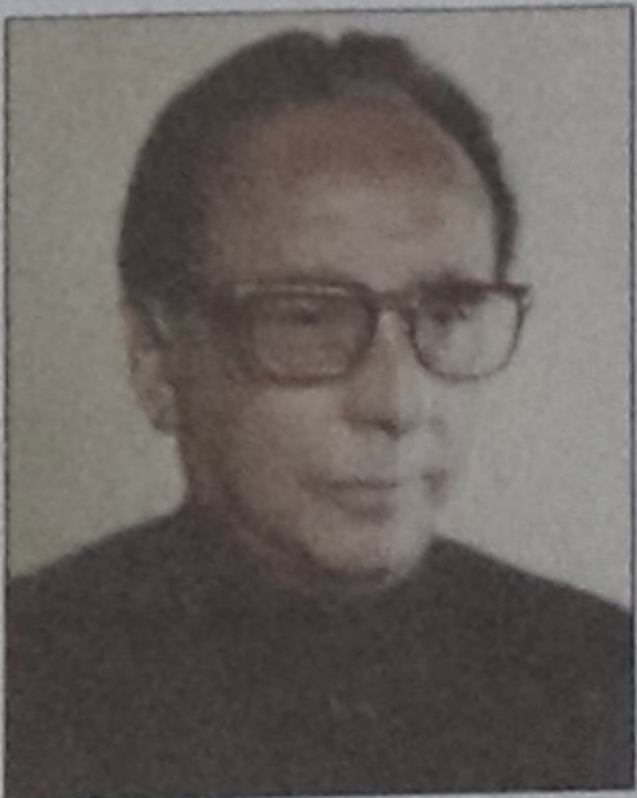



26 March 2009 Glorious Independence & National Day

Special Supplement

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



PRESIDENT
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH

Message

On the occasion of the great Independence and National Day, I convey my heartfelt greetings and felicitations to the countrymen living at home and abroad.

The historic Independence Day is a glorious day in our national life. We achieved our Independence through nine-month long armed struggle and immense sacrifices of lives. On this solemn day, I recall with utmost respect and pay my deep homage to the martyrs of the Liberation War who made supreme sacrifices for achieving the Independence in 1971. I pray for the salvation of those immortal souls.

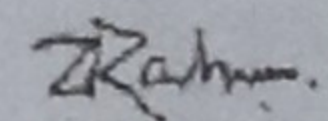
On this memorable day, I remember with profound respect the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who proclaimed country's Independence on March 26, 1971. Responding to his clarion call people from all walks of life participated in the War of Liberation and snatched the Independence. I also recall with deep respect the four National Leaders: valiant freedom-fighters and organizers who rendered their dedicated efforts and enthusiastic support that accelerated our great victory. The freedom fighters are regarded as the greatest sons of the soil and the supreme sacrifice of them would be ever remembered in the history of our independence.

One of the prime objectives of our hard-earned Independence was to build a happy and prosperous Bangladesh. Bangabandhu's cherished dream was to turn the country into 'Sonar Bangla' (Golden Bengal) which is yet to be fulfilled. Keeping that in mind, the Government has been rendering untiring efforts in materialising the objectives of Independence. With the span of time, we have achieved some significant progress both at national and international arena. Despite attaining the progress, we have to go a long way for attaining the cherished goals of Independence. I believe continued democratic process and united efforts from all are imperative in this regard.

It is a matter of satisfaction that the democracy is re-established and the People's Government has been formed through the ninth Parliament. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the daughter of Bangabandhu has declared the 'Charter for Change' vis-a-vis 'Vision-2021' for beaming at the common mass. I am confident, our country would be a happy and prosperous 'Sonar Bangla' through materialising the 'Vision-2021'-Inshallah.

On this great Independence Day, I urge all, living at home and abroad, to work unitedly imbued with the spirit of War of Liberation to expedite economic self-reliance and democratic advancement.

Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever


Md. Zillur Rahman

Expectation from the Liberation War and the Reality

Lt. Gen. M. Harun-Ar-Rashid Bir Pratik (Retired)

For any nation freedom achieved through a liberation war is a glorious event. Bangladesh stands out uniquely amongst a few nations in the world who have won freedom through a bloody war. I am much honoured for being able to take part in such a war. I express my unbounded gratitude to our great creator for affording me such an opportunity.

