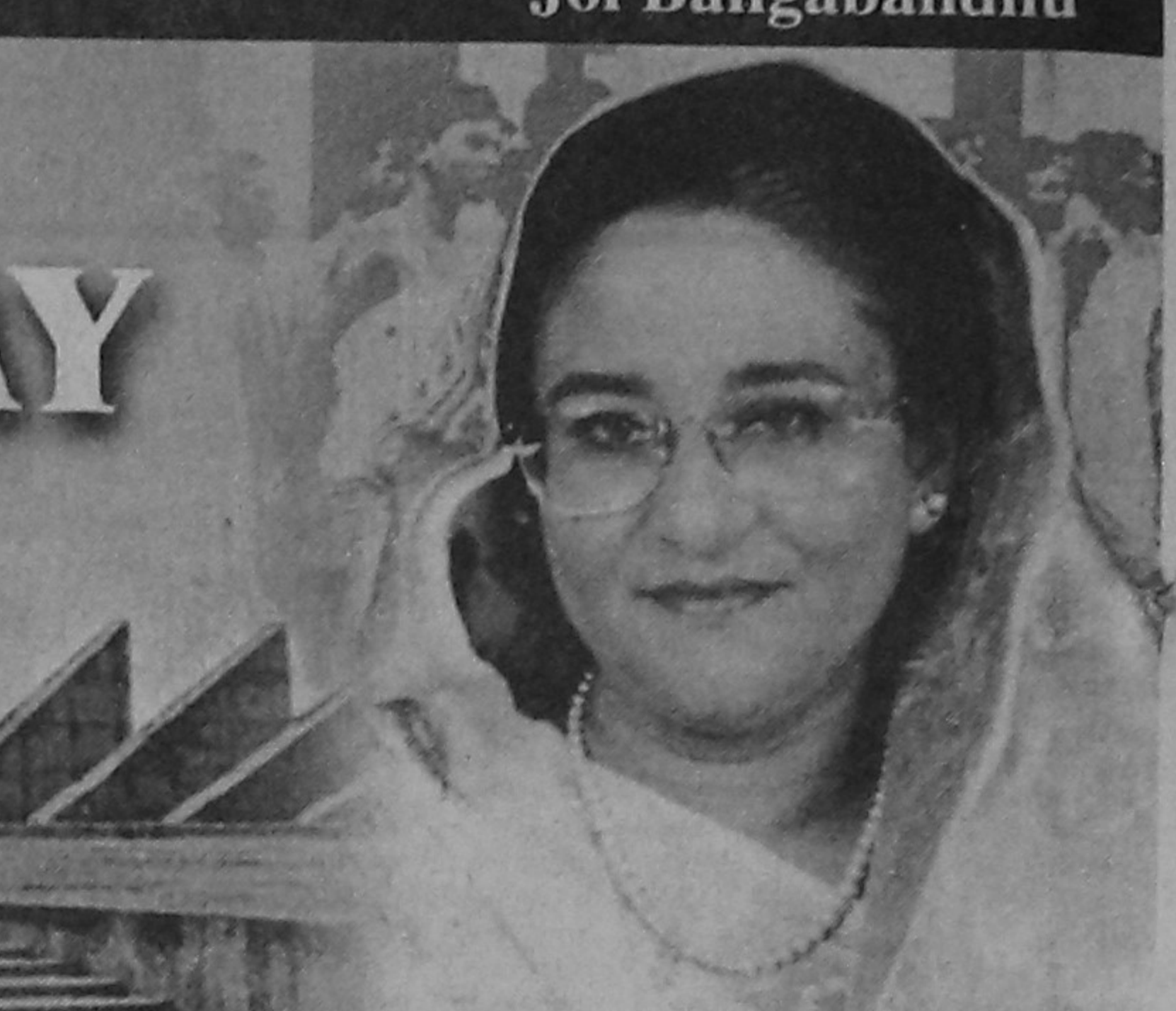




HISTORIC MUJIBNAGAR DAY



Special Supplement

17 April 2001

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Bangabandhu and the Mujibnagar Government

This is about time we got rid of the age-old controversy over the 'Announcement of Liberation War' which was actually raised by a group of anti-liberation people after brutal killing of the Father of the Nation. Of course this is about time the ill-motivated design of the defeated opponents of our liberation and of democracy should be unveiled. We could, in this connection, well refer to a number of proofs that is still the witness of time and be considered as the strong points to give a proper reply in the face of the persons engaged in distorting the glorious history of the liberation war of Bangladesh.

