

Special Supplement

NATIONAL CHILDREN DAY

17 March Tuesday

FROM PAGE 21

A Tribute to the Father of the Nation on his Birthday

Secretaries of 'East Pakistan Awami Muslim League', the first effective opposition party that was established in 1949 in Pakistan state, on behalf of the Bengalis (in 1955 it was named as 'Awami League'). At that time Bangabandhu was in prison cell. Before that he played his role as the pioneer in establishing East Pakistan Muslim Chattrra League in 1948 (named as Chattrra League in 1953).

From the very beginning of the new-born Pakistan state the rulers from West Pakistan imposed a kind of colonial subjugation and exploitation alongside cultural or racial-repression on the Bengalis who were then the majority in the country. In that state the first rebellion sprouted centering the question of state language. Policy related to the language of non-Bengali ruling body was not at all democratic, moreover it was excessively replete with racial antagonism. That is why though Bengali was the language of larger portion of the population (Bengalis) they were adamant not to make it even one of the state languages along with Urdu. The language movement in '48 and '52 spread the spark of fire at the root of conscience of Bengali people. At every educational institute throughout, tombstones were constructed for the language-martyrs of Ekush, as the symbol of national-awakening for Bengalis, the Shaheed Minar (Martyr Monument). These created intense churning of the minds of poets, literateurs and cultural activists and provided a solid foundation of a non-communal Bengali consciousness. Indeed it was in Pakistan era that the question of Bengali as state language quickly spread fast throughout in the course of the language movement. Bangabandhu played the leading role in the commencement and organizational enrichment of the movement. That's the reason why he had to embrace the confinement once and again. He was the first prisoner of the language-movement (March 11, 1948). He adopted the means of hunger strike being a captive for the right of the 'Freedom of political prisoners' and for the demand of 'Bengali as state language' (February 16, 1952). We can be acquainted with the profound solidarity of Bangabandhu with Bangla, Bengali and Bengali language at different stages of times. So whether it was the highway, jail, legislative or people's assembly-he was always loud in his point every time. On September 21, 1955, his unforgettable statement regarding language was: 'We want to speak in Bengali here, whether we know any other language or not it matters little for us If that is not allowed, we will leave the House ... that is our stand.'

Before any other leader Bangabandhu could perceive with all his heart and mind that Bengalis shall have no future unless they get freedom from the shackles of Pakistani colonial rule. So in the early sixties he finally decided to stand for achieving independence. Powerful organization and unwavering affinity among the multitude were essential for attaining the goal. Earlier (in 1957), he resigned from the cabinet just between the intervening time of nine months, for establishing the Awami League party that spearheaded the liberation movement of Bengali people, at the grassroot level on a strong foot-base. It was really a rare event in political history. The historical course of action that infused explosion in the national conscience and made the Bengali people inspired by the sacred verse of independence was nothing but the 6-point 'Our demand for survival' by Bangabandhu in 1966. The biographer of Sheikh Mujib, renowned journalist Obaed-Ul-Haque said in his statement, 6-point action was the 'Birth Certificate Written in Advance' for Bangladesh. In 1968 the 11-point demand of the student community was enclosed with the 6-point programme and made the struggle for national emancipation of the Bengalis indomitable. For suppressing the movement Ayub government took resorted to 'Agartala Conspiracy Case' making Bangabandhu the prime accused (charging separation of East Pakistan by armed rebellion in cooperation with India) that made the whole Bengali nation awakened against the intrigue of the Pakistani forces. Then the mass upheaval took place in the year '69.

After attainment of unconditional release from the prison,

on February 23, at the student-public gathering of lakhs of people at the Dhaka Race Course ground (presently Suhrawardy Uddyan), the unopposed leader Mujib was decorated with the title 'Bangabandhu', the friend of Bengal and the Bengali people. During the tenure of 23 years of Pakistani reign Bangabandhu had to pass twelve years alone in the dark prison cell. Archer K Blood who served as Consul General in US Embassy in Dhaka in 1971 (also served as diplomat in Dhaka for a mentionable time in 60's) has written in his book titled *The Cruel Birth of Bangladesh: Memories of an American Diplomat* (UPL 2002) that though Mujib was already 'the most prominent political figure in East Pakistan' still he



Members of the Families, who's near and dear ones were killed by the Al-Badars and Razakars during the war of liberation, demanding justice to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

could not have chance of meeting with even for once for the same reason. In his words, "While I have heard of him in 1960-62, I never met him for the simple reason that he was always in jail". In reality Pakistan state then was nothing but a big prison for Bangabandhu.

