



Joi Bangla

Joi Bangabandhu

Homecoming Day of Father of the Nation

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A Great Man Arrives...

Tofail Ahmed

January 10 is an immortal, unique and historic day in the annals of the Bengalee nation. The victory of the Bengalee people was complete with the homecoming of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on this day in 1972. A true spokesman of the oppressed and toiling masses of the world, Bangabandhu Mujib reached the Heathrow Airport of London on 8 January after being freed from the captivity in the dark cell of a Pakistani prison. Bangabandhu telephoned his close colleagues immediately after reaching London. He talked with Acting President Syed Nazrul Islam, Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmed and our respected 'Bhabhi' Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib. I also had the good fortune of talking to Bangabandhu on that day. That moment of conversing with my dearest leader was a memorable one in my life.



On the next day, Bangabandhu issued a statement at a crowded press conference in London. Shouting the war-cry 'Joi Bangla', he said, "I am feeling immense joy at the independence of Bangla through a liberation war. The ultimate aim of that freedom struggle was an independent and sovereign People's Republic of Bangladesh. When my people had declared me the President of Bangladesh, I was passing my days at a secluded and abandoned cell as a condemned prisoner on charges of treason. I thank India, the Soviet Union, Poland, France and Britain for extending support and cooperation in the freedom struggle of Bangladesh. An independent and sovereign People's Republic of Bangladesh is now a reality. The world has to recognise this country. Bangladesh will immediately submit a request for membership of the 'United Nations.' In conclusion, he said, "I am not ready to stay a single more moment here. I want to return to my people." He was very eager to get back to his people. A long period of secluded captivity could not subdue him. Even while in prison, the adored and dearest leader of the masses had constantly nurtured the company of his people in his mental world.

When we learned about Bangabandhu's freedom on 8 January, the whole country was swept with a wind of unprecedented euphoria. The joy of the people could not be expressed in mere language then. The entire population of the country was waiting very eagerly for the moment of return of their dearest leader. Finally, that highly cherished and auspicious moment arrived.

The day was a Monday. Hundreds of thousands of people were walking towards the airport in processions since morning with the slogan, "Joi Bangla", "Joi Bangabandhu". Crores of hearts were silently looking at the time, waiting with unbridled eagerness, when would the dearest leader arrive? With what would they welcome the leader whom they held closest to their heart and who was the greatest pride of their Bengalee ethos? The war-weary victorious freedom fighters, the struggling masses with bowed heads in reverence, mothers who lost their children with tearful eyes, widows who lost their husbands, children who lost their parents, everybody was waiting eagerly with extended hands to embrace the Father of the Nation; their heads were held high with pride after overcoming the sorrows and pains of losing their near-ones.

After this episode, our long wait came to an end. The plane landed at the airport at 1.51 pm. A ladder was put up beside the plane, and Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, other leaders, we the four chiefs of Mujib Bahini and the leaders of the Swadhin Bangla Students' Action Council ran up to welcome the leader. We had bouquets in our hands. The moment the Father of the Nation was garlanded, all his self-control was gone; he broke down in tears. It was an unforgettable moment, an unprecedented occasion, which is ever-luminescent in my mind. Standing on the steps of the aircraft, Bangabandhu waved his hand towards an ocean of people. Weighed down by the pains of losing so many near ones, there was a river of tears in his eyes; and there was also that contented smile of a victorious hero which illumined and spread all over his face. Such an expression on Bangabandhu's face was like the reflection of a pure and luminous countenance of the war-ravaged and independent mother Bangla. It was like the rhythmic cries and smiles of an epic of joy and pain. We also wept unremittingly on that day.

A 31 gun-salute welcomed the head-of-state the moment the Father of the Nation stepped on the soil of 'Golden Bangla' of his dream. After that, Bangabandhu was escorted to the stage. Flowers were raining on him from all sides. The army, navy and air-force gave him a guard-of-honour. Bangabandhu took salute from the dais. At that moment, the commander of Bangladesh Forces Colonel Ataul Ghani Osman, Lt. Colonel Shafiullah and Bangabandhu's eldest son Lieutenant Sheikh Kamal were standing beside the Father of the Nation. Major Mainul Hossain Chowdhury commanded the guard-of-honour. After inspecting the guard, Bangabandhu shook hands with the political leaders present at the airport, members of the diplomatic missions posted in Dhaka and other eminent persons. Apart from the leaders of Awami League and other political parties, high-ranking officers of the allied forces, high officials of Bangladesh Government and ambassadors of foreign missions in Dhaka were also present at the airport.

