

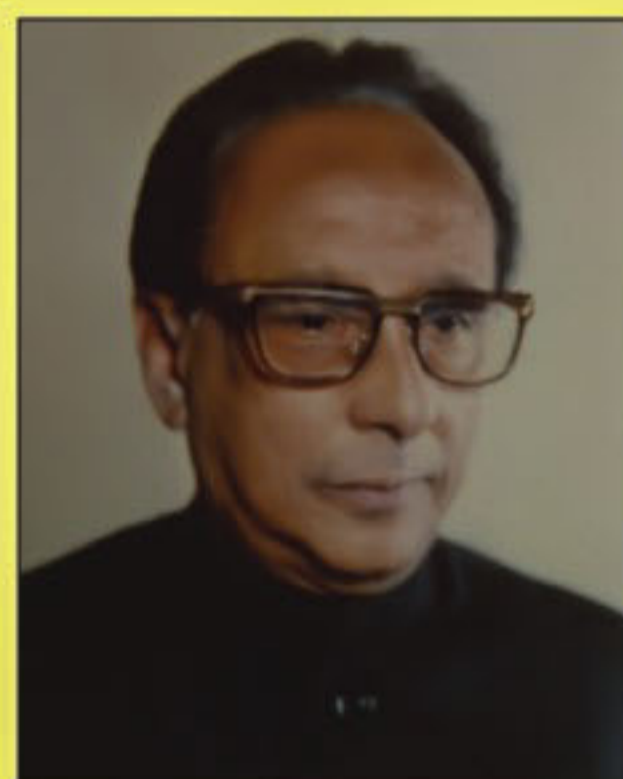
January 10

## Homecoming Day of Father of the Nation



Special Supplement

Art &amp; Design : Department of Films &amp; Publications ♦ Assistance : Press Information Department, Ministry of Information



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

PRESIDENT  
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF  
BANGLADESH

## Message

Today is the 10th January, the historic 'Homecoming Day' of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. On this very auspicious day, I recall with deep respect the great leader Bangabandhu along with grateful nation.

On this day, the architect of independent Bangladesh and Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who led our war of liberation and struggled for independence, returned to sovereign homeland after freeing from Pakistani prison. The people of our country became excited with strong emotion getting him back among them. With the return of the great leader, who faced deadly challenges of life for his brave leadership in various struggles for country's independence and who cherished the dream of a sovereign nation-state his whole-life, the people from all walks of life were overwhelmed with endless joy and enthusiasm. Returning from the gallows on this day, this undisputed leader of Bengal Bangabandhu uttered with emotion at the then Racecourse Maidan, "Today Bangladesh is free and sovereign. The independence let not be spoiled till the last Bangalee remains alive".

I believe our independence and sovereignty would remain constant, as long as we will stay with the ideal of Bangabandhu. Our great leader Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman made a clarion call to build a 'Sonar Bangla' with a view to ensuring peace and prosperity of the common people. I am confident that we shall be able to materialize the dreams of Bangabandhu with collective efforts.

I urge all, irrespective of party affiliation, to work unitedly to build a happy and prosperous Bangladesh

Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Md. Zillur Rahman

## Bangabandhu's Homecoming and Tomorrow's Bangladesh

Dr. Syed Anwar Husain

January 10, 1972 is a milestone in the history of independent Bangladesh for two reasons. Firstly, Bangabandhu returned to his homeland on this day after being freed from a Pakistani prison. It was not the return of an ordinary prisoner on being set free; it was the arrival of the architect of Bangladesh, and therefore the importance and significance of his homecoming was enormous. Secondly, the architect presented the future outline of an independent country before the people through his 10 January speech immediately after setting foot on the soil of his motherland. Through this direction-giving address, a leader of the stature and quality of Bangabandhu had done what was required at that juncture of time.

When Bangabandhu was imprisoned on the dark night of 25 March 1971, the country was infested with invading enemies. This was followed by his farcical trial in a Pakistani prison and a lonely, cruel life of ten months under a death warrant, when he treated 'life and death like mere servants'. Death could not touch him then due to the pressure of world opinion as well as our good fortune as a nation. We were supposed to savour the complete taste of freedom after defeating the enemy on 16 December 1971. But we were deprived of that because the catalyst of our independence Bangabandhu was not present amongst us; we also did not know his exact condition. We had doubts about whether we would get him back alive. As a result, we were beset with anxieties even during the moment of our ultimate triumph. January 10 was therefore the day of our attaining fullness when all our anxieties were put to rest – an illumined day of huge significance. In a symbolic sense, it was like the day of return of a lost son to his mother's lap.

