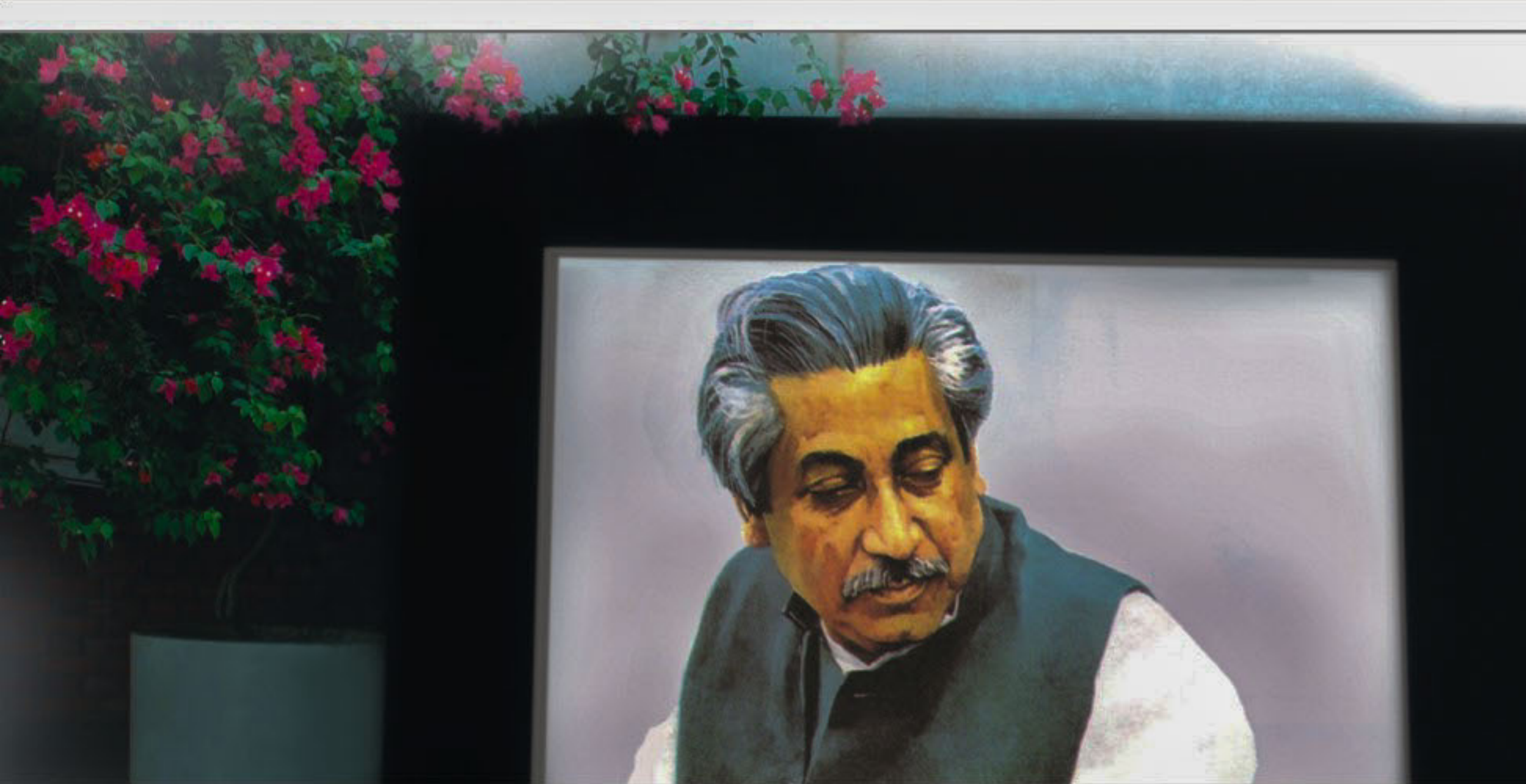




Special Supplement

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15 August

National Mourning Day
2010On This Day of His Passing Away
Mustafa Nurul Islam

*"As long as the Padma Jamuna Gouri Meghna flows on,
Your accomplishment will live on Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
All around flow the ganges of tears and blood today
Even then have no fear, victory is assured, a triumph for Mujibur Rahman"*

- Annada Shankar Ray

In the light of the above lines, I have firm faith that history has no death; and Sheikh Mujib – the symbolic offspring of history – is immortal; he is forever luminous on the canvas of eternity.