I joined the Pakistan Army as commissioned officer toward the end of 1970. I was transferred to the Fourth Battalion of the East Bengal Regiment at the Comilla Cantonment. During the 1970 election period, I got the opportunity to visit different voting centres of the then greater Comilla in East Pakistan under the Comilla Brigade Commander because of my background as the Liaison officer of the Brigade Commander at the Headquarters. The high-ups in the Pakistan Army thought the Awami League led by Sheikh Mujib might be able to obtain majority in East Pakistan but might not in whole Pakistan in the general election. But the election result was contrary to their expectation. Awami League had won absolute majority in the election. After the election they totally changed their behavioural pattern, facial expression and even utterances. They told quite openly that under no circumstances power could be handed over to Awami League. Their words were so vivid that young in age and junior-most officers we were though, we had no difficulty to understand their mind.

Conspiracies were on in so many ways about how to deny power to Awami League. East Bengal Regiment of East Pakistan was divided into four units, First Battalion at Jessore; Second Battalion at Joydevpur, Dhaka; Third Battalion at Rangpur and Fourth Battalion at Comilla. Besides, a portion of Eighth East Bengal Regiment, situated in Halishahar of Chittagong was on wait to go to Pakistan. Chittagong was the centre of East Bengal Regiment. West Pakistanis considered East Bengal Regiment an obstacle in implementing their design. As part of their plan, they divided the East Bengal Regiment into small groups and sent them outside the Cantonment with different assignments. The Fourth Battalion was also divided in several small groups and posted in areas stretching from Jangalia of south Comilla to Salutar airport in Sylhet. Giving reasons for such arrangement it was said that 'intelligence sources had informed them that some armed infiltrators had entered into the country forcibly from our neighbouring country, India'. The Fourth Battalion was tasked to identify and annihilate the enemy located from Kasba to Sylhet. To accomplish this job along with my Company 'D', another Company 'C' was sent to Brahmanbaria toward the end of February from Comilla Cantonment. Major Shafayet Jamil (later Colonel and Bir Bikram) was the head of the 'C' Company and Major Sadek Nawaz, a Pakistani Officer was the head of the 'D' Company. The remaining soldiers of the Fourth East Bengal Regiment were divided in small groups and posted at

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Endeavour of a Life-Time

B K Jahangir

It was the life-time endeavor of Bangabandhu to craft a definition of the Nation-a definition which was different from that of Pakistan. While the definition of Pakistan nationalism was ethnic, Bangabandhu envisaged nationalism based on ideology and experience. The foundation of Pakistani nationality was based on ethnicity and religion. On the contrary, Bangabandhu's idea of nationality was based on political experience. This nationalism centers around two elements. The first one is built on identifying Pakistan nationalism. The second element is built on rejecting Pakistan nationalism through the creation of an alternative nationalism.

The foundation of Pakistan's nationalism is ethnicity which is based on Islam. Pakistan's ethnicity is of singular character and its opposite singular character is 'Bengali Ethnicity'. This means the ethnic population is subordinate to the framework of Pakistan State and is inhabitant of the internal colony of Pakistan State. Whereas the foundation of Pakistan ethnicity is "pure" Islam, the foundation of Bengali Muslim ethnicity within the internal colony is "impure" Islam. The foundation of Hindu ethnicity is "idolatry". The rest of population is devoid of "true" religion.

A racial and religious nationalism evolved out of this experience of superiority of Pakistan nationalism. This nationalism on the one hand is racial, on the other hand, it is religious. These two elements have made Pakistan nationalism militant. The experience of this militant racial and religious nationalism in East Bengal/ East Pakistan/Bangladesh is heartless and cruel. Bangladesh in the context the experience of the people of East Bengal/ East Pakistan/ Bangladesh was inspired by a sense of a secular nation. He and his near and distant companions from Moulana Bhasani to Tajuddin Ahmed, from Muzaffar Ahmed to Moni Singh, from Ranesh Das Gupta to Joynul Abedin, from Rehman Sobhan to Anisur Rahman- all found unlimited possibility of freedom out of this sense of nationalism.