But what was most important was that Bangabandhu did not forget his duty as the architect of a new nation even during that emotional episode. He had provided future direction to the nation from the Racecourse Ground on 7 March 1971. From that same place, he gave directives on future structure of the new state on 10 January 1972. In fact, the speech was a complete plan for building an independent country freed from the clutches of enemies. Provision of timely directions was noticeable in both the speeches, which was an indicator of Bangabandhu's leadership quality. Both the addresses displayed statesmanlike foresight. What was more noticeable was the spontaneity and brevity of both the speeches. We certainly observed the insightful and farsighted approach of Bangabandhu in his 10 January speech. The dual tasks of state-building and nation-building have to be started without losing any time in a newly independent country. Bangabandhu provided specific and clear guidance on state-building and nation-building of Bangladesh in this speech, which was grounded on a total of fifteen themes.

Gratitude for achieving independence at the cost of millions of lives was spelt out at the very commencement of the speech. Also pronounced was the ultimate attainment for himself in the following words, "Today, my lifelong desire has been fulfilled. Bangladesh is independent today". His long-cherished aspiration was independence for his country-men. He nurtured in his heart a deep and unwavering conviction that the freedom of the Bangladeshes was inevitable; therefore, it was articulated in his speech, "I knew, Bangladesh would one day become independent". His lifelong struggles and the united movements of the people had laid the foundation for such a faith in his heart. The leader of the masses therefore accorded recognition to the struggles and contributions of the people in this way: "I salute all classes of people who participated in the achievement of Bangladesh's independence. I salute the liberation forces, the guerrilla forces, and the band of workers. I salute the struggling working classes, the peasants, the intellectuals".

What shape would an independent Bangladesh take? Directions were given in this speech: "My endeavour was to see the people of Bangla live in a free atmosphere, be happy with their food and clothing.... If our ordinary citizens do not get shelter, if the countrymen do not get food, the youths do not find jobs, then this independence will become futile, it will not be complete". The ideals on which the state of Bangladesh would be founded were described thus: "Bangladesh will be an ideal country. And its basis shall not be any religion. The pillars of the state shall be democracy, socialism and secularism" (nationalism was added later on).

Bangabandhu accorded explicit recognition to the contributions of the international community to Bangladesh's liberation war in this address. He expressed his gratitude, especially to the Indian government, its people and the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. He also expressed gratefulness to Britain, Germany, France and the former Soviet Union. For justifiable reasons, there was no mention of China. But what was noticeable was his extension of thanks to the American people – not to

## I shall pronounce while climbing the scaffold, I am Bangalee, Bangla is my country, Bangla is my language

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman landed at Dhaka Airport on a special flight of the Indian Air-force on 10 January 1972 afternoon. The airport was turned into a sea of people. He then moved through the jam-packed crowd from the airport to the Racecourse Ground. Riding an open-hooded truck, it took the Father of the Nation almost two and a half hours to reach the waiting sea of people. The following are extracts from the address delivered by Bangabandhu at the Racecourse.

I pay my respect to the departed souls of the martyrs of liberation war, to those who were killed by the barbaric armed forces.

My dear brothers, my country has been liberated today after million of people had laid down their lives. Today, my lifelong desire has been fulfilled. Bangladesh is independent today. I salute the peasants, the labourers, the students, the freedom fighters and the people at large. All of you – please accept my salam.

Independence has come to my Bangla today at the cost of huge sacrifices. Three million people have been killed. It is you who have sacrificed lives and underwent sufferings. My life-long endeavour was to see the people of Bangla live in a free atmosphere, be happy with their food and clothing. Around ten million people of Bangla took refuge in India out of fear for their lives. We express our gratitude to the Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the Indian government and the Indian people from the core of our hearts. I also thank the people of Britain, Germany, France, Soviet Union and the United States for extending support and cooperation to our cause during the liberation war of Bangla.