ONE

The month of August has once again come back through yearly rotation, and today is that accursed date of fifteenth. Those emissaries of hell had killed the 'greatest son of a thousand years' of motherland Bangla Sheikh Mujib along with his family-members. Again, history bears witness, he was that 'Bangabandhu' who was the noblest source of indomitable inspiration for us millions of Bangalis, and it was he who was the 'Father of the Nation' of a new-born state. They were the defeated enemies in the battlefields of 1971 – the local black-sheep collaborators of the marauding Pakistanis, the regressive, fanatical, fundamentalist groups – they had hatched conspiracies behind the curtain. And then like an ill-omened fate, they re-emerged on the scene on that accursed date of fifteenth. Naturally, I shall go back to that same answer – such an incident could not have happened all of a sudden. Or it could not be merely some terribly violent acts by a handful of power-hungry individuals bent on realizing their sinful designs. It has already been indicated before; and such instances have been observed in various countries at different junctures of time, history bears witness to that. Symptoms of a counter-revolution following the success of a revolution achieved through the liberation war are overwhelming. Example may be cited here of the termination of the regime of Emperor Louis, which yielded the fruit of equality-fraternity-liberty in post-revolution France. But it led to the emergence of another 'emperor' Napoleon. On the other side, people saw the all-devouring rise of fascist dictator Benito Mussolini in the land of Garibaldi – Italy. Similar rise of anti-freedom and anti-progress evil forces were observed in different shapes and forms in Sun Yat Sen's China, Sukarno's Indonesia, Africa's Algeria, Egypt and Iran of the Middle-east. In some cases, fundamentalism and militancy had mushroomed quite dangerously.

Let us now consider our own Bangladesh; and our very own 1971 – which saw unprecedented, immortal and exceptional successes during the liberation war. Again, it was we the general masses who were the victims within a span of only four and a half years. The pronouncement, 'The struggle this time is for our freedom' was then sent into exile from the country of 56 thousand square miles. The period that followed showed they came out from the ditches of cantonment and demonstrated that a political 'party' in political attire swiftly rose due to direct patronization and protection of military camps. And after that, the horses of power have maintained their dominance by uttering the dialect of democracy; and in parallel, religion-based fundamentalists were allowed to thrive.

TWO

I am trying to relate everything, including the symbolism of Fifteenth August for Bangladesh and Bangalis in the above backdrop. They did not merely kill a bodied man Sheikh Mujib during that dark dawn. Deep inside their conspiracy was the design to eliminate our Bangaliness, which flowed throughout our history, and to uproot and completely destroy the spirit of 1971 liberation war. They wanted the medieval darkness of Pakistanism to return alongside unquestioned restoration of religious edicts. I believe, it is known to the honest and conscious Bangalis – 'Bangabandhu' was a person who had fought on the bed of ideals throughout his life. And even there, Bangladesh was the truth.

History gives shape to those rare personalities only occasionally. They are the offspring of eternity. Sometimes it is they who make possible the creation of history. And sometimes, these two are complementary to each other. We come to know about such luminous men from the canvas of eternity.

