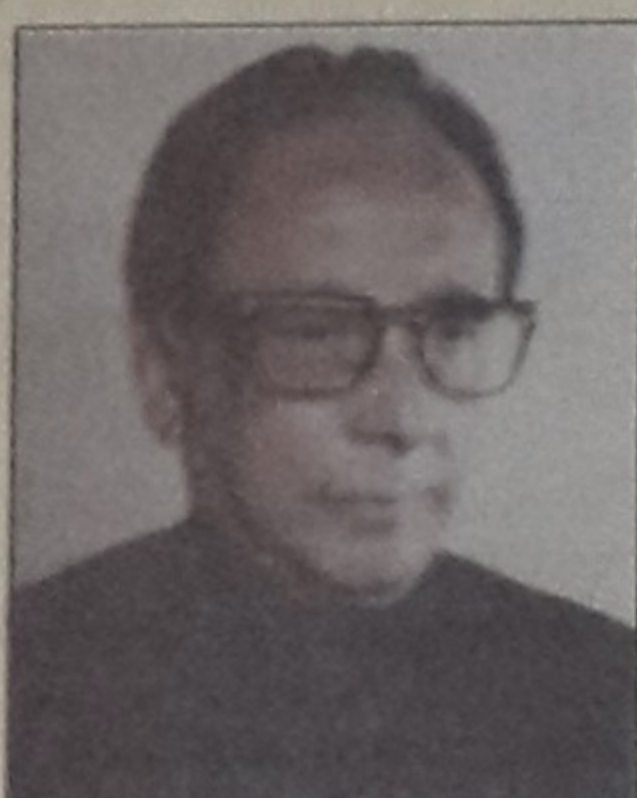





Special Supplement

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پیوند الفتوحات

 PRESIDENT
 PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
 BANGLADESH

Message

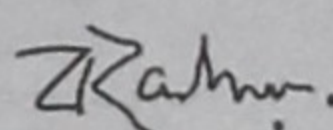
The 16th December is our Victory Day. On the solemn day, I extend my heartfelt felicitations and sincere greetings to my fellow countrymen living at home and abroad.

The great victory day is one of the most memorable and glorious days in our national life. Our long cherished Independence was achieved after a nine-month long armed struggle and supreme sacrifices of the millions. On this auspicious day, I pay my deepest respect to the memory of the valiant freedom fighters who laid down their lives for achieving country's independence in 1971.

On this very day, I recall with deep reverence, the greatest Bangalee of all times and father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who struggled for his whole life to establish our rights and led the country towards attaining sovereignty and prosperity. I also pay my profound tributes to the four national leaders, valiant freedom fighters, organizers, supporters and the people from all walks of life for their immense contributions to achieving our victory. The utmost sacrifices and unmatched valour of freedom fighters in the war of liberation are written in golden letters in the history of our Independence.

The prime objective of our liberation war was to build a happy and prosperous nation state where the common masses would lead a comfortable life. Despite having various initiatives, we could not attain all those targets after passing about four decades of independence. Our democratic advancement has also been hindered several times by the vested quarters that have hampered our development process. Our democracy-loving people, however, have always stood against all sorts of conspiracies and misdeeds. The people of our country have given their mandate in favour of democracy through the Ninth Parliament Election, held on 29 December 2008. I am confident that 'people's will' would be established through our collective endeavours in the days to come. It is a matter of great satisfaction that the Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina has declared 'Vision 2021' to fulfill the hopes and aspirations of the people. It is, therefore, our sacred duty to work unitedly with a view to achieving the desired goals. Let us put our coordinated efforts, imbued with the spirit of great victory to build a happy and prosperous Bangladesh.

Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.


 Md. Zillur Rahman

Victory Day

Anisuzzaman

16 December was a day coloured with blood, when the seven and a half crore people of Bangladesh got the taste of freedom. But the people could not savour the euphoria of victory fully for two reasons - widespread killings, especially of intellectuals by the Pakistani army and their local cohorts in the face of a certain defeat; and the captivity of Bangabandhu in Pakistani jail. However, Bangabandhu did return to his beloved motherland within one month - but the martyrs did not.

We have heard many times that anything big cannot be achieved without incurring a heavy price. When the barbaric attacks against our unarmed people were launched on the dark night of 25 March 1971, we became prepared for the ultimate sacrifice. Please recall the days of 1971. The mothers had stepped aside from the paths of their offsprings who wanted to join the liberation war. The valiant freedom fighters brought the corpses of their fallen comrades to safe places even by risking their own lives. The people of this country lost their lives, honour and property - even then they remained steadfast in their resolve. They tried their best to bring the land of their dreams into the realm of reality.