The first thing to consider is the historic speech delivered by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman before at least one million people present in and around the then Race Course Maidan (now Suhrawardi Uddyan). "And this struggle is the struggle for our emancipation," he declared in his commanding voice that raised to its highest pitch, "This struggle is the struggle for independence."

This was more than a clear announcement of a war of liberation and in fact, people of Bangladesh had been already in it. Bangabandhu also urged upon his countrymen to get prepared for a long struggle until the main objects are attained. "Turn every house into a fort of resistance," he said, "Resist the enemies with whatever you have." These were clear directives and guidelines from the most trusted and beloved leader of the nation at war for its survival.

Secondly, a final command to the people was rightly broadcast through the wireless of East Pakistan Rifles (now BDR) with a thoughtful note from Bangabandhu that said, "If I am not there to give you fresh order, you will carry on with the struggle until the last enemy is eliminated from the sacred soil of Bangladesh."

Thirdly, one should care-

fully go through the first ever government order passed by the Mujibnagar

in their offices on terms and conditions of services so long enjoyed by them and that all District Judges and District Magistrates, in the territory of Bangladesh and all diplomatic representatives elsewhere shall

Khandker Mazharul Karim



Acting President Syed Nazrul Islam inspecting the guard after taking oath of office at Mujibnagar on April 17, 1971

Government on 10 April 1971. This order under the head "Laws Continuance Enforcement Order" said, "I, Syed Nazrul Islam, the Vice President and Acting President of Bangladesh, in exercise of the powers conferred on me by the Proclamation of Independence dated tenth day of April, 1971 do hereby order that all laws that was in force in Bangladesh on 25th March 1971 shall subject to the proclamation aforesaid continue to be so in force with such consequential changes as may be necessary on account of the creation of the sovereign independent state of Bangladesh formed by the will of the People of Bangladesh and that all government officials — civil, military, judicial and diplomatic who take the oath of allegiance to Bangladesh shall continue