In the present context, we are looking at one such personality named Sheikh Mujib, who was the chief architect of a sovereign and independent nation-state. Let us present these words in a different way; that will make our articulation clearer. Let me cite example from the Asian landmass of the previous century –

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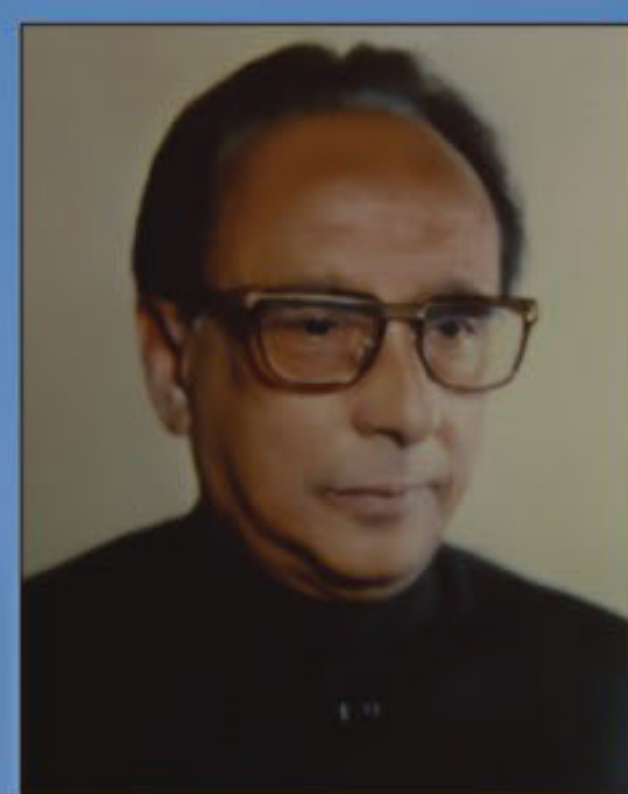
The killers had firm conviction that they would remain above any trial for ever. And that conviction was not baseless. Those that came to power immediately after the assassination sealed the means of the trial by enacting a law. The Indemnity Act was their life saving amulet. Besides, the post Bangabandhu killing government extended all cooperation to the killers. They were taken care of abroad, not in the country. That government was not satisfied with providing the murderers with legal immunity only, they also rewarded them. At the same time, they discarded the Bangladesh of the war of liberation and got preoccupied in building a new Bangladesh. That Bangladesh would be the Pakistan edition of Bangladesh. Right at the beginning of the process, secularism was to be abandoned as that was against the religion. The religion that occupied the exalted position in state system during the Pakistan regime was brought back pompously. The way for the return of the religion-based politics which was prohibited in the Constitution was paved for. The objectives of all the amendments made to the Constitution were the same- to remake the Constitution befitting the new Bangladesh by wiping out socialism and secularism. They were yet to be appeased; the successor to Ziaur Rahman made Islam the state religion through the 8th amendment of the Constitution. He drove the last nail in the coffin of secularism.

All governments of the new Bangladesh maintained the singleness of their attitude towards the killing of August in 1975. They did not take the killing to be an offence. Nor did they take any initiative to bring the killers to justice. That initiative had to be taken by the government of Sheikh Hasina who won the 1996 election. During the first five-year tenure the Sheikh Hasina government brought the killers to



justice under the normal law of the country. But that government could not witness the verdict of the trial delivered. The Awami League could not come to power in the following election. The Jamaat-e-Islami was a partner of the next Jote alliance government. Naturally the task undertaken by the Awami League government remained incomplete. The Awami League led-Grand Alliance returned to power with a landslide victory in the election of 2008. And the trial of the murder of Bangabandhu got complete in 2009, after 34 years of the killing. Those found guilty of homicide were executed, but partially. Because, the absconding convicted are still outside justice.

In one sense, the long nightmare of post-75 frustration and waiting has come to end through the establishment of the rule of law by the present government. It is a great achievement in our history spanning about forty years. Criminalization of politics had been in force for more than twenty years after the murder of Bangabandhu. The inevitable result of that process was the retardation of judiciary. The



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



PRESIDENT
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH

Message

August 15 is the National Mourning Day of Bangalee nation. Today is the 35th martyrdom anniversary of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the greatest Bangalee of all times. On this day I pay, with heavy heart, my profound respect to the architect of sovereign Bangladesh Bangabandhu as well as to the memory of his family members who embraced martyrdom with him.

