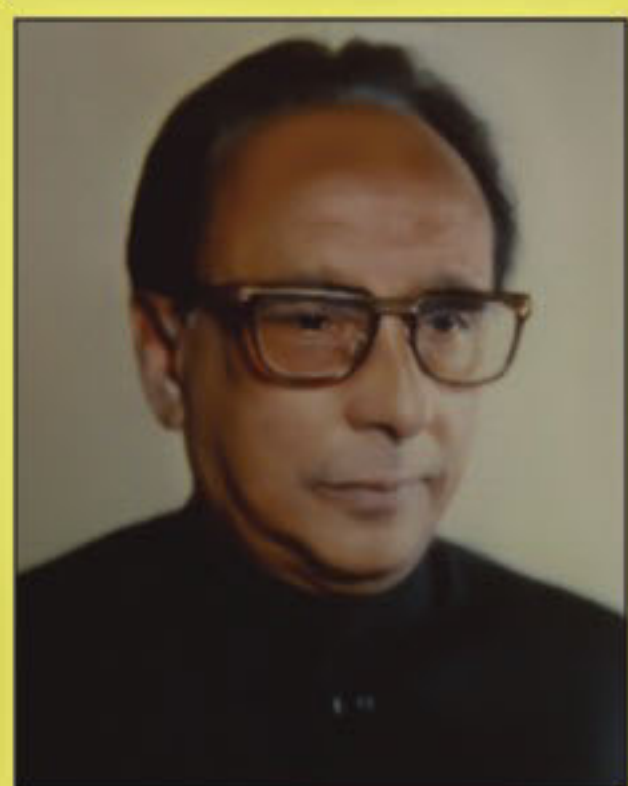


26 March Glorious Independence & National Day

Special Supplement

Art & Design : Department of Films & Publications • Assistance : Press Information Department, Ministry of Information



بنامہ اللہ الرحمن الرحیم



**PRESIDENT
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH**

Message

On the occasion of the great Independence and National Day, I convey my heartfelt greetings and felicitations to the countrymen living at home and abroad.

The historic Independence Day is a glorious day in our national life. We achieved our Independence through nine-month long armed struggle and immense sacrifices of lives. On this solemn day, I recall with utmost respect and pay my deep homage to the martyrs of the liberation war who made supreme sacrifices for achieving the Independence in 1971. I pray for the salvation of those immortal souls.

On this memorable day, I remember with profound respect the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who proclaimed country's Independence on March 26, 1971. Responding to his clarion call people from all walks of life participated in the war of liberation and snatched the Independence. I also recall with deep respect the four National Leaders; valiant freedom-fighters and organizers who rendered their dedicated efforts and enthusiastic support that accelerated our great victory. I also remember Sher-e-Bangla A. K. Fazlul Haque, Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy and Moulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani for their immense contributions towards inspiring our people at various stages of struggle.

One of the prime objectives of our hard-earned Independence was to build a happy and prosperous Bangladesh. Keeping that in mind, the Government has been rendering untiring efforts in materialising the objectives of Independence. With the span of time, we have achieved some significant progresses both at national and international arena. Despite attaining the progress, we have to go a long way for achieving the cherished goals of Independence. I believe concerted efforts from all are imperative in this regard.

It is a matter of satisfaction that the people of our country are democracy-loving. Without being institutionalization of democracy, the overall development is not possible to attain. Tolerance, fortitude and respectful to other's opinion are the pre-conditions for blooming democracy. Therefore, we must have to maintain patience, forbearance at all level and to be respectful to other's views in a democratic pluralism. Let us make our National Parliament a centre of excellence in solving our national issues and a place of discussion. I am confident, all irrespective of party affiliation, would play responsible role in fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of our common people.

On this great Independence Day, I urge all, living at home and abroad, to work unitedly imbued with the spirit of War of Liberation to expedite economic self-reliance and democratic advancement as we are committed to build a respectful, happy and prosperous Bangladesh for our next generation.

May the Almighty be with us.

