

Special Supplement

National Mourning Day 2009

Saturday, 15 August

(Continued)

The Greatest Speech of the Greatest Bangalee

speech is setting an agenda, which was repeatedly done by Bangabandhu's speech. The following part of his address shows that there was no change in his humanitarian approach even while announcing tough programmes:

"I want to pronounce clearly that the courts, offices, criminal courts and educational institutions will remain closed from today indefinitely. Other items will remain outside the purview of the strike, so that the poor don't suffer and my people do not endure hardship. Rickshaws, horse-drawn carriages, trains and launches will run; only the Secretariat, Supreme Court, High Court, Judge Court, semi-government offices like WAPDA shall not operate."

Status conferral function with regard to individuals and events is an important aspect of mass communication. Application of this premise could be observed in various parts of Bangabandhu's address. He said for example, "And

he could hook the audience to the speech with a high degree of efficiency by applying the art and techniques of communication theory.

The modern communication theorists say that the decisive part of a speech should generally be pronounced towards the end. The last sentence of Bangabandhu's 7 March speech, "The struggle this time is for emancipation! The struggle this time is for independence!" was effectively a declaration of independence expressed with a firm resolve, which had in fact defined the speech. The way he concluded the speech tallied exactly with the text-books of communication theory. It is said, "don't drag out your conclusion." We often use words like "In conclusion" or "We must say one thing" while concluding a speech. But Bangabandhu directly entered the 'speech definition' in his historic address - through an appropriate application of communication theory, which was quite unthinkable 38 years ago.

In his address delivered on 4 June 1940, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill had said: "We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills, we shall never surrender." Here, 'we shall fight' was the definition of that speech.

timeliness of this speech, which contained the directives and declaration of the liberation war in Bangabandhu's own voice, has remained a gold-mine for researchers. The manner in which this address had invigorated and indoctrinated the Bangladeshis with the mantra of liberty added a new chapter in the annals of speeches. This historic address is considered to be a compulsory text at home and abroad by the experts of public speeches, researchers and communication theorists. A polished and clear presentation on our day-to-day perceptions and idealistic position is a key premise for public addresses.

In this context, a quotation by Dale Carnegie can be recalled here. He said, "The best argument is one, which seems merely an explanation." A lucid and detailed explanation about the events unfolding at the time made this speech withstand the test of logic for all times to come.

Although the historic 7 March speech was an extempore one, what was noticeable about it was that annoying repetitions and hesitations in framing words as observed in such speeches were totally absent. It was possible for Bangabandhu alone to deliver such an unostentatious, direction-giving, poetic speech without any break and without taking any help from notes while standing in the middle of a sea of people. That is why, the international periodical 'Newsweek' termed Bangabandhu as a 'Poet of Politics' in the cover story of its 5 April 1971 issue. This speech was literally a revolution - which culminated in our liberation war and

In Memory, Remembrance and Respect



those labourer brothers who had joined this 7-day strike, industry owners will reach them their salary," or, "And those people who were martyred or sustained injury, we shall try to help them as much as we can on behalf of the Awami League."

The need for posing a challenge for obtaining effective results in public addresses and mass communication is well-known. When Bangabandhu said towards the end of his speech, "Set up action committees under the leadership of Awami League in all villages and townships, and remain prepared with whatever you have. Remember, since we have learnt to give blood, we shall give more of it - we shall free the people of this land by the grace of Allah," it showed that

Similarly, when Martin Luther King delivered his historic address on 28 August 1963, the definition part of his speech was "I have a dream." A portion of that address was as follows:

"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character."

We know that powerful speeches are always short. The fiery and ground-breaking address of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivered on 7 March 1971 is the best example of this genre. A speech that could inspire an entire nation to join the liberation war was a rare event in history. Analysis of the importance, significance and

freedom. Such spectacular application of words was truly an amazing event.

An analysis of the application of words by Bangabandhu reminds us of the famous quotation by the third President of the United States Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826): "The most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do." This 7 March address of 1971 was not only the greatest speech in Bengali language, it is one of the best in the entire world. This is because, this speech was simultaneously the declaration of our independence and the inspiration of our liberation war.

This speech will continue to rekindle the Bangalee nation with a spark of fire, show the path of realizing the mundane truths and provide political direction to emancipation of the Bangalee people.

