend the honour and integrity of Bangladesh.

AND

WHEREAS in the conduct of a ruthless and savage war the Pakistani authorities committed and are still continuously committing numerous acts of genocide and unprecedented tortures, amongst others on the civilian and unarmed people of Bangladesh.

AND

WHEREAS the Pakistan Government by levying an unjust war and committing genocide and by other repressive measures made it impossible for the elected representatives of the people of Bangladesh to meet and frame a Constitution, and give to themselves a Government.

AND

WHEREAS the people of Bangladesh by their heroism, bravery and revolutionary fervour have established effective control over the territories of Bangladesh.

We, the elected representatives of the people of Bangladesh, as honour bound by the mandate given to us by the people of Bangladesh whose will is supreme, duly constituted ourselves into a Constituent Assembly, and having held mutual consultations, and in order to ensure for the people of Bangladesh equality, human dignity and social justice,

declare and constitute Bangladesh to be sovereign People's Republic and thereby confirm the declaration of independence already made by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and

do hereby affirm and resolve that till such time as a Constitution is framed, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman shall be the President of the Republic and that Syed Nazrul Islam shall be the Vice-President of the Republic, and

that the President shall be the Supreme Commander of all the Armed Forces of the Republic,

shall exercise all the Executive and Legislative powers of the Republic including the power to grant pardon,

shall have the power to appoint a Prime Minister and such other Ministers as he considers necessary,

shall have the power to levy taxes and expend monies,

shall have the power to summon and adjourn the Constituent Assembly, and

do all other things that may be necessary to give to the people of Bangladesh an orderly and just Government.

We, the elected representatives of the people of Bangladesh do further resolve that in the event of there being no President or the President being unable to enter upon his office or being unable to exercise his powers due to any reason whatsoever, the Vice President shall have and exercise all the powers, duties and responsibilities herein conferred on the President.

We further resolve that we undertake to observe and give effect to all duties and obligations that devolve upon us as a member of the family of nations, and to abide by the Charter of United Nations.

We further resolve that this Proclamation of Independence shall be deemed to have come into effect from 26th day of March, 1971.

We further resolve that in order to give effect to this instrument we appoint Prof. Yusuf Ali our duly Constituted Potentary and to give to the President and the Vice-President oaths of office.

representatives of the people had and, second, as a consequence of the organised genocide resorted to by the army. The way was one of Bangladesh's asserting its right to freedom, for Pakistan to abjure the illegality and criminality it had taken recourse to and acknowledge new realities. When the army fired the first shots in the early hours of 26 March 1971, Pakistan slumped to its end in what till minutes earlier had been its eastern province.

That Bangladesh's declaration of independence was a well thought out move, that adventurism or hollow policies had no part in it, was displayed amply through the dispersal of Bangabandhu's close advisors out of an increasingly disturbed capital. The move towards political emancipation and the attainment of national sovereignty was further substantiated through the 10 April Proclamation of Independence of Bangladesh, which Proclamation was subsequently formalised through the constitution of the Provisional Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh at Mujibnagar on 17 April 1971. An analysis of the Proclamation makes it obvious that the objective before the leaders of the Mujibnagar movement was a good deal more than waging war for an end to the Pakistani military occupation of the country. It was, in a very fundamental way, a reassertion of the principles upon which the Bengali nation had waged its long crusade for the establishment of democracy in Pakistan. The Proclamation makes clear that it was the sudden assault of the ruling junta on the forces of democracy which precipi-

adopted as its political principle from day one of its creation out of British India. Note the clear statement of intent:

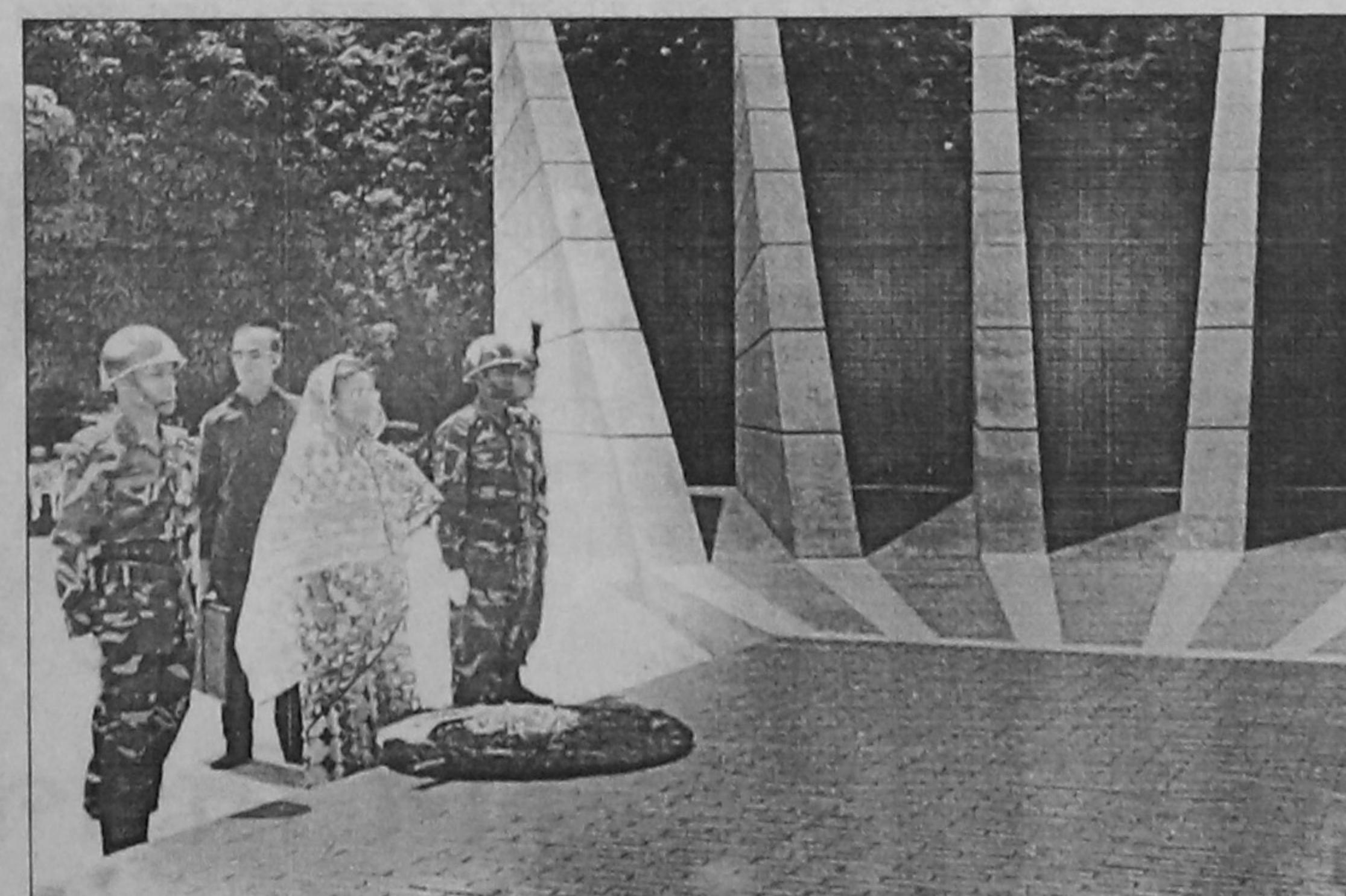
"We, the elected representatives of the people of Bangladesh, as honour bound by the mandate given to us . . . in order to ensure for the people of Bangladesh equality, human dignity and social justice, declare and constitute Bangladesh to be a Sovereign People's Republic . . ."

The question of national objectives is thereby answered without ambiguity by the Proclamation. A secular society, a concept of social justice encompassing the principles of equality and human dignity, are all features put forth at the onset of a war which promised to be long and tortuous. But despite the difficulties up ahead (and at that point the element of uncertainty