This awareness is an answer to Hindu communalism and Muslim communalism in pre partition India. It is at the same time a protest against fundamentalist tendencies in post partition India.

Out of this perception, it is as much possible to build a separate distinct nation as it is possible to create radical modernism in South Asia out of this concept of

nationhood. India is endowed with a very old tradition. Burdened with Muslim distinctive identity, Pakistan is militant. On the other hand Bengali nationalism is free from the old tradition of Hindu glorification of Indian nationalism. It is also free from extremism of Pakistan nationalism. The tribal, the Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Christians who have been living for generations in a politically ideological and geographical East Bengal have left a historic tradition. For ordinary people of this region the traditional values of people are precious.

In colonial days during the time of creation of a sense of nationhood, the seeds of populism were sown. In the political address, thinking and writings of Bangabandhu, and his associates, the peasant society and agriculture questions have come up again and again. This populism is affected by a sense of sadness. The economic hardship and distress of farmers was exacerbated by Pakistan capitalism. The peasants, chiefly the jute growers were deprived of fair price of their produce. The peasants were ousted from their land. The meaning of ruin of peasants was to reduce the foundation of nationalism and community to instability. This contributed to the potential of a bright future of populism. The aim of nationalism based on agriculture and peasants was to solve the problem of agriculture and peasants. It was not possible to solve the problem of agriculture and peasants in a frame work of colonial Pakistan state. Hence was the rejection of colonial state. It was possible to build alternative nationalism by resisting powerful capitalism in support of a colonial state. Similarly the central foundation of economic programmes of alternative nationalism was to seek urgent solution of questions of agriculture and peasants. Unless these are done, it is

Freedom and Democracy

Syed Manzoorul Islam

When the Pakistani Army launched their cowardly attack on the people of Bangladesh on the night of 25 March 1971, there was no scope for anyone to build up resistance against them. The police at Dhaka's Rajarbag and the EPR forces at Pikhana did make a counter-attack as they had some arms in their possession; but it was not possible to sustain this counter-attack for long against a well-equipped army ready for all-out war. On one side, there was an armed barbaric force and on the other side there were unarmed civilians who had gone to sleep after finishing their day's work, as on other days, on the eventful night of 25 March. Not a single bullet was fired at the enemy from the Dhaka University campus, which had been the centre of Bengalee people's struggle against Pakistani colonial rule since 1948, where students had hit the roads from the very beginning of March 1971 in support of independence and had flown the flag of Bangladesh from atop a building. Although this fact may appear surprising, its inner meaning was important: the independence struggle of the Bengalees was non-violent from the very inception. That our struggle was non-violent showed that a major attribute of the Bengalee psyche was its peace-loving nature. Because of the non-violent character of our struggle, we received swift support from the outside world. Many world-famous personalities and organizations expressed their moral empathy for us. But when the liberation war commenced, this peace-loving nation became irresistible and fearless. The Pakistanis could not recognize this co-existence of fire and water, spark and flower in the Bengalee ethos. The military leaders and politicians of Pakistan used to reckon us very lowly. In their eyes, we were like subjects. They did not expect anything from us except submission. They observed this capitulation among some individuals, politicians and bureaucrats, who were their slaves and sycophants. During the nine months of 1971, the members of the Razakar-Al-Badr Forces saluted the feudal attitude of the Pakistanis by acknowledging them as their masters. But the Pakistanis knew from the start that the conscious people of the country, students, workers and peasants

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



PRIME MINISTER
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH



Message

Today is the 26th March, the great Independence and National Day. At the very first hour on this day in 1971, the greatest Bengalee of thousand years, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman proclaimed the independence of Bangladesh. Under his undaunted leadership, the independence of our beloved motherland, Bangladesh was achieved through a 9-month bloody war and supreme sacrifices of 3 million martyrs, agonies of two lakh women and sufferings of millions of people.

On this memorable day, I pay my deep respect to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives during the War of Liberation. I recall with deep gratitude the greatest hero of our national freedom struggle, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I pay tributes to the four national leaders and the valiant freedom fighters. I recall with deep gratitude those who lost their near and dear ones, who were subjected to inhuman torture and repression, and the freedom-seeking people in achieving the independent and sovereign Bangladesh. I also recall the overt and covert support and cooperation of the friendly foreign countries and their citizens in attaining our long-cherished independence.