The 15th August 1975 is marked as a shameful chapter in the history of Bangalee nation. On this day the great leader and father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman along with his family members, except his daughter Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana, were brutally assassinated at his own residence by a group of killers who were directly and indirectly indulged with the conspirators. Wife of Bangabandhu Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib, sons Sheikh Kamal, Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russel, daughters-in-law Sultana Kamal and Rosy Jamal, brother Sheikh Naser, farmers' leader Abdur Rab Serniabat, youth leader Sheikh Fazlul Haq Moni and his wife Arzu Moni, Baby Serniabat, Sukanta Babu, Arif and Abdul Nayeem Khan Rintu were also assassinated on this day. I pray to the Almighty Allah for the salvation of those departed souls of all martyrs on this Mourning Day.

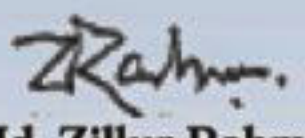
The contributions of Bangabandhu in our national history are of paramount. The Bangalee nation, who had been struggling for a long period, achieved their long-awaited independence under his able and courageous leadership. Starting from the historic Language Movement in 1952, Bangabandhu led the nation at every struggle and movement including 58's movement against Martial Law, 66's Six-Point Movement, 69's Mass Uprising and 70's General Election towards attaining self-reliance and fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of our common mass. He, therefore, was sent to jail for several times and suffered inhuman sufferings for this. Finally, the great leader Bangabandhu declared independence on 26th March in 1971 after inspiring our people with the spirit of Bangalee nationalism. Hence, he had been sent to jail again and had to be ready for gallows during his imprisonment. In spite of manifold pressure during his confinement in Pakistan, he was firm with his principle and yet he did not compromise with the opponent on idealism. He always upheld the people's interest throughout his life. Though the conspirators killed the father of the nation they could not wipe out the ideals and beliefs of Bangabandhu. I am confident that the name of Bangabandhu will remain ever-imprint in the mind of millions of Bangalees so long as the country and its people alive.

It is a matter of hope that the trial of the killers of Bangabandhu has been made in the soil of Bangla after 35 years of assassination. Today the nation is somewhat stigma-free. Now we should bring the death-sentenced fugitive back to country in order to execute the verdict. The nation is aware of that killers have no room at any corner in the world.

The father of the nation Bangabandhu dreamt a 'Golden Bangla' throughout his life. It is our utmost responsibility to materialise his dream in order to build a happy and prosperous country. If we can do so, I believe, we would be able to pay our true homage to him.

On this National Mourning Day, let us make our grief into strength and devote ourselves in building a prosperous Bangladesh.

Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.


Md. Zillur Rahman

Bangabandhu-
immortal
in the Bangalees'
memory

Zillur Rahman Siddiqui

The tragedy of the magnitude of the one that happened on the 15th August in 1975 rarely happens to a nation. That killing was a glaring example of treason and sedition. Bangabandhu was not only the president of Bangladesh but was also the father of the nation as well as the architect of the country. The 1971 war of liberation was conducted by the exile government but Bangabandhu, though imprisoned in Pakistan, was the declared president of that government. Despite his absence, his presence was conspicuously felt from the first to the last day of the liberation war. He was present in the collective consciousness of the Bangalees and obviously by being the source of inspiration for all the activities of the exile government. It was Bangabandhu in whose name the war of liberation was conducted. In his absence the vice president Syed Nazrul Islam shouldered the responsibility of the president. The killers not only killed the incumbent president but also all the members of his family present there. Nobody, not even the women and children, were spared from that massacre. That kind of cruel violence can hardly be compared with any other in the history of the world. That cruelty and violence were inflicted to two other families comprising his close relatives. Attacks were made simultaneously in three houses. The houses of Bangabandhu's nephew Sheikh Moni and his brother-in-law (sister's husband) Serniabat which were located separately came under attack. The number of persons including the members of the three families killed in that attack was 37.