Then we climbed a waiting truck with Bangabandhu and other national leaders to travel to the racecourse ground. It was 4.30 in the afternoon when we reached the ground after crossing a sea of people standing on both sides of the road, which was decorated with beautiful archways, Bangladesh flag and Bangabandhu's portrait. That meant, it took us 2 hours 13 minutes to come to the ground from the airport. When we entered the ground with our leader, hundreds of thousands of people were waiting with no spaces remaining empty. The whole place was reverberating with the clapping sound of people of all ages. Everything appeared to drown in the war-cry of 'Joi Bangla', 'Joi Bangabandhu'. Bangabandhu climbed the dais and looked all around; he rubbed his face with a handkerchief. It seemed to me then after looking at Bangabandhu's face that the Father of the Nation was waiting for such a day all his life. I had always noticed that he wore an unpretentious expression on his face. His nature was bereft of hypocrisy. His pale face appeared to brighten up despite the tiredness resulting from long periods in captivity. With upright forehead, wide chest and tearful eyes, his voice was choked with emotion.



From the podium, Bangabandhu went to a number-18 building of Dhanmondi, where his family-members were waiting. Another house in front of that building was kept for him, because his road no. 32 residence was so much vandalised by the enemy forces that it was not habitable then. In this way, our long wait for the Father of the Nation had ended on 10 January 1972.

Today, on the unforgettable and historic homecoming day of the Father of the Nation, I recall again and again the last part of his 7 March Address - "The struggle this time is for our freedom, the struggle this time is for independence." We have achieved political freedom. We got an independent and sovereign People's Republic of Bangladesh, a constitution, a national anthem, a national flag. We got back parliamentary democracy after many sacrifices. But we have not yet been able to build the 'Golden Bangla' as dreamt by the Father of the Nation; nor have we achieved economic emancipation for bringing smiles to the faces of the poor and sad people whom he loved so much.

Today Bangabandhu is no more. But I firmly believe that the veins which carry his blood, a blood which knows no defeat, a blood which embraces death smilingly, the inheritor of that blood - people's leader Sheikh Hasina and the government she leads is determined to bring smiles to the distressed people of Bangla by bringing about economic emancipation. The Awami League-led grand alliance government has already taken some historic and epoch-making decisions. Just as the Father of the Nation had shown the dream of independence to the people of Bangla, Bangabandhu's daughter has also shown the dream of a modern technology-driven digital Bangladesh. Bangladesh is expected to be transformed into a promising, progressive and secular country through the implementation of Vision-2021. Hopefully, we shall be able to involve all segments of people irrespective of party or opinion in the noble task of building a cherished Bangladesh of Bangabandhu's dream.]

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বাণী

আজ ঐতিহাসিক ১০ই জানুয়ারি। জাতির জনক বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের স্বদেশ প্রত্যাবর্তন দিবস। কৃতজ্ঞ জাতির সাথে আমিও স্মরণীয় এই দিনে গভীর শ্রদ্ধার সাথে তাঁকে স্মরণ করি।
মহান স্বাধীনতা সংগ্রাম ও মুক্তিযুদ্ধে নেতৃত্বদানকারী অনন্যসাধারণ নেতা, স্বাধীন বাংলাদেশের স্থপতি জাতির জনক শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান পাকিস্তানের কারাগার থেকে মুক্ত হয়ে এদিনে সদ্য স্বাধীন বাংলাদেশে ফিরে এসেছিলেন। তাঁকে ফিরে পেয়ে বাংলাদেশের সর্বস্তরের জনগণ আনন্দ, উচ্ছ্বাস ও আবেগে অগুত হয়ে যায়। জীবন মৃত্যুর কঠিন চ্যালেঞ্জের ভয়বাকের অধ্যায় পার হয়ে সারা জীবনের স্বপ্ন সাধনা ও নেতৃত্বের ফসল স্বাধীন সার্বভৌম বাংলাদেশে মহান নেতার প্রত্যাবর্তন, সকল স্তরের জনগণকেই সীমাহীন আনন্দে উদ্বেলিত করে। ফাঁসির মঞ্চ থেকে ফিরে তৎকালীন রেসকোর্স ময়দানে বাংলার এই অবিসংবাদিত নেতা আবেগ-আগুত কণ্ঠে বলেন, 'আমার সারাজীবনের স্বপ্ন আজ পূর্ণ হয়েছে। আমার বাংলাদেশ আজ স্বাধীন হয়েছে। একজন বাঙালী বেঁচে থাকতেও এই স্বাধীনতা নষ্ট হতে দেব না।' আমি বিশ্বাস করি, আমরা যতদিন বঙ্গবন্ধুর আদর্শে অনুপ্রাণিত থাকবো, ততদিন আমাদের স্বাধীনতা সার্বভৌমত্ব অটুট থাকবে। বঙ্গবন্ধু সেদিন সবাইকে 'সোনার বাংলা' গড়ার ডাক দিয়েছিলেন। আমি আশা করি দেশপ্রেমের চেতনায় উদ্বুদ্ধ হয়ে কঠোর পরিশ্রমের মাধ্যমে আমরা সে লক্ষ্য অর্জনে সফল হবে-ইনশায়াহ। আমি সুখী ও সমৃদ্ধ বাংলাদেশ গড়তে দলমতনির্বিবেশে সকলকে একযোগে কাজ করার আহ্বান জানাই।

