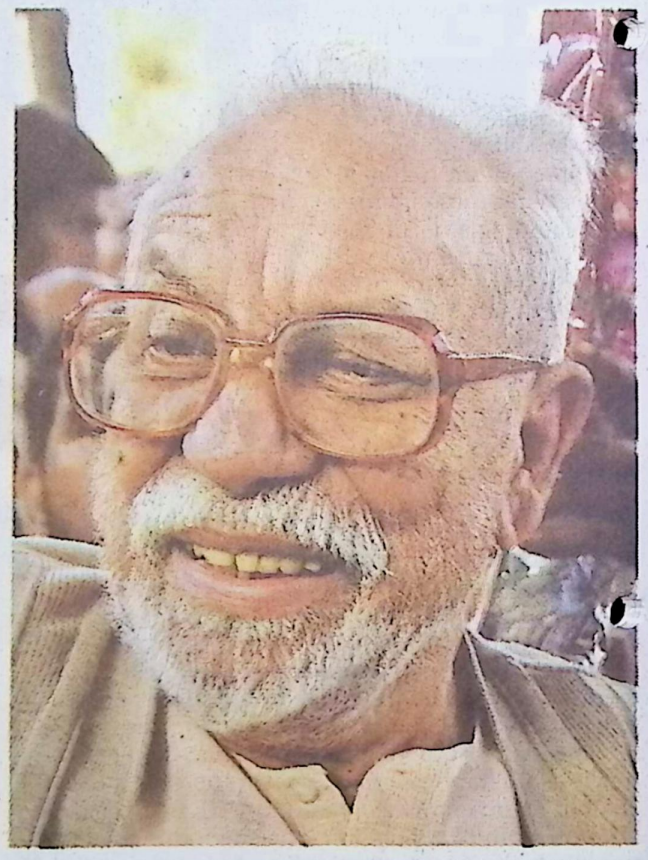
Gaziul Haque and those beautiful times

SYED BADRUL AHSAN

It was in the early 1970s, soon after the liberation of Bangladesh, that I first spotted Gaziul Haque. He was leaning on the balcony of a house in Malibagh, looking out on to the street below. It was the road that had at one end Mouchak market and at the other the under-construction Bangladesh Television centre in Rampura. As a newly enrolled student at Notre Dame College, I walked past that house everyday, which is to say that it was often that I saw Gaziul Haque, wearing a smile that highlighted the radiance in his bearings, on that balcony. I knew he was an important man, that he had something to do with politics. But it was the details that I did not know, those that related to his association with the Language Movement of 1952. And I did not have the courage to go and talk to him about it. A college student had no business walking up to a famous individual and asking him questions about the reasons behind his fame.

And so the years passed. I went on hearing about Gaziul Haque in the newspapers, reading about him and reading what he had to say about politics and culture. It was not until the early 1990s, though, that I actually came in touch with him. And that was when Sheikh Hasina, then leader of the opposition in the Jatiyo Sangsad, decided that the newly set up Bangabandhu Memorial Museum needed to have its various sections lined with photographs relating to the crucial moments in Bangabandhu's life. A committee was formed and on that committee Gaziul Haque and I were members. There were some other individuals there as well. Over a number of weeks stretching into quite a few months, we sifted through the innumerable albums that bore diverse images of Bangabandhu and his family. We would sit in Bangabandhu's library; and then there were the times when we pored over the photographs in the room where Sheikh Kamal once lived. Those were sad moments, for none of us could brush away, even for a moment, the thought that in that very house the



Bhasha Shoinik Gaziul Haque

Father of the Nation and much of his family had lost their lives at the hands of a murderous group of soldiers.

It was in those moments that Gaziul Haque took us all back to the past, relating to us stories of a young Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, of his courage and