Accomplices of the killers who were the members of Bangladesh Army carried the Bangabandhu's dead body by a helicopter to his paternal home at Tungipara. He was buried in the most insolent manner. The minimum formalities for burial that were observed perfunctorily were possible due to the demand by some village locals. In case of other deceased, even that minimum burial formality was not observed; the members of Bangabandhu's and two relatives' families were buried in Banani graveyard without any religious rituals.

That cruel incident was quite unthinkable. Bangabandhu never used to pay heed to any caution about probable attack on his life. He did not feel it necessary to live within the security blanket of Gonobhaban. The security system at his own house at Dhanmondi was not at all befitting for a president. He was certainly aware of that. But he firmly believed that no Bangalee would ever dare to kill him. He had the good faith that those whom he loved with all his heart loved him as well. Only great men can afford to have that kind of faith. He paid the price of his good faith by sacrificing his own life as was paid by the Indian Premier Indira Gandhi. She too was warned against her Sikh bodyguards in her house but she did not care. Having seen the armed killers, Bangabandhu perhaps could not think that they had come to take his life. Otherwise, he would not have uttered in his characteristic style- what do you want here?

They replied to his question by pulling the triggers of their guns. They turned his body porous with bullets. They did not stop there. And then they targeted the other members of his family. Even the immaculate boy Russel, Bangabandhu's youngest son, was not spared from the hands of those murderers.

Today, there is not that much of debate or opaqueness as to who masterminded the beastly massacre and what they wanted to achieve. Though they apparently killed the person of Sheikh Mujib but if we judge the extent of that killing and take the killing of four national leaders in November into consideration, there remains no shred of doubt that they did not kill any person, they rather killed spirit of the independence of the country. They claimed that by killing Bangabandhu they saved the country from destruction- a claim that they made quite publicly. Never did they deny the responsibility of the killing; rather they confessed with pride and uttered in arrogance- we are the killers, let them try us if they can.



PRIME MINISTER
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

Message

The 15th August, a grief-stricken day for the Bangalee nation, is our National Mourning Day. On this day in 1975, the greatest Bangalee of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, along with his 18 family members, was assassinated in one of the most barbaric carnages in the human history.

Bangabandhu's wife Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib, sons Captain Sheikh Kamal, Lt. Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russel, daughter-in-laws Sultana Kamal and Rosy Jamal, brother Sheikh Naser, farmers' leader Abdur Rab Serniabat, youth leader Sheikh Fazlul Haq Moni and his wife Arzu Moni, Baby Serniabat, Sukanta Babu, Arif and Abdul Nayeem Khan Rintu were also killed on the fateful night. Bangabandhu's Military Secretary Col Jamil was also killed. Some members of a family at Mohammadpur were also killed by canon-ball fired by the killers.

On the day of National Mourning, I pray to the Almighty Allah for the salvation of the souls of the martyrs of the 15th August.

The people of this territory snatched the glowing sun of the Independence, breaking the shackles of subjugation of thousands of years, under the dynamic, courageous and charismatic leadership of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. We got our own nation-state and the pride of self-identity.

But Bangabandhu was killed when he had devoted himself to the arduous task of building a Golden Bangla reconstructing the war-ravaged independent country and unifying the whole nation. The defeated forces of the Liberation War made an abortive effort to ruin the tradition, culture and advancement of the Bangalee nation. Their target was to destroy the non-communal democratic fabric of Bangladesh.

The anti-liberation forces linked to the carnage initiated the politics of assassination, coup and conspiracy. Martial Law has been promulgated suspending the constitution and overthrowing the government elected by the people. Military ruler Zia established stratoracy and destroyed democracy. The trial of the case for Bangabandhu's killing was blocked by promulgation of black laws and the killers of the Father of the Nation were rewarded.

The peoples' right to franchise was established in 1996 through sacrifices of the lives of hundreds of martyrs. Awami League got the opportunity to run the country through people's verdict.