Translation: Helal Uddin Ahmed

(Continued)

In Remembrance of Bangabandhu Father of the Nation

world beyond measure. Even today, the hearts of each and every Bangalee are heavy with bewilderment, sorrow and shock that were inflicted on that fateful day. It surely would take a very long time to unveil the mystery of the self-confessed killers and the estranged retired soldiers of the Bangladesh Army who captured Bangabandhu, and brought the murderer, - the synonym for Mirazafar, - Khondokar Mushtaq to power, how the three army chiefs had expressed their allegiance to that illegal government of Khondokar Mushtaq, how those killers could enter into the jail and brush-fired the four national leaders on November 3 despite our national jail administration was functional and why the former Prime Minister decided to observe the mourning day, August 15 as her birthday to celebrate although the school record and passport bear two different birth dates.

He never retreated from leadership in his struggle to secure the rights and freedom of his people. After 1958, many influential leaders of east and west Pakistan surrendered to the dictator Ayub Khan and gave undertaking pledging never to return to politics. History testifies it was Sheikh Mujib alone among the politicians who firmly refused to give up politics. Undaunted, he told Ayub's supporters, "I am in politics to serve the cause of the people. This was not an offence. The question to give up politics does not arise." General Ayub possibly could realise that this was the voice to stand against the misuse of Pakistan (former West Pakistan) and against indiscriminate exploitation, oppression and injustice that were being done to the Bangladeshis of East Bengal. Ayub made no mistake to know Sheikh Mujib. Later, when even after suffering oppressions including imprisonment, Sheikh Mujib declared in 1966 at Lahore, the historic Six Point Charter or Magna Carta for Bangladesh. Ayub Khan angrily said: "Reply shall be given" (re: six point) not in words but by weapons. Later the fall of Ayub Khan amply proved in 1969 that non-violent democratic movement was far more effective and forceful than weapons.

Ayub Khan's successors were in the league to turn East Bengal into their colony for economic exploitation and persecution and was experimenting the power of weapons through a genocide that was started at 12 midnight on 25th March, 1971 on the unarmed civil population who were in deep sleep at that hour of the night. Apprehending their machinations, Bangabandhu declared independence of Bangladesh in the first hour of 26 March night. He declared Bangladesh as an independent sovereign country, severed all connections with the ruling aggressor country, Pakistan. Bangabandhu's declaration reads: This may be my last message. From to-day, Bangladesh is independent. I call upon the people of Bangladesh wherever you might be and you are to resist the occupation army to the last with whatever you have. Your fight must go on until the last soldier of Pakistan occupation army is expelled from the soil of Bangladesh. Final Victory is ours.

In records of America, this declaration of independence has been preserved. This message sent through transmitter was first read by Awami League leader, Abdul Hannan from Chittagong Radio Station. This was followed by Director, Radio Abul Kasem Sandwip. On that very night (midnight 26 March) Pakistani soldiers arrested Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and sent him quickly to Pakistan. A political party with a credential of Islamic revivalism and almost with a Pakistani mentality embarked upon a futile propaganda exercise to make Bangabandhu's declaration of independence controversial.

Independence is a peaceful, creative nation with a heritage of thousand years. Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan, Hamid Khan, Mitha Khan and Tikka Khan thought they could finish the strength of their (Bangalees) soul by using their weapons and subjugate them for all time.

But their mischievous attempt did not succeed. Although after March 25, the Bangladeshis were taken back at the scale of barbarity, mass-killing and inhuman oppression the Pakistani Army had unleashed on them and felt somewhat helpless. The Bangladeshis however, had in no time built up a nation-wide resistance against them. With Bangabandhu as President, the exile Mujibnagar government was formed under the premiership of Tajuddin Ahmad in the mango-orchard at Meherpur on 17th April. The Bangladeshis drew their

strength from the all-inspiring speech that Bangabandhu had delivered at the Suhrawardy Uddyan on 7th March (1971). Raising his finger, he told the Pakistanis, "Remember when we have spilled blood, we shall give more of it. Insha Allah, we shall secure freedom for our country." In his speech he further said 'Build fortresses in each and every home. (If attacked) With whatever you have, you must confront the enemy'.

