

JOI BANGLA

15th August National Mourning Day

Special Supplement

**President**People's Republic of Bangladesh
Dhaka**Message**

On the National Mourning Day and 25th Death Anniversary of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, I pay my homage to his immortal memory and pray for eternal peace of his departed soul.

The name of 'Sheikh Mujib' is well-connected with the creation of Independent and Sovereign Bangladesh. His immense sacrifice for the welfare of the people is unparalleled in history. The people loved and honoured this illustrious leader spontaneously for his indomitable courage, strong character and brilliant leadership. It is now the responsibility of us all to materialise his dream of 'Golden Bengal' and for that reason Unity among all is essential for national interest. On this day, it is my earnest appeal to all, irrespective of party affiliations, to forge unity for the cause of national interest.

His tragic death, alongwith some members of his family, caused by some misguided army personnel, is an indelible shameful chapter of our national history.

Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed

Bangabandhu : A People's Leader

By Fakir Abdur Razzak

What sort of a leader was Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman? How great was he? There are debates and controversies regarding many internationally acclaimed political leaders ranging from George Washington to Fidel Castro. And the real identity and lasting image of a statesman is formed in the minds of the people through these debates and discussions, criticisms, research, evaluation and study of history. It is beyond any doubt that Sheikh Mujib was the founding father of our independent nation and in the judgement of history, 'the undisputed leader and statesman'.

In South-east Asia, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the only one of his kind who had to carry forward an uncompromising struggle for long 23 years for realizing the various demands of his people with the ultimate objective of achieving independence. He also had to lead an armed liberation struggle in this process. The Bangalee nation fought tooth and nail keeping full faith and trust in his effervescent image and carried out his plans, orders and directives even when he was absent during the liberation war. And ultimately, this nation snatched the red sun of independence by defeating the Pakistani occupying forces. The lives of three million martyrs and the honor of 200 thousand mothers and sisters had to be sacrificed in the process. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman remained the principal figure during all these struggles, sacrifices, war of liberation, achievement of independence and the changing faces of politics. This irrevo-

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cable fact of history can never be obliterated. Many people tried unsuccessfully, but history has only shown pity to them. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was a people's leader in the real sense of the term; he was a leader of the teeming millions, dearest 'Mujib bhai' of the peasants, laborers and toiling masses who constitute 85 percent of the country's population. That address (Mujib bhai) by the general masses since the early fifties laid the foundation for his ultimately becoming a people's leader.

For justifiable reasons, the mainly educated segments of society and the students added some adjectives before Mujib's name later on. But the ordinary people of the country who had seen, known and supported Mujib from a close distance were satisfied and proud by calling him 'Mujib bhai'. They considered 'Mujib bhai' to be closer to them than 'Bangabandhu, Father of the Nation'. They demonstrated through their infinite love that Sheikh Mujib was very dear to the common people, as he was a constant companion to their hackneyed existence in his role as a leader of the masses. Any other identity is of no value to the common man. The real and natural identity of our Father of the Nation among the peasants, laborers and working class of the country was his historical identity brightened and embellished by his common identity of 'Sheikh Mujib', 'Mujib' and 'Mujib bhai'. This identity has firmly placed him in the pages of history as a leader of the masses.

What attributes of a people's leader did Bangabandhu possess? Why did history put

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15 August 2000

Father of the Nation
We salute thee

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**Prime Minister**Government of The People's
Republic of Bangladesh**Message**

Three-and-a-half Years of Bangabandhu's Government A Period of Reconstruction and Institution-building

Obaidul Haq

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, founding father of Bangladesh, was in power only for three-and-a-half years. The anti-independence and anti-national forces who seized power after his brutal killing on 15 August, 1975 have since then unleashed a campaign of lies and vilification about Bangabandhu and his government. The people were not allowed to know the facts. They were kept in

darkness about the reality following the liberation war and devastation caused by it. There was still then a conspiracy against our hard-earned independence being hatched by anti-independence forces-both local and international-who were out to sabotage all the achievements of Bangabandhu despite tough challenges and odds. Yet, Bangabandhu's Government achieved commendable successes in the reconstruction of the war-devasted nation.

The first meeting of the Council of Ministers was held on 13 January, 1972. The meeting approved the design of our national flag, national anthem Amar Sonar Bangla and the marching-song chal chal. The meeting also formed a committee on postal stamps and sanctioned funds for reconstruction of the Shahid Minar. On the same day, Bangabandhu took some more important measures including the writing off all Khazna (land tax) for that year, distribution of 250 million taka loan among the farmers, steps to restore the telecommunication system within the country in six months, actions to start production in the Rajshahi Sugar Mill and an an-

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Father of the Nation with the members of his family

Assassination of Bangabandhu : Politics of Killing

Monaem Sarker

Bangabandhu was destined to die by the bullets of assassins the moment in the early hours of 26 March 1971 when he declared independence and directed that his message be circulated throughout the world. Now after 25 years of his assassination we shall have to find out the cause as to why the evil design was executed by bullets of the killers only after four years of independence. Bangabandhu was a nationalist and undisputed leader of the Bangalee Nation. Always he gave priority to the interest of the Bangalees. His 6-point was a charter of freedom of the Bangalees. Independence, the ultimate goal of Bangalee nation was contained in the 6-point demand. 6-point was launched for emancipation of the

Bengalees from oppression and deprivation by the Punjabis of Pakistan. The 6-point demand culminated in the mass upsurge of sixty nine.