This resolve and struggle of the Bengalees during the period had earned the respect of people all over the world. Even in countries where the governments had opposed our liberation war or maintained an unethical silence, the masses came forward in support of our freedom struggle. At its root lay the publicity campaigns by the expatriate Bengalees and the declaration of allegiance by the Bengalee diplomats abroad.

Nearly one crore people had gone to India as refugees. The first Bangladesh government got sanctuary there. The members of our armed forces set up their bases and the freedom fighters got training there. The joint command of India and our liberation forces was also forged there. It was from there that our country got formal recognition for the first time. And all this could happen due to the political leadership of Bangladesh Government.

Those people who look at the liberation war by confining it within the nine-months of the war suffer from a myopic view. The 24 year history of the Pakistan period cannot be separated from the days of our war. All political movements starting from 1948 had gradually taken us to the doorsteps of an independence war. The armed struggle of 1971 should therefore be looked at as a part of the bigger political process.

We have now moved 38 years away from 1971. That does not mean that the liberation war is a mere history. Despite innumerable obstacles, the spirit of the liberation war is forever flowing inside our ethos. We have to return to 1971 to rid ourselves of distortions which have constantly troubled us and made us lose sight of our goals.

But there is another side to it. Just as the spirit of the liberation war exists, so does the promises it embodied. The liberation war will not be a complete success until the pledges made at that time for building a new nation are materialised. We got a homeland free from the clutches of enemies on 16 December, but we have not realized the Bangladesh of our dreams during these 38 years.

16 December beckons us with that call. The martyrs and the freedom fighters have done what they could. They gave us this gift of a Victory Day. Now it is our turn to finish the remaining task. We can show honour to the ultimate sacrifices made by our people in 1971 only by establishing a non-communal, just and democratic Bangladesh.

After 1971, people were not supposed to sacrifice lives for upholding justice and their ideals. But people had to do that because of adverse circumstances. They sacrificed their lives for a happy, prosperous and progressive Bangladesh. We can never repay their debts, just like those of the martyrs of liberation war and before that the martyrs of the language movement and the subsequent mass upsurge. We shall not allow their blood to go in vain - we have uttered this many times before. When shall we be able to say - their bloodletting has not been futile! We could really say that once on 16 December. Now we shall have to fly the flag of victory by working, by building the country and by eliminating poverty and lack of education. ■

Translation: Helal Uddin Ahmed



Certainly, there are thousands of problems in Bangladesh, webs of confusions - daily sufferings of the general masses irrespective of positions. Needless to say, there is need for a massive work-effort for salvaging the country. But at this present juncture, our urgent search lies somewhere else. The truth that we are seeking is not all that complex. The subject of our search is - why 'Bangladesh'? How could a free and independent Bangladesh emerge? We shall understand here that it was not an instantaneous affair or event on the surface. Work was done at a deeper level, for many many days with full dedication; it was done with a vow - a belief, the discovery of a faith and from it emerged an uncompromising spirit - whose name was 'Bangladesh'. We know that the people imbued with that spirit had to fight subsequently. It was the liberation war of Bangladesh. The historians and political scientists will take recourse to analysis and explanations. They will discover the fundamental causes at work. But we the ordinary people will tell our new generation at home about our own experiences.

At that time, it was a harsh reality for us, which could also be termed as a fact of life. For people living close to the soil like ourselves, we knew why Bangladesh was needed. We knew why that spirit lay in our faith, the spirit of the liberation war; why 'Joy Bangla' was uttered like a prayer, that valiant war-cry 'Joy Bangla'. That spirit mingled in our blood. From that, how swiftly the historic victory of 16 December 1971 was achieved. I am thrilled when I decipher its resemblance with the French revolution two centuries earlier. The articulation of their faith was also similar, 'Vive Lei Revolution Francaise'. The readers of history know that the French Revolution ultimately transformed the world's intellectual map. Regrettably I ask - what has happened to Bangladesh? In a land where a country was made possible through a liberation war? What has happened to the fate of its people? A kind of 'fate' indeed! Has all memories of

(Contd. on next page)

پیوند الفتوحات

 PRIME MINISTER
 GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S
 REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH



Message

I extend my sincere good wishes and warm felicitations to all citizens of Bangladesh at home and abroad on the occasion of our great Victory Day, December the 16th.