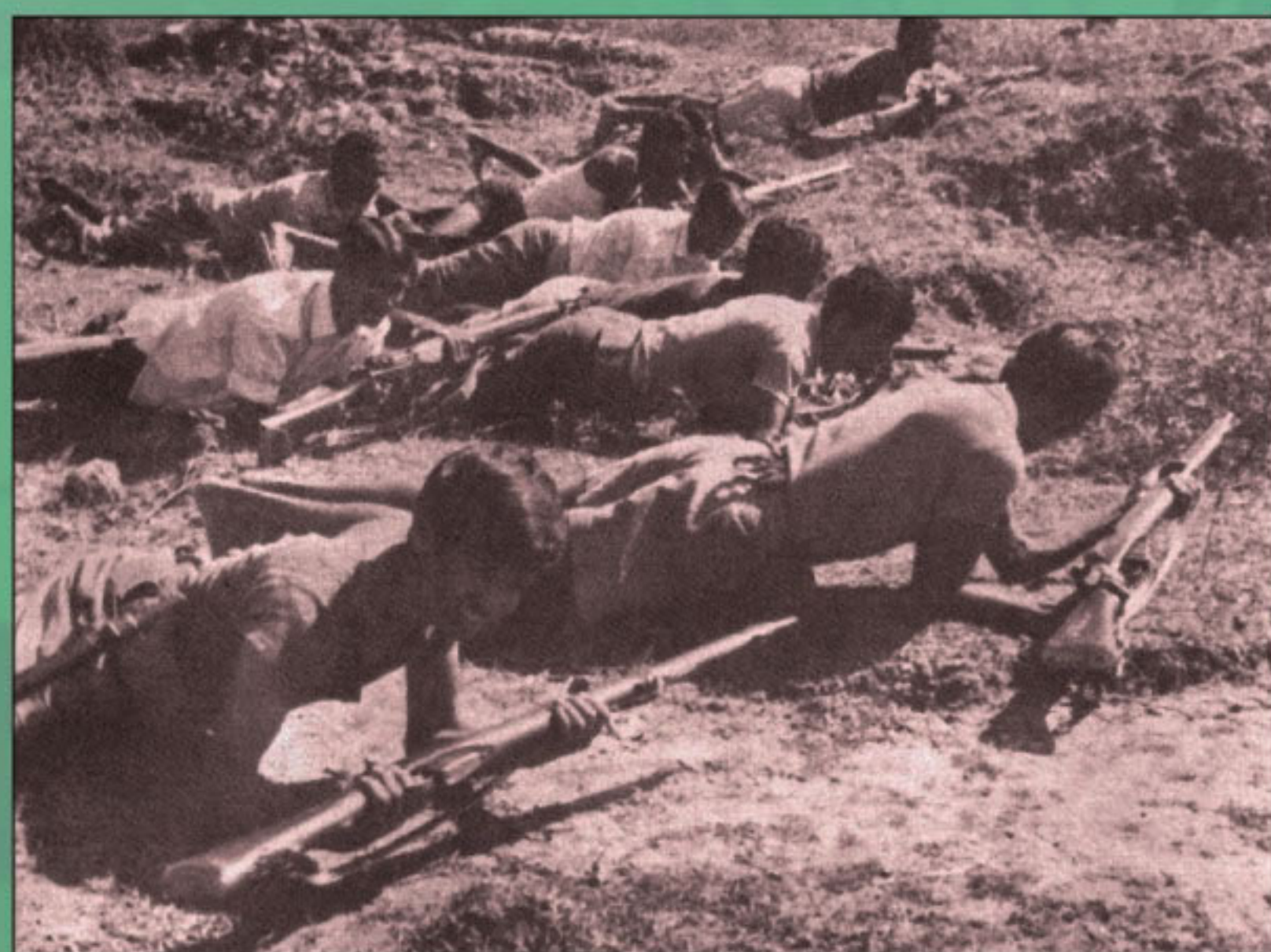
Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Z Rahman
Md. Zillur Rahman

26 March is not only a day of mere Celebration Professor Dr. Abdul Mannan Choudhury

26 March is our Independence Day. On this auspicious day Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared the independence of Bangladesh although millions of Bengalees interpreted his speech at the then Race Course on 7 March as the declaration of independence for them while foreign media carried messages terming it as nearer to declaration of unilateral independence. The declaration of 26 March was the immediate outburst in response to crackdown of Pakistani military junta aimed at annihilation of a total nation. The whole country and the world endorsed it and it was embodied in the formal declaration and formation of the Government at Mujib Nagar. Later it has become part of our constitution.

26 March would have been the day of independence even though Bangabandhu had failed to make such an explicit declaration due to any onerous situation. The speech on 7th March had enough of key words or phrases signifying when the Bengalees would gain independence, when they would wage war along with the tactics and strategy of the war in order to expel the Pakistanis from the soil of Bangladesh. It is worthwhile to recall what he had said on that day, 'even though I fail to give you further instructions, you are requested to turn every house into a



NON COOPERATION MOVEMENT IN 1971 REHEARSAL FOR LIBERATION WAR Rafiqul Islam

President Yahya Khan on first March 1971 as a sequel to a conspiracy by the ruling junta in a Radio broadcast announced the postponement of the meeting of National Assembly convened in Dhaka on 3 March. People of Dhaka at once burst into protest demonstrations in the streets. At once the city turned into angry processions. Schools, colleges, university, office, courts, factories, shops and transports, all shut down. Groups of struggling people started to gather at Paltan from all directions. There was militant procession everywhere and it terminated as angry milling crowd in front of Hotel Purbani. At that time the Awami League council was in a meeting in that hotel. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman called upon the people not to lose patience but face the situation. But the crowd demanded announcement of independence immediately. A mammoth public meeting was held spontaneously that afternoon at the Paltan maidan. At a press conference held at hotel Purbani that afternoon, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman made a strong protest against the postponement of National Assembly meeting by president Yahya Khan. He declared strike in Dhaka city on Tuesday, countrywide strike on Wednesday and public meeting on 7 March in the Race Course Maidan. He also declared that he would give an outline of a comprehensive programme in the public meeting of 7 March.