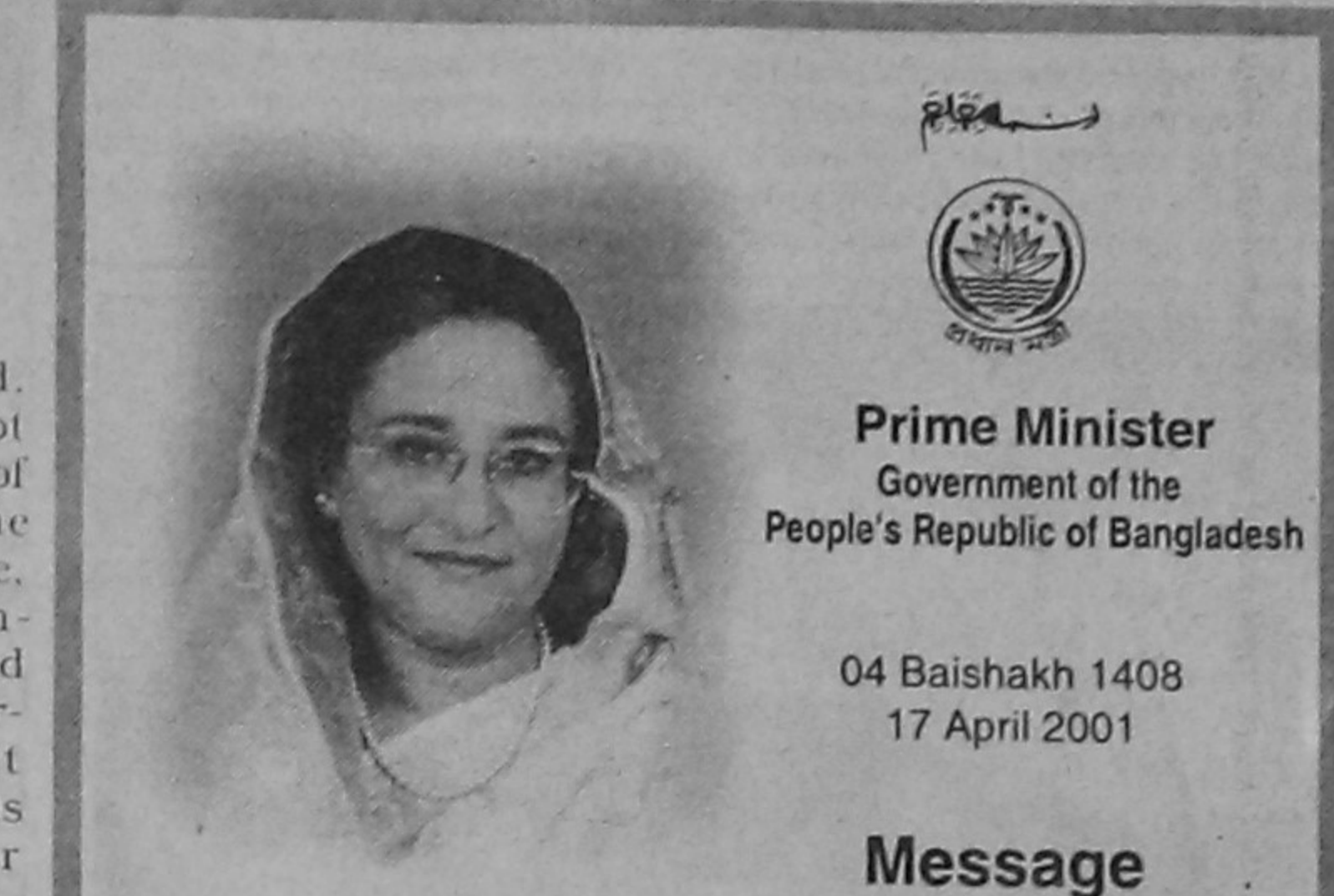
to administer the oath of allegiance to all government officials within their jurisdiction. ... This order shall be deemed to come into effect from 26th day of March, 1971. ... signed: "SYED NAZRUL ISLAM, Acting President." So this is obvious that the entire actions and activities of the new-born state of Bangladesh was justified by the historic declaration of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivered on late night of 25 March, and never on the basis of any announcement by a rebel officer of Pakistan Army from a drum top as was discovered after a decade of liberation. If the initial announcement of the liberation war is accepted to have been on 27 March, then, the whole existence and validity of the Mujibnagar Government formed on 10 April 1971 at

Mujibnagar comes void. One cannot and should not twist the glorious history of the liberation war for the motherland this way. We, therefore, settle the controversy at the moment and should let our future generation know the exact course of events that led us to an uncompromising war against the then occupational army of Pakistan and finally achieve the victory instead of misleading them with the concocted history.

We should sincerely and honestly let them know that the history of Bangladesh — its liberation war and the long struggle for the emancipation of the people is factually the history of Bangabandhu. The very cause of independent Bangladesh was established in the mind of the whole world owing to the political developments occurred after the election held in 1970, where the Awami League under the unanimous leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman won and the occupational rulers rejected to hand over power to them.

The Mujibnagar Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh formed on 10 April 1971 was headed by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who had been captivated by the Pakistani army immediately after transmission of his message for waging war against the occupational forces. The other five members of the cabinet were Syed Nazrul Islam as Vice President, Tajuddin Ahmed as Prime Minister and coordinator of the War of Liberation, Khondkar Moshtaque Ahmed as Foreign Minister, Captain Mansoor Ali and A. H. M. Quamaruzzaman as Home Minister.