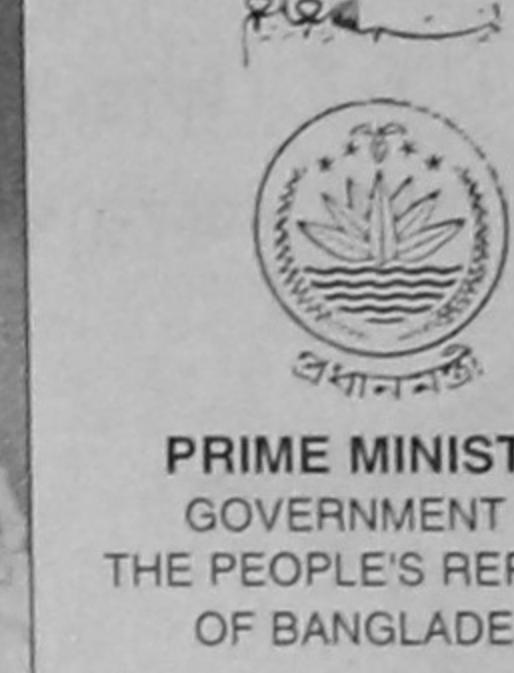
independence, at a very early stage of Bangladesh's war for liberation from Pakistan, served as statement of policy as well as a moral principle. The objective before the Mujibnagar government remained simple and fundamental: that having chosen their public representatives through free and fair general elections,

the people of Bangladesh were going to war in order to make their land secure for peace and democracy. As the Mukti Bahini returned home at the end of the war,

and the Mujibnagar administration made its way back to the country, the goal of a secular democratic polity was not lost sight of. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's return to a free Bangladesh was the signal for the Proclamation of Independence to be given practical effect to. The first step taken was the inauguration of parliamentary democracy in the country. #



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina placing wreath at Mujibnagar Memorial at Meherpur on 17 April 1998.

PRIME MINISTER
GOVERNMENT OF
THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC
OF BANGLADESH

Message

The 17th April 1971, the Mujibnagar Day is a red-letter day in the history of Bangladesh. On this day, the first Government of sovereign Bangladesh took oath in the mango garden of Baidyanathatala in Meherpur District declaring the unanimous leader of the Bangalee, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as its president. Since the day the place is named after the name of Father of the Nation as Mujibnagar.

In the absence of Father of the Nation, acting president Syed Nazrul Islam, prime minister Tajuddin Ahmed, and ministers including M Mansur Ali and A H M Quamaruzzaman of the Mujibnagar Government conducted the armed struggle mobilizing the people against the genocides and violation of human rights by the Pakistani occupation forces. The Bangalee achieved independence through a successful War of Liberation under the leadership of the Father of the Nation. The contribution made by the members of the Mujibnagar Government and its officers and employees and freedom fighters as well as people from all walks of life shall be remembered forever in the history of the Bangalee.

It is our misfortune that after the assassination of Father of the Nation on August 15, 1975 by some heinous killers, the four national leaders who led the Mujibnagar Government were also brutally killed in the Dhaka Central Jail in captivity on November 3, the same year to make the country leaderless. On this holy day, I pay my deep respect to the memory of Father of the Nation and four national leaders. I also recall with gratitude the contributions of those countries, personalities and institutions who stood beside us like friends during the most critical stage of the Bangladesh Liberation War extending their diplomatic, political and military support.

The 17th April will remain ever shining as the Mujibnagar Day in the history of Bangladesh. On this historic day, I call upon our countrymen to work unitedly for the welfare of the country and its people being imbued with the spirit of independence and War of Liberation. Let the historic Mujibnagar Day be immortal.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever

Sheikh Hasina

The Voice of Thunder

- Bangladesh has achieved independence. If anyone conspires to despoil the independence of Bangladesh, Mujib will be the first to give his life to defend it.
- Bangladesh will continue to exist in history as an independent state. There is no power on earth that can suppress Bengal.
- No people of any country had paid such a high price, lived such dreadful and gruesome life or suffered so much distress as the people of Bangladesh did in their struggle for independence. Today we need to sanctify our souls without which one can not love one's country nor contribute to its development.
- Political freedom comes to naught if it fails to ensure economic freedom.
- The struggle of Bangladesh is the manifestation of the universal struggle of mankind for attaining justice and peace. Therefore, it is only natural that Bangladesh will stand up for the world's oppressed masses right from its inception and continue to do so for all times.
- The poor people of Bangladesh have to pay at least one lakh taka (one hundred thousand) for a person to become a physician. The same amount is spent to make an engineer or an agricultural expert. These people get educated with the money of the toiling workers who do not have the means to prepare a square meal each day. Time has now come for us to ponder how much we have given them in exchange of their sacrifices, and how much we have paid them in return.
- My dear countrymen, let me tell you this, not as a leader but as your brother, that if the ordinary men of our country are not provided with shelter, if they do not get food, and young men and women do not find employment then this independence of ours will be frustrated—it will never be realized in full.