At leader's behest and his inspiring words, the Bangladeshis had acted accordingly throughout the 9-month long Liberation War period. The united Bangladeshis proved at a cost of 30 lakh lives that they were prepared to shed further any amount of blood if needed to sever all links with the Pakistani rule. The sacrifice our people made so unhesitatingly to the cause of our liberation amply proved the justness of those famous words of Bangabandhu: 'None can suppress the Bangladeshis'. Truly, the freedom-loving Bangladeshis could never be kept under subjugation. They defeated the Pakistani soldiers both in the guerrilla and frontal wars. Under the leadership of Bangabandhu, the Bangladeshis gave a befitting reply to the war of weapons that was launched by Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan and Tikka Khan. The Pakistani soldiers whom the Pakistanis billed to be the best fighting force in the world were critically locked with the Allied Force comprising of the freedom-fighters and soldiers of the friendly country, India in the 9-month long war. Late MR Akhtar Mukul sarcastically used to call them 'big-sized' Pakistani soldiers. The utterly frustrated, shattered and defeated Pakistani Army was compelled to surrender to the Allied Force on December 16, 1971.

This was how Bangabandhu's Sonar Bangla emerged as an independent sovereign nation. On January 10, 1972 when Bangabandhu after his release from Pakistani prison returned to his homeland, the hearts of each and every Bangalee were filled with pride and unprecedented joy. They felt all their sorrows, if any they had after independence, had now melted in the air, whatever inadequacies they had were now fulfilled. On January 10, the joyous people rented the sky with blank rifle and gun shots. That was how the Bangladeshis gave their dear leader a heroic and heart-felt welcome on his return to 'Sonar Bangla'.

In this limited space, it is not possible to dwell elaborately on many characteristics of his personality like his unwavering firmness, passionate yearning for peoples' politics, love for people and generosity of his large heart and many such other virtues. It too is not possible to give details of sacrifices he made to the cause of Bangladesh and for her people. It had been his constant endeavor to protect people from the evil designs of the highly ambitious military men, palace cliques and machinations of the civil-military nexus to usurp power and to keep democracy firmly on track.

Soon after the declaration of Six Point Charter of Demands at Lahore in 1966 and the nightmare of the 25th March of 1971 the Bangalee nation literally had transformed themselves into one family. Under Bangabandhu's leadership and directives the Bangalee nation united as a single family fought the Pakistani marauding soldiers. True, there were some quittings and enemies of the Bangalee nation. They were the collaborators and advisers of the Pakistan army. They were responsible for many cruel killings that happened during the liberation war period. Since the general election of 1970, the entire East Bengal was in reality had turned into Bangladesh of Sheikh Mujib, Bangladesh of Bangabandhu. The slogan that rented the air was 'One Leader, One Country, Bangabandhu's Bangladesh'. This was not just a slogan. This was a statement coming from the depth of hearts of the people.

Bangladesh is Bangabandhu's land of his love, of his devotion. Annada sankar in his rhyme said "As long as the Padma, Meghna, Gouri Jamuna flows on / Your accomplishment will also live on, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman". That Annadasankar did not exaggerate a little can be found from the following events.

There were many events in Bangabandhu's eventful life that are historic and merit mention. For they contribute to Bangladesh's thinking and welfare and also are reinvigorating to our development strides. Due to space constraint, I, however, refrain from writing them. I have only one question to ask: Was there any Bangalee leader in thousand years who had said, 'My Bangalee, My Bangladesh'. Surely there were notable leaders like Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Deshbandhu Chitta Ranjan Das, Shere-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Huq, Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy, Moulana Bhashani who gave valuable leadership to the Bangalee people. Despite this, I would say with due respect to those great leaders that none of them could get into the hearts of the Bangladeshis and Bangalees so intimately like Bangabandhu. On 10th January, 1972 while wiping out his tears at a public gathering held to mark his home-coming, Bangabandhu said that his Bangalee people had falsified poet Tagore's concern about the accomplishment of the Bangladeshis. The Bangladeshis have now come up so well. Bangabandhu had said, 'My Bangladesh'. Bangabandhu and Bangladesh merged into one.

To-day is 15th August. I pay my deepest respect to his holy memory. May Almighty Allah grant peace to souls who embraced martyrdom on this day. Bangabandhu has become a shahed but he lives eternally in the hearts of all Bangladeshis.

Translation: Syed Badrul Haque

(Continued) Bangabandhu and Bangladesh

sacrificing Awami Leaguers in the nooks and corners of Bangladesh, who did not leave the party despite becoming destitute. The leaders, however, do not keep track of them. Besides, Sheikh Mujib had such individuals as his companions, without whose help he might not have achieved his cherished goal. As a result, the Awami League became bigger, expanded after the 6-point movement and simultaneously Sheikh Mujib became the undisputed leader of the masses.