খোদা হাফেজ, বাংলাদেশ চিরজীবী হোক।

মো: জিন্নুর রহমান

The Day Made the Victory Complete

Kamrun Nahar

January 10, 1972. Day dawned in Dhaka. The great leader of the Bengalees Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is coming back home. The ocean of people passed the night sleepless. They thronged to the Racecourse and Tejgaon Airport to have a better place to stand on and have a glimpse of their beloved great leader from a better angle. What a awaiting it was! The national dailies pen pictured their eagerness as quoted hereunder.
The Daily Ittefaq in its first lead wrote "The Great man is coming and all are thrilled in every direction. Today is the day we have waited for long. The Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is coming to the sweet lap of his motherland in the midst of overwhelming love and confidence embedded in sacrifice after a prolonged span of nine months. The jail of the Pakistani military killers was not strong enough to keep him inside.

Every daily newspaper depicted emotion-choked stories and editorials. **The Daily Ittefaq** in its first page editorial went to say under the headline 'Esho Banglar Swapanik, Swagatam' (come the dreamer of the Bengal, welcome) while the Dainik Bangla in its editorial said under the caption 'Beerer Sonitey Tomay Baran Kari' (we receive you in the pool of blood shed by our heroes).

The Daily Sangbad : The whole city is awaiting the Bangabandhu. By this time Dhaka has become a city of celebration. With the arrival of the leader coming closer people of all walks of life--- peasants, labourers, students and members of the women folk are getting more prepared. **The Ittefaq** in another story under the headline "Aami Sarbagre grihini" (first of all I am a housewife): Begum Mujibur Rahman while talking to a group of journalists yesterday said, first of all I am a house wife, I am to shoulder the responsibility of running a big family'.

The Daily Azad presented the historical scenario---"Bangabandhu, when came down from the plane, was visibly very moved and overwhelmed. He could not believe apparently ---- yes, this is the land of my beloved motherland. In a very feeble sound he started saying--- I am in Dhaka. I have come to my people again.

It took 130 minutes to reach the Racecourse from the Tejgaon Airport. **The Dainik Bangla** reports the people were on footpaths, traffic island, trees, balconies, wall, lamp-posts, roof-tops and where not. Nobody viewed it hither-to, but how disciplined it was! Unbelievable! They were lost in emotion but firm in order.

Bangabandhu entered into the Racecourse amidst tumultuous welcome and slogans from the people thronged in lacks where a free Mujib on his free motherland expressed with utmost firmness - we have freed the country and we will remain free (**The Dainik Bangla**).

The Daily Ittefaq reports : "The Bajrakantha (thunderous voice) of the Bangabandhu was emotion-choked. He said, Bangladesh is free and there is no one in this planet to snatch the freedom from us. -- My dream has transformed into reality now. The Bengalees this time shall be cheerful. They will in joy and merry. There will be no dearth of bread. Otherwise, the freedom will be meaningless."

The Sangbad reports : Bangabandhu with his unique 'Bajrakantha' expressed a note of caution--'Be alert! Conspiracy is still going on.'

Under 'Janata Sagarey jageche urmee', Sangbad gave a vivid description of the Racecourse public meeting - the meeting was so mammoth and thick in attendance that Bangabandhu could meet the diplomats only.

The Azad reports on the public meeting on the following day under the caption 'Bangabandhu Bajrakantha' (The Thunderous voice of the Bangabandhu) ---If there were no food and clothing the freedom will be futile. Yet, there is conspiracy against the freedom of my country.

The Azad in its front page editorial says---the freedom of the country is now complete as the great leader has come back to Bangladesh after being freed from the imprisonment.

The Daily Ittefaq reports on the re-union of the family -- 'the emotion studded scenario is not only a single family, but it is common to every family of the country. On 11 January issue the Daily reports:

"The day we passed yesterday was yet a day of wiping out the sorrows of a poor mother, the mother Bengal. It was a day of the highest degree of our joy. It was not a day of celebration for a person or a class or a group; It was the joy of the whole country and the nation."

At the end of his speech, the Bangabandhu conducted a prayer for the salvation and eternal peace of those who helplessly succumbed and embraced martyrdom in the hands of military junta and their local accomplices, the 'Rajackers'. Thereafter, the weary Bangabandhu returned home at Dhanmondi. But no feeling of exhaustion could confine him within the four walls of the residence. Well, this is the day, the country had witnessed on January 10, 1972.

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