In almost all cases of revolution there is a Doooms Day fixed by the warriors — or more exactly, the war planners. Bangabandhu, absolutely confident upon the



Prime Minister
Government of the
People's Republic of Bangladesh

04 Baisakh 1408
17 April 2001

Message

The Mujibnagar Day is a red-letter day in the history of Bangladesh. On the 17th April 1971 the first government of sovereign Bangladesh took oath in the mango garden of Baiddyanathpala 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 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 AHM Quamaruzzaman of the Mujibnagar Government conducted the armed struggle mobilizing the people against the genocide 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 15 August 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 03 November, the same year to make the country leaderless. On the holy Mujibnagar 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 moral, 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 my 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

রাষ্ট্রপতি
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ

০৪ বৈশাখ ১৪০৮
১৭ এপ্রিল ২০০১

বাণী

মহান মুক্তিযুদ্ধের স্থিতি বিজড়িত মুজিবনগর দিবস উপলক্ষে আমি দেশবাসীকে জানাই আন্তরিক কৃতজ্ঞতা।

১৯৭১ সালের ১৭ এপ্রিল আনুষ্ঠানিকভাবে স্বাধীন বাংলাদেশের অস্থায়ী সরকার গঠন বাংলাদেশের ইতিহাসে একটি অবিশ্বরণীয় দিন। ১৯৭০-৭১ সালের নির্বাচনে সরকার গঠনে নিরঙ্কুশ সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠতা অর্জন করলেও আওয়ামী লীগকে সরকার গঠন করতে না দিয়ে তৎকালীন সামরিক সরকার নিরঙ্কুশ জনগণের উপর অতর্কিত সামরিক অভিযান চালায়। এরই প্রতিবাদে অস্থায়ী সরকার গঠন ও স্বাধীনতা যুদ্ধ পরিচালনা দেশের মানুষকে স্বাধীনতা যুদ্ধে উদ্বীণ করে। জাতি তাই কৃতজ্ঞচিত্তে স্বাধীনতা আন্দোলনের অবিসংবাদিত নেতা জাতির জনক বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান এবং মুজিবনগর সরকারের অস্থায়ী রাষ্ট্রপতি সৈয়দ নজরুল ইসলাম, প্রধানমন্ত্রী জনাব তাজউদ্দিন আহমদ, অর্থমন্ত্রী ক্যাপ্টেন এম. মনসুর আলী ও স্বরাষ্ট্র ও ত্রাণমন্ত্রী জনাব এ. এইচ. এম. কামারুজ্জামান এবং সংশ্লিষ্ট মন্ত্রী, মুক্তিবাহিনী, নেতা ও কর্মীদের কণা গভীর শ্রদ্ধার সঙ্গে স্মরণ করে।

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

বিকারপতি সাহাবুদ্দিন আহমদ

THE PROCLAMATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Mujibnagar, Bangladesh, Dated 10th of April, 1971

WHEREAS free 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 fulfilment 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 representative 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 consultation, 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 Potentiary and to give to the President and the Vice-President oaths of office.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina unveiling the plaque of Mujibnagar complex at Mujibnagar

strength of his people, yet afraid of a untoward happening in the late March 1971, discussed with his close associates — including political leaders, student leaders and the important persons — coming from the army, civil bureaucracy, traders and industrialists, journalists and intellectuals, who really matter. He warned them of the evil design of the Pakistani rulers. And finally he told a foreign press that 25 March would be a crucial day. In fact, he was apprehending that the very day could be the D-Day.

He prophesied as if he could see what was going to happen. He concluded that the Pakistani rulers would sure betray the Bangalees as they did earlier. He then advised his intimate followers to organise themselves quite methodically to wage a total war against Pakistan. They wanted the leader to go with them, but he regretted. He had his reasons that were proved to be true afterwards.

It was well evident that whatever steps taken by the organisers of our liberation war nothing but a well-planned continuity of the historic call by the great leader and his last announcement of waging war against the brutal rulers of Pakistan. The measures taken from 7 March through 25th to unite the nation that led the formation of the government in exile including the Laws Continuance Enforcement was only the result of the amazing foresight of Bangabandhu.

The history also reveals that the Mujibnagar Government was run in his name. His very name was the chief inspiration of the freedom fighters. During the first few months the freedom fighters were universally called 'Followers of Sheikh Mujib.' Whatever credibility and importance was given to the liberators of Bangladesh was only due to Sheikh Mujib. Even now, among the foreigners Sheikh Mujib is more popular name than the name of Bangladesh.

History thus has inseparably woven the names of Bangladesh and its founding Father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Two words, in fact, were the prime inspiration of the Mujibnagar Government of Bangladesh — were Bangabandhu and 'Joi Bangla'. One can never change the past.

Translated by : Deepyaman Acharya.