I had uttered at this Racecourse on 7 March last year, 'Build up fortresses'. Today, I am saying again, 'Please maintain unity'. I had pronounced, 'I will free Bangladesh'. Today Bangladesh is free and independent. We shall not spoil this freedom even while a single Bangalee is alive. Bangladesh will remain alive in history as an independent nation. There is no force which can subdue Bangla.

The military has made this Bangla barren during the past 10 months. Today, lakhs of people in Bangla do not have food, innumerable people are without shelter. We seek assistance for them on humanitarian grounds. I appeal to all nations of the world for help. I request all free nations of the globe to recognise Bangla. My Golden Bangla, I love you. The Guru among Poets Rabindranath had said, 'O' Enchanted Mother, You have groomed your seventy million children as Bangalees, not as humans'. We have erased this lamentation of the Guru of Poetry. The Bangalee nation has proved that they are humans; they can lay down their lives. They have done such great deeds this time which are unprecedented in history.

I am not speaking as a President, nor as a leader, I am speaking as your brother. If our ordinary citizens do not get shelter, if the countrymen do not get food, the youths do not find jobs, then this independence will become futile, it will not be complete. We therefore will have to work a lot. You, my brothers, you became guerrillas for liberating the motherland. You gave blood. Your blood shall not go in vain.

Those of you who do not speak Bangla, from now on you shall become Bangla's citizens. Brothers, please do not lay your hands on them; they are also our brothers. We want to show the world community, the Bangladeshes can make sacrifices not only for achieving freedom; they can also live in peace. Many people have testified against me. I know them. Necessary actions will be taken at appropriate times against those who had actively collaborated with the Yahya government. They shall be tried. Repose that responsibility on the government.

Yahya Khan had ordered my hanging. I am a Bangalee, a human, a Muslim. The Bangladeshes know to die only once. I therefore decided that I won't bow down. While climbing the scaffold, I shall pronounce: I am a Bangalee, Bangla is my country,



Bangla is my language. I also told them, there is no harm if you kill me. But carry my corpse to the people of Bangla.

My colleagues Tajuddin, Syed Nazrul and others had cried when they left me on that night of March. But I told them, I want to die here. Even then I cannot bow down my head. I told them, you please continue the struggle in accordance with my directives. They kept their pledge.

Bangladesh is today free, independent. But we have numerous problems, whose solutions are urgently needed. Please build up the devastated Bangladesh anew. Start building roads on your own. Continue your respective tasks.

their government. The reason can be easily comprehended.

From the context of diplomacy, recognition for an independent Bangladesh was extremely important. That is why he made the clarion call: "I request all free nations of the world to recognise Bangladesh". There was also a request to the international community for assistance to rebuild the war-ravaged country. Demand was also placed for immediate membership of the United Nations.

It can be easily imagined what the attitude of the general masses was at that time towards the anti-liberation Razakars, Al-Badars, Al-Shams, and especially the Jamaat-e-Islami. But Bangabandhu had a word of caution: "Necessary actions will be taken at appropriate times against those who had actively collaborated with the Yahya regime. They shall be tried. Repose that responsibility on the government". He asked the people not to lay hands on the Non-Bangalees. Because, "They are also our brothers; we want to show the world community, the Bangladeshes can make sacrifices not only for achieving freedom, they can also live in peace".

Two aspects were emphasised in this address regarding the international outlook of independent Bangladesh. It is well-known that most Muslim countries had taken a stand against Bangladesh by opposing the liberation war. Some of them had even assisted Pakistan actively. But despite that, Bangabandhu placed

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

PRIME MINISTER  
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S  
REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

## Message



The 10th of January is the Homecoming Day of the greatest Bangalee of all times, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

On this Day in 1972, ending his nine and a half-month confinement in the Pakistani Jail, Father of the Nation returned to the independent country which he had dreamt of.

The victory of the long struggle for independence was fully accomplished with the return of Bangabandhu, and the endeavor to build the war-ravaged country had begun under his leadership with renewed determination.

It is the misfortune for the Bangalee nation that Bangabandhu along with his family members was assassinated on 15 August 1975 following the conspiracy mooted by the defeated forces.

After the assassination of Bangabandhu, the usurper of power had killed democracy, and stopped the spree of progress and development. The path of trial of Bangabandhu's assassination was thwarted through promulgating law.