I recall with great reverence the sacrifices of 3 million martyrs and two lakh women, who lost their chastity, in achieving the independence of our beloved motherland. I salute the freedom fighters, who had fought to free the country from the occupation forces.

My deepest respect goes to the greatest Bangalee of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, under whose call the Bangalee nation earned the ultimate victory on December the 16th in 1971 when the Pakistani forces and their local collaborators - Rajakars-AI-Badrs-Al-Shams - were bound to lay down their arms ending the 9-month blood-spattered liberation war.

At this auspicious moment of the Victory Day, I also recall the four national leaders under whose leadership the elected Awami League government conducted the war of liberation. The history of our freedom fighting was not a casual event. In fact, the freedom fighting was the culmination of the struggle of the Bangalee nation for 23 years under the indomitable leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The Bangalee nation arrived at the juncture of the crucial 7th March of 1971, voyaging a long path of struggle of the Language Movement of 1952, the election of the 1954, the Education Movement of 1962, the six-point demand of 1966, the Mass Uprising of 1969 and the election of 1971. The champion of freedom Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in front of a million of people at the then Race Course Maidan declared that 'this time the struggle is for independence', 'this time the struggle is for our freedom'. In fact, the new chapter of freedom struggle got momentum from that day.

Thirty eight years have been elapsed since the independence but the desired dreams and aspirations of the independence are yet to be achieved. The defeated forces of the 1971 snatched away the peoples' right through killing, coup and politics of conspiracy after the assassination of the Father of the Nation along with his most of the family members on the 15th August and the four national leaders inside the Dhaka Central Jail on the 3rd November in 1975. Through the killings, the defeated forces wanted to undo the greatest achievements of the War of Liberation - the constitution, democracy, humanity, culture and development.

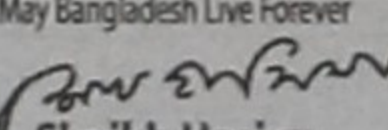
The nation which has earned its independence through bloodbath, it reestablished democracy and rights of the people through a long struggle and immeasurable sacrifice.

In 2008, the nation gave verdict in favor of the spirit of the independence, development and charter of change in the parliamentary elections. Time has now come to reach the fruits of the freedom struggle to country's each household. Our government has been working relentlessly to fulfill the aspirations of the people.

We have already established the rule of law and human rights. The highest court reaffirmed the capital punishment of the self-confessed killers of Bangabandhu. We are hopeful that the trial of the war criminals and all killings, including the killings of the four national leaders inside the jail, will soon be held.

We are going to celebrate the golden jubilee of Bangladesh's independence in 2021. I urge all, irrespective of party affiliation, opinion, class and profession, and caste and creed to work together for building a happy and prosperous country. Let us build a state where each citizen will get guarantee of a decent and secured life. Let us build a Bangladesh, as dreamt by the Father of the Nation, where a horizon of prospect will usher in for our future generations. Best wishes to all again.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
 May Bangladesh Live Forever


 Sheikh Hasina

New Dawn of Independence
Haroon Habib

It is imperative for the new generation to know that the journey to independence was never an easy street to traverse. It was crisis-ridden and perilous all the way. The post-independence period too was never merciful. Even as Bangladesh was crossing four decades of her birth after the 1971 liberation war, this country liberated through enormous sacrifice of lives, had to sustain blows after blows. A planned attack was launched on the very existence of Bangladesh, her hard-earned freedom and the noble perceptions of the liberation war as well.

During the war of liberation, a comprehensive conspiracy was hatched to frustrate the liberation of Bangladesh.

The anti-liberation elements had in those days setup a strong network against Bangladesh. But the Mujibnagar government which was conducting the war had successfully foiled their conspiracy with the active support of our allied nation, India. Fortunately our struggle to move ahead was unstoppable. But the reality is, the other party in their hostile designs never allowed us to become well-organised as a nation. From the very early days of independence, they were constantly active to nullify our endeavours with renewed efforts.

The natural flow of history of the newly independent Bangladesh was first blocked with gruesome blood-letting at road number 32 Dhanmondi on August 15, 1975. This gory killing was the first planned attack on Bangladesh. For Bangladesh, which had won freedom through a bloody people's war only a few years ago, this killing was evidently too much to bear. With such an enormous wound inflicted on the nation, Bangladesh had to cross 34 years of her existence confronting many ups and downs on the way. Obviously, November 19, 2009, the date on which the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court gave its verdict was not just another

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