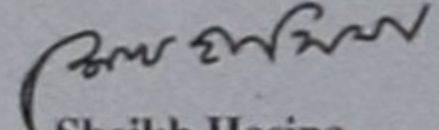
On the occasion of the great Independence and National Day, I convey my best wishes and congratulations to the countrymen as well as all Bengalees living abroad.

On the eve of the Independence Day, I call upon the countrymen to remain alert against the concerted evil activities of the anti-liberation, communal, autocratic and identified reactionary forces. The anti-liberation forces are still desperate to nudge their claws aiming at shedding blood. Like the past, they are still engaged in plotting designs and hatching conspiracies to obstruct the national progress and advancement. I urge the people to get united to resist their evil acts.

The Independence earned through the bloody war is the noblest achievement in our national history. The spirit of Liberation War would have to be spread everywhere to make this glorious achievement meaningful and sustainable. Equally important is to ensure justice, good-governance and higher living standard for our people. To achieve the objective, we have to work with highest sincerity and honesty being imbued with the spirit of Liberation War and patriotism.

Our government is committed to establishing the values of the Liberation War and fulfilling the election pledges. We are also committed to building a 'Golden Bengal' free from poverty, hunger and illiteracy as dreamt by Bangabandhu. Retaining the true history of the War of Liberation in your hearts, we would have to go ahead to achieve the objective of 'change' through building a Bangladesh free from corruption, mal-governance, terrorism, hunger and poverty.

I am looking forward to see that the spirit of the great Independence and National Day is reflected in our all activities.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever

Sheikh Hasina

not possible to build the political and economic foundation of nationalism.

Without solving the land issue, the construction of alternative nationalism is meaningless. This is why Bangabandhu and his associates brought this issue before their agenda and they all confronted this question from all sides. During the colonial Pakistan regime, the peasant movement (from the tribal peasant to Hindu Muslim peasant was involved in this movement) wanted to solve the question about relationship of different kinds of peasants with land, the relationship of land and peasants with the State. The peasant movement, the issue of agriculture, the relationship of land with different kinds of peasants and the state played a significant role in building nationalism. Out of this expanded peasant movement was born a sense of secularism in the field of politics and economics. An active sense of secularism has been strengthened from the language movement. The use of language is a secular activity overcoming the difference of religions. The multi-faceted leadership strengthened this consciousness in their various political, economic and cultural fields in order to be able to harness its enormous possibilities to build nationalism from movement to movement. The centre piece of nationalism formulated by Bangabandhu is secularism. This awareness of secularism was encouraged by resistance to Pakistan colonialism. The internal colonialism exploited and oppressed and humiliated former East Bengal/East Pakistan. This exploitation is the result of capitalist oppression. So Bangabandhu and his associates analysed and enquired into the diverse manifestation of Pakistan capitalist exploitation and subjugation. They came to the conclusion that it was not possible to build nationalism in a state of exploitation, it was not possible to achieve the glory of nationalism in a sustained state of subordination. The alternative nationalism is free and exclusive of exploitation and subjugation. The objective of their attack was capitalism and Pakistan state, symbol of administration of subordination. In the address of Bangabandhu, Moulana Bhasani, Tajuddin Ahmed, Moni Singh, Muzaffar Ahmed, in the economic and social thinking of Ranesh Das Gupta and Joinal Abedin, in the economic thoughts of Rehman Sobhan and Anisur Rahman, the role of community has received recognition as the cornerstone of nationalism in their political project. Included in this project, are the tribal, /peasants/gender/ethnic nation communities. This is why community has been used as an equivalent of nationalism and the community is moral community which is above class divisions and existing property-based relationship.

During the colonial days the struggle to establish a secular community to replace a capitalist structure and fundamentalist ideology gave the movement for Bangladesh a distinctive character. This is why it is important to identify distinctive identity of Bangladesh project. Indian nationalists consider the Bangladesh project as an extension of Indian nationalism. The Pakistani ideologists consider Bangladesh project as an initiative to destroy Muslim separate identity. Both these thoughts are wrong. Therefore, it is urgently essential to analyse the political and economic background and space in order to arrive at a political definition of the nation envisioned by Bangabandhu.

Translation: Abdul Hannan