He also had tremendous self-confidence and courage. The blossoming of the party had also raised his confidence in himself as well as the people. That was why he could transform the 6-points into a 1-point. And this was his unclear vision or dream. That he was unwavering on the question of this objective and had the necessary courage and confidence for materialising this dream were highlighted during the Agartala conspiracy trial. Fayed Ahmed had written about an incident during this trial. He was sitting beside the main accused Sheikh Mujib. They were not allowed to talk inside the court.

Sheikh Mujib tried to draw the attention of Fayed Ahmed a number of times in order to say something.

Fayed Ahmed said, "Mujib Bhai, conversations are not allowed. I can't turn my head. They will throw me out." A loud reply came forthwith, "Fayed, one has to talk to Sheikh Mujib if he wants to stay in Bangladesh." -----He did not know then that this symbolic utterance by Sheikh Mujib was not meant for any individual person; it was a message for the entire people of a country, which could ignite fire.

Sheikh Mujib returned to the Bangladesh of his dream in 1972. Now his role was not that of a waver of movements. Rather, he played his part in materialising the dream of a Golden Bangla. He worked tirelessly with that objective in mind until 15 August 1975. Reconstruction of the country was in full swing and the Constitution was already framed by that time.

The biggest achievement of Bangabandhu and the then Awami League government was to endow the country with a Constitution. I do not know whether there is any other example of a country where it was possible to provide a Constitution so swiftly in the aftermath of such a bloody war. The four core principles of the state were proclaimed through this Constitution, which could have been termed as radical in the context of the then realities. These were: Democracy, Socialism, Secularism and Nationalism. These principles in fact contained those very ideals for which the liberation war was fought. This was especially true of secularism. That is why the military generals had at the very outset struck at these core principles, especially secularism. Besides, the Constitution described the social, economic and political rights of citizens and the philosophy of the state. In other words, it indicated that the liberation war was waged for establishing a civil society in place of a military-dominated one. The 1972 Constitution had incorporated the necessary institutions for a civil society; it firmly strove to lay the foundation for a vibrant civil society in Bangladesh.

In this context, Bangabandhu had said in one of his speeches: "I do not know whether democracy was initiated immediately after a bloody revolution in any country of the world. ----- Elections have been organised. The right of vote has been expanded in scope by lowering the voting age from 21 to 18. Bangladesh's own aeroplanes are now flying in the skies of different countries; a fleet of commercial ships has also been launched. The BDR is now guarding the borders. The ground forces are ready to repel any attack on the motherland. Our own navy and air-force are now operational. The police force and thanas have been rebuilt, 70 percent of which were destroyed by the Pakistanis. A 'National Rakhi Bani' has been raised. You are now the owners of 60 percent of mills and factories. Taxes for up to 25 bighas of land have been exempted. We do not believe in the policy of vengeance and revenge. Therefore, general amnesty has been declared for those who were accused and convicted under the Collaborators' Act for opposing the liberation war." But the people were not inclined to appreciate the framing of Constitution, its principles, and the successes of Sheikh Mujib due to rising price of essentials and the law and order situation.

Not only was Bangabandhu killed along with his family, the husband of his sister Abdur Rab Serniabat and his nephew (sister's son) Sheikh Moni were also killed along with their family members. It was quite apparent that intense hatred had worked behind this; otherwise this kind of brutality could not have been carried out in cold blood. The assumption that if any of the family members survived, then he would come forward to provide leadership was also at work. That this assumption was not unfounded has been proved subsequently.

Bangabandhu's two daughters Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana survived as they were staying abroad. Later, Sheikh Hasina became the leader of the Awami League and is now once again waging a struggle to reinforce the civil society.

Pair of Shoes are Lying on Grass Rafique Azad

Pair of shoes are lying on grass
Without its owner.
Shoes are on the grass - a pair of shoes on green grass.
The pair of shoes lying on this greenness.
The abandoned shoes are lying on the grass
Without its owner.
All people with Lilliputian legs
Want to wear these shoes!
How is it possible
How will these shoes match in their legs!
All are dwarfs, groups of dwarf tried.
tried but failed.
Don't you know the measurement of brave leg?
Pair of shoes are lying on grass
Without its owner.
None can ever wear this pair of shoes.

Translation: Fatema Zohra Haque

Back From Tungipara Mohammad Rafiq

The blue space the infinity around
Trembles with
The astounding voice of ancient soul
The soil erosion step by step
The melancholic frame comes out
From an age-old stones slab.
Fire in everywhere
Who has seen such miracle
Floral carriage,
Shattered lives filled with dark stains
Celebrations of death with gloom
Independence.
One voice eternal tune
One country amidst turbulence of deep sea
Floating aimlessly,
Silent, serene, incorporeal
Grief stricken soul groans from the grave,
When he cries tears fall down
From Hijol's leaves
In ever longingness,
Whose another name is patience
Who chants holocaust in war from the soil,
This war is in the light of liberty
Will be eternal eroded in breeze!

