FROM PAGE 10

The frequent quote from this short historical speech in defining democracy is, "*that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.*"

In our context, the speech that changed the history of the land is the legendary speech of Bangabandhu delivered on March 7, 1971 at Race Course Maidan (Suhrawardy Udyan) in the presence of millions of freedom loving people. "*Ebarer sangram, swadhinotar sangram, ebarer sangram, muktir sangram*" (The struggle this time is a struggle for emancipation. The struggle this time is a struggle for independence.), "*Protyek ghoree ghoree durga goree tolo--tomader jaar ja kichhu ache, tai niee shatrur mokabela korte hobee*" (turn every house into a fortress, resist the enemy with everything you have), "*Rokto jakhon diechhi, rokto aro dibo, e-desher manushke mukto kore chharbo inshallah*" (Having mastered the lesson of sacrifice, we shall give more blood. God willing, we will free the people of this land.), these quotes from the speech were not mere expressions of heartfelt emotions of freedom seeking Bengalis at that historical turning point, rather these acted as more than deadly weapons targeted at the Pakistani occupying armies. In fact, in 1971 this address united the whole nation with the spirit of the Liberation War. People of all walks of life became freedom fighters in one way or another. Some actively joined the war, and millions, though they did not directly take part in the war, gave moral supports to our war of liberation. These people were, in fact, silent freedom fighters, among whom many sacrificed their lives, wealth, and efforts for the great cause.

The members of the generation who were mere children during the liberation war and who finished their major parts of their schooling in the post 1975 era and the generation afterwards, in general, are utterly failed to appreciate the significance of this historical speech. Whereas, the young generation of America after about 150 years of Gettysburg address still upholds the essence of Lincoln's famous address when they look back to its national history. To unveil the causes behind this failure on part of our young generation, we need to shed light on the August 15, 1975, the blackest day of our national history.

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