Breaking all shackles of conspiracies, the journey to democracy has begun again. The Awami League government formed through people's massive mandate has been working relentlessly to materialise its election pledges - the charter of change.

Let us come and get united to build a happy and prosperous future for the people of Bangladesh. Let us take a fresh vow to build a non-communal, democratic and welfare country on the Homecoming Day of Bangabandhu.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu  
May Bangladesh Live Forever

Sheikh Hasina

I have no grievances against the people of West Pakistan. The leaders of West Pakistan – you have killed innumerable Bangladeshes, you have dishonoured countless Bangalee mothers-sisters. Yet I want you live well. Today, I do not see many students, youths, intellectuals and colleagues anymore. There is no other instance of killing so many civilians from a population. So many civilians were not killed even in the First or Second World Wars.

Please be informed everybody, Bangladesh is today the second largest Muslim country in the world and the position of Pakistan is fourth. Indonesia is first and India third. But it is an irony of fate that the Pakistani army had killed the Muslims of this country in the name of Islam. I do not seek to show disrespect to Islam. But I want to spell out clearly that Bangladesh will be an ideal country. And its basis shall not be any religion. The pillars of the state shall be democracy, socialism and secularism. The peasants-labourers, Hindus-Muslims of this country shall live in peace.

I know the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. I pay my respect to her. She is the daughter of Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru, granddaughter of Pundit Motilal Nehru. Politics has mingled in her blood. She had personally appealed to all heads of state of the world for my freedom. I had talks with Mrs. Gandhi in Delhi. The Indian army will go back whenever I tell them to. Already, many are being sent back gradually.

Around ten million people who took refuge in India out of fear of the Pakistani army and the rest who remained inside the country, all of them underwent extreme hardships. I salute all classes of people who participated in the achievement of Bangladesh's independence. I salute the liberation forces, the guerrilla forces, and the band of workers. I salute the struggling classes, the peasants, the intellectuals. We shall have to build up Bangladesh as a happy and prosperous country. Not a single person shall be allowed to die out of hunger from now on. All kinds of bribery transactions will have to be stopped.

Mr. Bhutto had requested before my return to consider whether it would be possible to maintain some kind of bond between the two parts. I then replied, I cannot say anything before returning to my people. I want to say – Mr. Bhutto, you please live in peace. No more with you. Bangladesh has achieved independence. If anybody tries to snatch away the independence of Bangladesh now, Mujib will be the first person to give up his life for safeguarding that freedom. The Bangladeshes cannot lose their liberty anymore. I wish you well. We are independent, please accept this. You continue to live independently.

During the long 9 months since 25 March, the barbaric Pakistani army had killed almost all intellectuals of this country. They murdered my people. They took away the honour of thousands of mothers and sisters. The world knows about only a fraction of these incidents. The world community must investigate these most heinous acts in the history of mankind. I am making an appeal for the constitution of a neutral international tribunal to properly investigate the atrocities of the barbaric Pakistani army. I request all free nations of the world, please accord recognition to an independent and sovereign Bangladesh immediately. The United Nations should also fulfil the just demands of Bangladesh by giving her a seat.

Joy Bangla (Victory to Bangla). ■

Translation: Helal Uddin Ahmed

emphasis on the image of Bangladesh as a Muslim state in his speech. He said, "Please be informed everybody, Bangladesh is today the second largest Muslim country in the world and the position of Pakistan is fourth. Indonesia is first and India third". This utterance by the architect of a secular Bangladesh had a deep and far-reaching significance. He knew that petro-dollar would be needed for the reconstruction of war-ravaged Bangladesh. And secularism does not imply exclusion from religion. Besides, there was the question of recognition by the Muslim countries. Under such circumstances, this kind of comment could not have been possible without a realism based on farsightedness.

Just as it was true that the contribution of India was huge in the liberation war, similarly it was correct that the indefinite stay of the Indian army on the country's soil would have raised questions about sovereignty. But before such questions could be raised, Bangabandhu declared in unequivocal terms, "I had talks with Mrs. Gandhi in Delhi. The Indian army will go back whenever I tell them to". The Indian army went back home before 17 March 1972, which was Bangabandhu's birthday.

January 10 was not only the day of Bangabandhu's homecoming; it was also the day when Bangladesh received directives on how to move forward. ■

Translation: Helal Uddin Ahmed