Depending on the 6-point movement, basically the charter of freedom for Bengalis, Awami League descended in the 1970 elections under the leadership of Bangabandhu and eventually achieved an astounding victory in that. But the Pakistani forces didn't intend to hand-over power to Bengalis and chose the path of conspiracy. The situation was running fast towards culmination. All-pervading non-cooperation was observed from 2-25 March in the whole Bengal in response to the call of Bangabandhu. Pakistan government became totally inoperative. The country was then administered by the directives of Bangabandhu. He was the *de facto* Head of the Government. His residence at 32 Dhanmondi seemed like the 10 Downing Street of Britain i.e. Office-cum-residence of the British Prime Minister. In the words of *Evening Standard* published from London: "Sheikh Mujibur Rahman now appears to be the real boss of East Pakistan, with the complete support of the population ... Rahman's home in Dhanmondi, already known as Number 10 Downing Street in imitation of the British Prime Minister's residence has been besieged by bureaucrats, politicians, bankers, industrialists and people from all walks of life" (12 March 1971, p. 10).

The angry Pakistani rulers continued firing on the disarmed people indiscriminately throughout the country and left them dead and wounded. In different places were created spontaneous resistances of common people. In such a fiery situation the 'Poet of Politics', (as the *Newsweek* called) Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman arrived at the huge assembly of hundreds of thousands of peoples at Race Course ground for summoning the people for the impending armed struggle for Liberation. The day was March 7. At the tail-end of an eighteen minutes memorable speech, he invited the Bengali people in clarion voice, "Build citadel at every house. You have to encounter the enemies with whatever you have

... The struggle this time is the struggle for our emancipation. The struggle this time is for Independence."

Bangabandhu's speech on March 7 was actually the proclamation of independence. He was always cautious not to be marked as a secessionist leader at home and abroad. Facing innumerable incitements he remained calm and composed, and like a dexterous artist he was inquesting for a rational consequence towards which step by step the liberation struggle of Bengal was advancing. He straightway declared the Independence of Bangladesh on the early blooming hour of March 26, after the Pakistani occupying forces made invasion on the disarmed Bengali people on March 25. So, the announcement of Independence by Bangabandhu was not something accidental, rather he reached this stage through the passage of time facing a long course of eventful struggle. According to the *Newsweek Magazine* (April 5, 1971): "When Sheikh Mujibur Rahman proclaimed the independence of Bangladesh last week some of his critics declared that he was nearly yielding to the pressure of his extremist supporters ... But Mujib's emergence as the embattled leader of a new Bangla 'nation' is the logical outcome of a lifetime spent fighting for Bengali nationalism his presence there is no accident."

In the emergence of Bangladesh the Mujib leadership was an irresistible, indispensable ingredient. He was imprisoned in Pakistani prison during the Liberation War, but it was in his name that the nine-month long war was fought. Though he was not present, he became the Head of the temporary Mujibnagar Government that was established on April 10 (1971) for guiding the war. Even after the attainment of victory on December 16, our Independence was not secured. But when he stepped in the country after being freed from the Pakistan jail on January 10, 1972 all apprehensions were over. The *Guardian* published from London (January 10, 1972) has written in an editorial comment: 'Once Sheikh Mujibur Rahman steps out at Dacca Airport the new republic becomes a solid fact'.

Bangabandhu has sacrificed his life for the overall well-being of the people of Bangladesh. Everything was trivial to him than this. Successively after the Independence on January 18, 1972, a noted British journalist namely, David Frost took a personal interview of Bangabandhu. It is a valuable evidential document. From this one can get a distinctly visible conception of his life and ideology. The questioner asked him how was his state of mind in imprisonment when with the target of killing him the grave was excavated beside his prison cell, whether the flashes of his wife-son or relations came to his mind. In reply Bangabandhu said, "My first thought is for my land. More than my relations I love my country most. Whatever is my grief is only for my land. You see, how profoundly they (countrymen) love me." In another question when Frost asked to know which day he considered as the 'happiest day' of his life-he answered instantly, "When I heard that my Bangladesh attained its freedom, was the moment illuminated with extreme happiness for me". On March 17 in 1971, when a foreign newsman asked him about the occasion of his birthday, Bangabandhu's reply was, 'Saying about my birthday! You can see, how much the people around me are destitute, how much is their affliction'.