The Awami League government achieved tremendous success in building a welfare society, imbued with the spirit of Liberation War, through signing the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty, Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Treaty, self-sufficiency in food, poverty alleviation, unprecedented success in mass education and empowerment of women. People got back their lost confidence and trust.

The nation was unfortunate that BNP-Jamaat alliance, with assuming the state power through rigged elections in 2001, undid the achievements and established kleptocracy. The wheel of development has been totally stopped. The 2001-06 period was a black chapter of the country's history to ruin the spirit of Liberation War, democracy and democratic institutions. The main objective of the then government was to annihilate the opposition political forces, especially Awami League, and establish one-party rule in the country. As part of the design, a heinous attempt was made to kill me with a grenade attack on my rally on the 21st of August in 2004. By the grace of the Almighty Allah, I was saved but 24 leaders and workers of Awami League, including Ivy Rahman, were killed in the attack.

Even then, the Bangalees remained undaunted. The people made Awami League victorious again with unprecedented mandate in the December 2008 elections. The present government has been working hard to build Digital Bangladesh to materialise the charter of change. We are marching forward to establish a modern Bangladesh free from hunger and poverty by 2021, which is the golden jubilee of Independence.

We have freed the nation from the stigma to some extent through implementing the verdict of the Bangabandhu killing case. Steps have been taken to bring back the remaining convicts. Measures have also been taken to accelerate the trial of the killers of four national leaders.

When the Awami League government has initiated the trial of the war criminals and launched drive against the corrupt people, the rejected forces are out to subvert the march forward of development and democracy through hatching conspiracy and creating chaos. I urge the countrymen to remain alert about the troublemakers.

The killers could have killed Bangabandhu but they could not kill his dream and ideals. The 15 crore people of this country have been nurturing in their hearts the ideals of sacrifice of Bangabandhu. Let us march forward with bold steps in the struggle to build a Golden Bangla as dreamt by Bangabandhu by turning the grief of the eternal loss of the Father of the Nation into strength.

We must win in the struggle to establish an economically solvent democratic and non-communal Bangladesh which will be totally free from hunger, illiteracy and poverty.

Insha Allah victory is ours.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever

Sheikh Hasina

most heinous crime could not be tried in that paralyzed judicial system. The most optimistic change that has become evident today is manifest through the emergence of the judicial system being on its own feet.

The victory of the grand alliance led by the Awami League in the 2008 election would be considered the triumph of people's demand. That demand was to revive the 1972 Constitution and to bring the war criminals to justice. The obstacles to achieving the goals not only spring from outside but also from within. We must not forget that secularism in the 1972 Constitution is an indivisible conception. There is no room for any compromise.

What happened in August and November in 1975 pushed Bangladesh out its orbit politically. That deflection has left a terrible scar on our national life. Political criminalization does not remain limited to the gamut of politics only. It has escalated to all spheres of our national life. The Prime Minister has to warn her near ones almost every day so that they do not indulge in corruption. Though there are efforts to break away the net of corruption, in our every day life we experience the irresistible attraction of that net of corruption as well.

Why we could not turn about right after the terrible assault of August in 1975, why we had to endure the anguish of defeat and humiliation of long period of tyranny and misrule? - we are yet to get appropriate answers to these questions. Is our political consciousness still not deep-rooted? Our political organizations still weak? But if you look into the election results, who would argue that the voters in Bangladesh made blunder in casting their votes? Or, they delayed in reprimanding the rulers as they erred or failed?

Bangabandhu reposed his confidence on this people of Bangladesh. People were the source of his power. In him did they find their indisputable leader. The reactionary forces wanted the people of the Bengal to forget Bangabandhu. But they have not forgotten him. He is still crowned with their respect, bathes in their love. The black stain resulting from the killing of the father of the nation, the greatest Bangalee in the history, has been removed through the trial of the killers. Bangabandhu's place is eternal in the hearts of the Bangalees.

Translation: A.M. Saleheen