A total strike was observed in Dhaka on 2nd March. Militant processions and slogans for independence rent the air of Dhaka. At the historic meeting of students held in the Arts building of Dhaka University, flag of independent Bangladesh was



hoisted for the first time. Suddenly the authorities in a radio broadcast on the night of 2nd March declared imposition of curfew in Dhaka city. Soon after the declaration of curfew, students, workers and people brought out processions raising slogans to protest against curfew. They chanted, 'we reject curfew', 'Joy Bangla', 'valiant Bengalees take up arms and bring freedom to Bangladesh'. Barricades were raised in the city violating curfew. The army opened fire at half-past nine in the evening on the crowd at the DIT crossing and in front of the Morning News paper office. A big crowd advancing towards the governor's house faced bullets. Besides, there was indiscriminate firing on people violating curfew in different parts of the city. The movement was intensified on 3rd March. Faruk Iqbal the 18 year old fire-brand student leader became a martyr while raising barricade.

A complete hartal was also observed in the port city, Chittagong. During country-wide strike on March 3 about four hundred persons were killed on that day in attacks, clashes, arson and police and army firing. General Yahya on 3rd march invited 12 leaders of parliamentary groups of National Assembly to join a meeting in Dhaka on March 10. Bangabandhu rejected this invitation. At a big public meeting at Paltan Maidan in the afternoon of March 3 Bangabandhu announced the programme of movement to secure legitimate rights of Bengalees. Strike will be observed everyday from 5 am to 2 pm till 6 March. At the historic meeting at Paltan the declaration of founding of an independent Bangladesh by the independent Bangladesh students council was read out. The declaration chose the poem 'Amar Sonar Bangla' by Rabindranath Tagore as national anthem of Bangladesh and declared Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the commander-in-chief of independent and sovereign Bangladesh. The 4th day of the freedom movement was passed through complete strike, angry demonstrations processions, absentee janaja, meetings and pledges of independence.

On March 4 conditions in Chittagong deteriorated further. There were clashes between the Bengalees and non-Bengalees. About 120 persons were killed and 335 injured in Chittagong on 3rd and 4th March. Six persons were killed and 22 injured by firing by the army in Khulna on 3rd March. The artistes expressing solidarity with the movement in a statement decided to abstain themselves from participating in Radio and Television programmes from March 2

Many workers were killed in Tongi industrial area on 5th march by Army firing. Meanwhile, the number of casualties in Chittagong rose to 222. The same day a substantial number of persons were injured in Rajshahi. Many were killed in Jessore on 3rd March as a result of army firing on demonstrating processions.

In a radio broadcast on 6 March president Yahya described the enraged people of Bangladesh as miscreants and announced convening meeting of National Assembly on 25 March. Actually this was a deception. That announcement was made only to

fort and face the enemy if a single shot is fired and if my people are killed'. He further asserted 'Since we have learnt to shed blood, we will sacrifice more blood, God willing, I will make this country a free country. Then, he emphatically and boldly pronounced 'this time the struggle is for our emancipation, this struggle is for Independence'. Thus, the crackdown to annihilate a nation was sufficient condition along with all other objective conditions for explicit and univocal declaration of independence by a person who was second to none to speak on behalf of the Bengalees. We are fortunate enough that the Father of the Nation, the elected representative of 70 million people and the commander-in-chief of all armed forces including the civilian activists could declare the independence and instruct his people once again before his capture by the Pakistani military junta to wage war till the expulsion of last soldier of the Pakistani occupation forces.

There was no controversy or question about this declaration during the war of liberation or till the assassination of the Father of Nation on 15 August 1975. It was intensified with the assumption of power by Khaleda Zia-the wife of late president of the country who himself was a freedom fighter and who happened to be the fifth person to read out the declaration of independence on behalf of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Some of her supporters came up with the assertion that Sheikh Mujib could have declared the independence on 7 March and we could expel the Pakistan army from our soil with minimum of

بنامہ اللہ الرحمن الرحیم



**PRIME MINISTER
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH**

Message



I convey my heartiest greetings to my countrymen as well as to all expatriate Bengalees on the occasion of the great Independence and National Day of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

The Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman proclaimed the independence of Bangladesh through the then wireless of EPR at the first hour of 26 March 1971 when Pakistani occupation forces launched genocide on unarmed Bengalees on the fatal night of 25 March 1971. After a 9-month bloody war under the brave and dauntless leadership of Bangabandhu, we earned the ultimate victory of independence on 16 December.