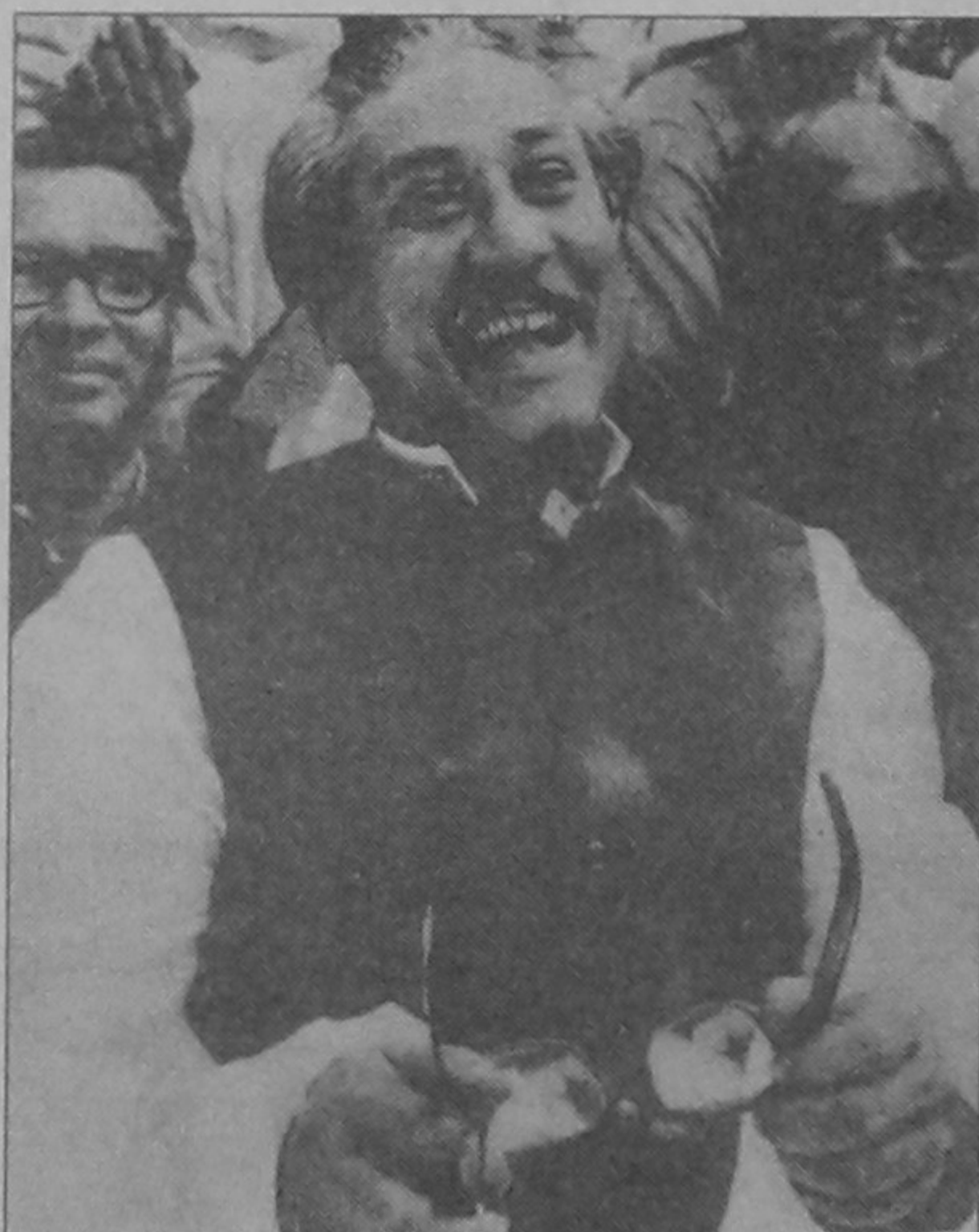
The life of this truly great man,

the Father of the Nation and founder of the independent Bangladesh came to an end by the bullet of a group of murderers who also killed all his family members present at the dreadful night on August 15 in 1975. In no way this fate could be due to him. In a book written on Bangabandhu titled *Sheikh Mujib: Triumph and Tragedy* (UPL, 2005), S A Karim properly named him as 'a tragic hero'. The independence of Bangladesh is his imperishable achievement. Bangabandhu and Bangladesh is indivisible, an inseparable state of thing. He will be immortal in the history and at the heart of Bengali people for the independent entity of his country, Bangladesh and for his intense love for countrymen. Bangabandhu is immortal. On his 89th birthday here's the heartfelt tribute for him from the soul of the grateful nation.

Translation: Samia Rubayat Hussain



Bangabandhu in his boyhood



who employ them. If the adage that 'one who is merciful to animals serves god' can be imprinted in their hearts that would surely facilitate them to become real human beings. To elucidate, the nobility and justness lie in the selfless dedication to do good to others and this feeling can free children's minds from animal passion.

In this context, we may once again recall Rabindra Nath's observation. He wrote in his article titled 'Banglabhasha-Parichaya'. 'The prime lesson for human beings who by nature live collectively should tread the common path of uniting with each other right from their childhood. When in persons animality has the upper hand, selfishness

isolates them, creates obstacles in meeting with others wholeheartedly. At that moment the yearning of the collective people, the lesson, the guiding spirit that had been there since long cries out to say that you must become a good human being overcoming all hurdles and moving in opposite direction of your animality'. Rabindra Nath opines that the continuous endeavour for human perfection to overcome the inadequacies with which a human-child is born gets united with the relentless strivings for attaining humanity. This feeling about the awakening of humanity enjoined by the world community achieves a meaningful purpose through creating an ambience of cordiality. In such a way, patriotism gets deeply entrenched with the ideals of sacrifice and dedication to service. One who dedicates himself to the

FROM PAGE 21

Humanity Is Fundamental