The Bangalee Nation took the right decision in the election of 1970 by giving absolute majority to Awami League, the party of Bangabandhu.

The Pakistani military junta acted as traitor and started taking resort to fraudulent move against the Bangalees. The process of suppressing the Bangabandhu and Bangalee nation began. They started blaming Bangabandhu and accused him that he was an anti-state element. The autocratic military ruler Yahya in his address of 26 March criticized Bangabandhu and

termed his constitutional and lawful movement as an attempt to destroy the unity and integrity of the country.

On this pretext he used abusive and provocative language against Mujib and warned to punish him and his party Awami League. The Pakistani military launched brutal attack against the innocent students and masses with tanks and formidable weapons to implement the evil design hidden behind the audacious comments of Yahya. On 25 March, the military junta started the massacre of Bangalees and in the dead of night arrested Bangabandhu and sent him to west Pakistani jail.

A skilled politician does not always proceed straight way. For achieving the cher-

ished goal he has to follow different paths at different times. Those who say that by accepting arrest Bangabandhu acted imprudently are wrong. As the leader of the majority party in parliament he had shown real boldness and farsightedness. He spent days and nights in Pakistani prison in total uncertainty but with indomitable courage.

During that hard times Pakistani rulers could not show the courage to kill Bangabandhu due to international pressure and in view of the fact that 96 thousand Pakistani soldiers were stranded in Bangladesh. Whereas, the cowards killed Bangabandhu in the darkness of night in independent Bangladesh. The death of the greatman at the hand of assassins is not new in history. Socrates died after taking poison called Hemloc. Jesus Christ was crucified. Mahatma Gandhi was killed by bullets.

Bangabandhu was tried by a military court in Pakistan. He was sentenced to death but execution was suspended. In 1975 he was killed by the coterie of vested interests which was not possible in 1971. For getting an answer to the question why and by whom Bangabandhu was assassinated, one has to take into consideration the factors like emergence of independent and sovereign Bangladesh, contemporary political scenario, achievement of freedom through armed struggle, aspirations of an exploited nation, socio-economic and administrative steps taken by Bangabandhu and the situation prevailing in international field.

The defeated forces in the war of liberation, the fun-

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All attempts made by the tyrant killers involved in the conspiracy and the anti-liberation circles have been foiled in the face of struggling tradition and resistance of the Bangali Nation imbued with the ideals of the Father of the Nation. The people of the country have given the responsibility of governance to Bangladesh Awami League, the party that led the War of Liberation, through free and fair elections held on June 12, 1996, under a Non-Party Caretaker Government. Following repeal of the infamous Indemnity Ordinance the historic judgment and verdict of the Bangabandhu Murder Case was pronounced. But for foiling the execution of the verdict of the killing, the killers of 1971; the rajakars, albadars, the reactionaries, the killers of 1975 and the neo-autocrats have rampaged together in preparing blue print of conspiracy and killing. They want to create anarchy, plunge the country into darkness and retardation. Their recent attempt in Kotalpara to assassinate me by blasting bomb is a part of that conspiracy. They have been trying to create unrest throughout the country by pre-planned destination of law and order situation, which includes assassination of eight Student League workers at Chittagong, the eminent journalist Shamsur Rahman in Jessore and other incidents in different places of the country. I call upon the countrymen to remain vigilant against the evil alliance of the anti-liberation forces, killers, women-oppressors, autocrats and the vote riggers. Despite their conspiracy, the verdict of the court will be executed in this land, InsaAllah.

We have been running the country for last four years according to the ideals of the Father of the Nation. Our government successfully signed the historic Peace Accord on Chittagong Hill Tracts and the Water Sharing Treaty with India. The 21st February, the commemorative of the Language Movement has been recognized as the World Mother Language Day. Bangladesh has been recognized as the 10th cricket test playing country in the world. We have tackled devastating floods in 1998, enhanced country's image in the international arena, re-established the rule of law, prepared people-oriented budget and achieved the goal in socio-economic sector. We have taken innumerable welfare programmes for the people including introduction of old-age allowance, implementation of Asrayon (housing) projects, establishment of Employment Generation Bank and introduction of lumpgrant for the helpless women. Bangladesh today has raised its head high before the world as a promising and prospering country. We must win over the struggle for building up of a democratic Bangladesh free from hunger, illiteracy and poverty.

From the eternal heaven, the Father of the Nation is ever present in the national life of the Bangali through his works and ideals and will remain so forever. The light of his ideals would always usher the Bangali to the right direction ahead. Let us take a fresh vow to complete the unfinished task of Father of the Nation through building a happy and prosperous 'Sonar Bangla' (Golden Bangla) with concerted efforts. Let the Almighty Allah help us in all our endeavour.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever

Sheikh Hasina