On this glorious day, I pay my deep homage to the 3 million heroic Bengalees who sacrificed their lives, and 200 thousand women who lost their innocence in the War of Liberation.

I recall with deep gratitude the great leader of our liberation struggle, the greatest Bengalee of all time, the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

I also pay my humble tribute to the four national leaders and the valiant freedom fighters, who had led and fought against the Pakistani occupation army to free our beloved motherland.

I extend my sympathies to those who had lost their near and dear ones and were subjected to brutal torture and subjugation during the war. I recall with gratitude our foreign friends who had extended their whole-hearted support and cooperation for the cause of our liberation.

On the eve of our Independence Day, I urge countrymen to remain alert against the conspiracies of anti-democratic and retrogressive forces. The defeated anti-liberation, communal and identified reactionary forces are set to undo the democratic and development process of our beloved country at a time, when our government had executed the verdict of Bangabandhu's Assassination Case and is going to start the trial of the war criminals.

In this context, I urge countrymen to remain united and prepare themselves to foil all ill-designed plots against the government and the people.

The independence earned through huge bloodbath and sacrifice is our people's greatest achievement. To ensure that this achievement remains meaningful, the spirit of our great liberation war should be reached to every nook and corner of the country. It is by cherishing the true history of our liberation war close to our hearts, we would have to go ahead in achieving the objective of the 'charter of change' by building a Bangladesh, free of corruption, mal-governance, terrorism, hunger and poverty.

Our government has been striving hard to establish Bangladesh as a poverty-, hunger- and illiteracy-free Digital Bangladesh by 2021, the Golden Jubilee year of our independence. For the success of the noble endeavour, I call upon all people wherever they may be to join us with their utmost sincerity, honesty and dedication.

I am confident that Insha-Allah, with our united efforts, we would surely achieve our 'Golden Bangladesh' as envisioned by the Father of the Nation.

**Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever**

Sheikh Hasina
Sheikh Hasina

gain time to bring troops from West Pakistan. Essentially the junta pushed the seven and half crore majority Bengalees of Pakistan inevitably to the path of struggle for independence by denying them the verdict of 1970 election and postponing the meeting of National Assembly and not allowing Bangabandhu to form an Awami League government at the Centre.

7th March historic declaration of Bangabandhu

There was a sea of people in Ramna Race Course on 7th March. Flags were fluttering in the sky, the red sun flag curved out of the map of sonar Bangla. Millions of sticks were raised in the sky with slogans as a mark of struggle of Bengalees. The leaders of movement council were chanting slogans in loud speaker from the stage. The sea of crowd responded with cry of Joy Bangla. They chanted 'No compromise, fight fight fight', 'my country, your country', Bangladesh Bangladesh. No Assembly, take up arms brave Bengalees free Bangladesh, build fortress in every home, free Bangladesh. At 3.20 pm Bangabandhu arrived on the stage of the meeting and began his historic address. He concluded his speech with an unprecedented declaration 'The fight this time is for our freedom, the fight this time is for independence'. The historic declaration of Bangabandhu at that historic public meeting of 7th March was in essence a declaration of independence of Bangladesh. That speech continued to inspire Bengalees till the end of liberation war.

On 7 March 1971 General Tikka Khan was appointed military administrator in East Pakistan replacing Lt general Shahibjada Yakub Khan. He was also appointed as governor. But as the chief justice declined to administer oath of office to him, he

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sacrifice of lives, properties and human toils of all kinds, since the Pakistanis were unprepared. It was pointed out with facts and figures that such declaration would have been interpreted as unilateral declaration of independence by world body leading to results as was witnessed in Biafra of Nigeria. Then the critics changed their tone and started a rear-guard fight saying that Mujib on 26 March did not spontaneously make such declaration, he did it under duress and festering of Begum Mujib. When, on the basis of fact, this assertion failed to dig ground, they started to tell that Mujib did not declare any independence; he was lobbying to become prime minister of united Pakistan or Pakistan Confederation.

This type of ill motivated controversies continued till the time the court intervened and made it unconstitutional to call anybody other than Bangabandhu as the person to declare independence. However, this has not yet proved to be an absolute guarantee that a permanent brake has been put to such meaningless, baseless and already settled controversy. Such a controversy like many more controversies has aided in hiding the real problems of the toiling mass who fought the war of liberation for economic emancipation. No government would be able to provide two square meals, housing, medicare or minimum level of education by keeping such controversies alive. Moreover, if this trend and tendency could not be reverted, the very existence of the country will be at stake one day. At the least, we would not see the materialization of the dream of the Father of the Nation in our life time.

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