characteristic of humankind is that they are never alone. Each individual is linked with many other people and shaped by them in the process. It means the human-child if separated from the humankind no longer belongs to humankind and the human-child is without any bar to transform into animality. The obvious clue to this is that the human entity is the product assimilated by human mind and body of billions of people since ages. A person reflects the human qualities to the extent that the person strikes a harmonious balance with that bigger entity. It is to remember that a human-child when raised outside human society in the company of other creatures, not only the human-child fails to learn the human-language, but also fails to acquire the human characteristics. But the other creatures master their own characteristics automatically for which they need not to make any conscious-effort. Human beings are invested with twin characteristics, - humane and devilish. To arouse the second characteristics the humankind is not required to make any effort, but for the first one they need to strive persistently as otherwise they would be overwhelmed by animal passion that lie dormant in them. The subject-matter shall become clearer if excerpts of his observations are quoted here from his another article. In his nursery rhyme titled 'Chcheley Bhulano Chchara: EK' Rabindra Nath writes: 'On a closer observation there is nothing old as children. The human adults have undergone myriad of changes in the realm of culture, education over a long period of time. But children are still the same as they were thousands of years ago. That old unchangeable child is being born in this world though in an unbroken chain, the child is still fresh, bewildered, tender and sweet exactly in the same way when the child was born on the maiden day of his or her first appearance on this earth. The permanence of this newness owes its secret to the fact that nature was responsible for the creation of the baby while an adult human being is, in good measure, moulded by his or her own self.

The human baby is obviously eternally new and shall grow in the way the baby is raised. A Bengali child living in England shall get used to speaking in English instead of Bangla like a

child raised in animal kingdom shall pick up animal-language. The inner meaning of a self-made adult person is that the person has to attain his or her accomplishments through own efforts.