Translation: Fatema Zohra Haque

The Sovereign Forefinger Mohammad Nurul Huda

Growing out of the alluvial currents of the Aryans and non-Aryans,
Blended in the estuary of Bangalee mind,
Across the basin of the Ganges, the Padma, the Brahmaputra
And thousands of rivers flowing,
The primitive clans growing in herds in the fertile fraternity of diverse
seeds,
You are the index of that harvest, the bliss of that origin,
You are the human flag celebrating that gregarious living:
Father, you are the meeting ground of paddy and grass, fields of grains,
Men and women, tillers and workmen befitting the ground,
Bird-language of Bong tribe, love making among the clans, their
natural smile!
The language war of Fifty-two, the liberation war of Seventy-one,
The unconquerable martyrs and victors, the true offspring of this soil
The Declaration of Independence originated from your forefinger
That signaled the war preparation in every house along with the
message of revolution,
Weapons rose to every hand, freedom fighters emerged,
And they expunged the disgrace of our cowardice.
Yet the killers wait in ambush, hiding close to entrance, in shadows, in
illusions,
Trying to rob us of our possessions stretching their paws in our
unguarded moments.
The invading assassins and their pet natives, the professional associates
of darkness,
Who shot at the heart of father of this nation,
The abode and grave of those heinous killers shall no more remain
In the earth and sky, in the shoal and seas of this vast Bengal -
The self-confessed killers must be banished forever from this land of
ours.
The genuine progeny of Bengal are the true vanguard of this nation-
state,
This mother country, the father of this nation -
The image of your fatherhood is engraved in every seed,
In every whirl and bend of time eternal.
Victory to all
It's you who have conquered all fears, you are the boon and blessing
for your posterity.
O the sovereign forefinger, you are the independence, you are the
Bangladesh we inherit,
You are the war of liberation embedded
in the heart of every fearless Bangalee during any hour of crisis;
The Bangladeshis do remember their birth, you are their triumphant
celebration,
The proud banner of victory of the Bangladeshis for all times to come.

It is clear from the manner in which the Bangabandhu family was assassinated that there were local and international conspiracies and a long time was spent for planning it. The conspirators took risks and that risk-taking paid off. A faction of the Awami League led by Khandakar Mostaque was involved in it. It can be cited as evidence that it was during Mostaque's rule that the four Awami League and national leaders Tajuddin Ahmed, Syed Nazrul Islam, Mansur Ali and Kamruzzaman were killed inside the central jail on 3 November 1975. Saudi Arabia and China recognised Bangladesh immediately after Khandakar Mostaque came to power. Relationships with Pakistan and the USA also improved. Consequently, the theory that foreign powers had a hand in the killings cannot be dismissed outright.

Almost three decades after Sheikh Mujib's killing, the people can once again feel what Sheikh Mujib really was and why he was awarded the title 'Bangabandhu'. People can realize today that he wanted to raise the stature of the Bangladeshis, and one way of doing that was to give back the honour to the unarmed people. Whichever parties and persons might have ruled Bangladesh after his murder, his name could not be erased from the minds of the people. That effort still continues. That is because it is evident today that we got that honour only once, that path was opened for us only once in 1971, when Bangladesh succeeded in ousting all kinds of armed thugs under the leadership of an unarmed Bangalee called Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The position of Bangabandhu vis-à-vis other doers in the civil society of Bangladesh will become clear if the events of 1971 and 1971-75 are analysed. It is impossible to write the history of pre and post-independence Bangladesh without mentioning him. The names of two great Bangladeshis will remain forever shining in the minds of the Bangladeshis. One is Rabindranath Tagore and the other is Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. One had shaped the Bangalee language and wrote the national anthem of Bangladesh. The other materialised the age-old dream of the Bangladeshis by helping create an independent territory called Bangladesh for an entire nation. I feel proud for this, and my posterity will also be so. The names 'Bangalee' and 'Bangladesh' will continue to live on. And that is why any Anandashankar Ray had written:

"As long as the Padma, Meghna, Gouri Jamuna flows on,
Your accomplishment will also live on, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman."

Translation: Helal Uddin Ahmed

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