In the light of above discussion if we devote our thoughts for the welfare of our children's welfare that can only be achieved through right infusion of humane qualities in them. The more we are able to do that our society will become proportionately beautiful, noble and beneficent. It is true beyond doubt that human beings have to strive ceaselessly to attain humanity. Therefore we have to think to develop the minds of children in a way conducive to imbibe humane qualities. It is urgent therefore that their minds are cleansed of vices like hatred, jealousy etc. right from the beginning. Alongside higher cultural values, their minds must be freed from all kinds of superstitions to allow them unhindered development of scientific outlook. They have to be inspired with the ideals of liberalism, benevolence and sacrifice as against narrow-mindedness, selfishness and greedily consumerism. It should be greatly rewarding if elements such as honesty, devotion, sincerity, responsibility and dutifulness could be made part of their day-to-day life. Their minds have to be infused with the noble inspiration of love for all humanity irrespective of religion, caste and creed. Love and respect for motherland and mother-tongue need to be created in their minds as also for history and heritage-awareness. Their humanity shall attain full circle if their minds become respectful towards the labourers instead of people

welfare of greater humanity, his human-life may become more meaningful and attains greater immortality.

If viewed from this angle, the significance of the national children's day and its central message may become much more relevant. The great soul whose birthday has been dedicated to the children's day is the redoubtable champion of our liberation war and founder of the independent Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. He dedicated his entire life for the liberation of the Bangalee nation. Life was a trifle thing to him when he viewed the question of nation's rights and dignity and showed exceptional courage to defend his conviction even at the risk of his life. His genuine love for Bangalee nation was his perpetual source of inspiration and strength. This very feeling inspired him to risk his life, no matter what was the cost-for the sake of his motherland. For all such reasons, the Bangla Service of BBC, which is a neutral organisation honoured him by adjudging him to be the best Bangalee in thousand years through a world-wide listeners' survey.

If all such examples are presented to the children as lofty ideals, they surely will be motivated to dedicate their life to the cause of humanity. Not only one great life from our country, the life-histories of great leaders of other nations as well need to be presented to the children focusing the high-points of those lives so that our children may be imbued with the ideals of sacrifice eschewing consumerism, service to others instead of self-promotion and humanism shunning animal passion. It is imperative to present our children with the life-philosophies of world heroes who contributed to the progress of human civilisation and philosophical elucidation in order that the children may translate their examples in their own lives. To attain such a purpose, mere formalities without sincere effort would not be enough. We have to develop our society with moral values ignoring consumerism and lift the society to a new height of moral accomplishment and spiritual upliftment which should gain in ascendancy than economic betterment and service to humanity reaches the pinnacle in idealism.

Translation: Saeed Badrul Haque

O Great Life
Syed Shamsul Haq

Bright green, velvet green, gold dust covered green
O traveler of Bengal, if you want to see
The greenery of your dream-
Then come to Tungipara

Serene water, meditating water, suitable water
for the boat
O traveller, the water flowing to your future-
If you want to see then come to Tungipara

Soil full of grains, rock hard soil of Chaitra,
moist soil of Shravan
O traveller of Bengal, the soil of your birth
If you want to see then come to Tungipara

Towering man, enlightened man, learned man,
powerful voiced man
The man standing slay high
On the path of your history
If you want to see then come here once.

Here is weavy water, with green waves and green in
colour
The boat floating on water-the utterance of her
If you want to hear then give your ears:
Liberty! Independence!

O traveller if you have reached,
Say that you have come,
You have come to know that soul
Who has a red rose in his chest,
An eternal rose bloomed by his blood.

O man of Sunrise, O great life of Independence,
Your birthday is ours, so in this Independent Bengal,
All new borns' cradles sway back and forth
By your own dream hands.

Translation: Fatema Zohra Haque

Sindabad
Nirmalendu Goon

Fatherland has revived inside
I have also risen from
The deepest womb of Jamuna

As you have awoken me my lord,
Now you too wake up
You wake up again from ashes,
Fatherland has risen in Bangla
Your pride will no more be lost
In dust or neglect

Haven't yet you got time
To return my father?
Listen to that far away, in palace
Playing on celebrational tune in joyous mood
The monarch's mind rhythming Zindabad.

In Bangabhaban with illuminating light,
And whiff of tobacco in the air-
Will you not join the victory celebration
O father, Sindabad!

Translation: Fatema Zohra Haque