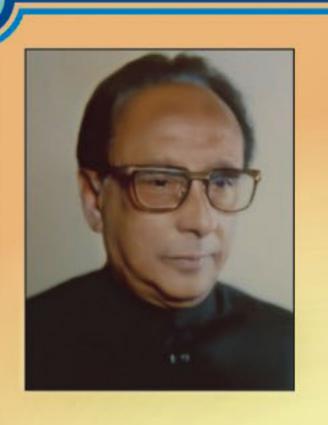
Joi Bangabandhu

Homecoming Day of Father of the Nation

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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, উচ্ছাস ও আবেগে অপ্রত হয়ে যায়। জীবন মৃত্যুর কঠিন চ্যালেঞ্জের ভয়ংকর 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-আপ্রুত কণ্ঠে বলেন, 'আমার সারাজীবনের স্বপ্ন আজ পূরণ 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 উদ্বন্ধ হয়ে কঠোর পরিশ্রমের মাধ্যমে আমরা সে লক্ষ্য অর্জনে সফল হবো–ইনশাল্লাহ।

আমি সুখী ও সমৃদ্ধ বাংলাদেশ গড়তে দলমতনির্বিশেষে সকলকে একযোগে কাজ করার আহ্বান জানাই।

খোদা হাফেজ, বাংলাদেশ চিরজীবী হোক।



The Day Made the Victory Complete Kamrun Nahar

anuary 10, 1972. Day dawned in Dhaka. The great leader of the Bangalees 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 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 Swapnik, 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 deadline "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 look 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, rooftops 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 Bangalees 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 'Bangabandhur Bajarakantha' (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:

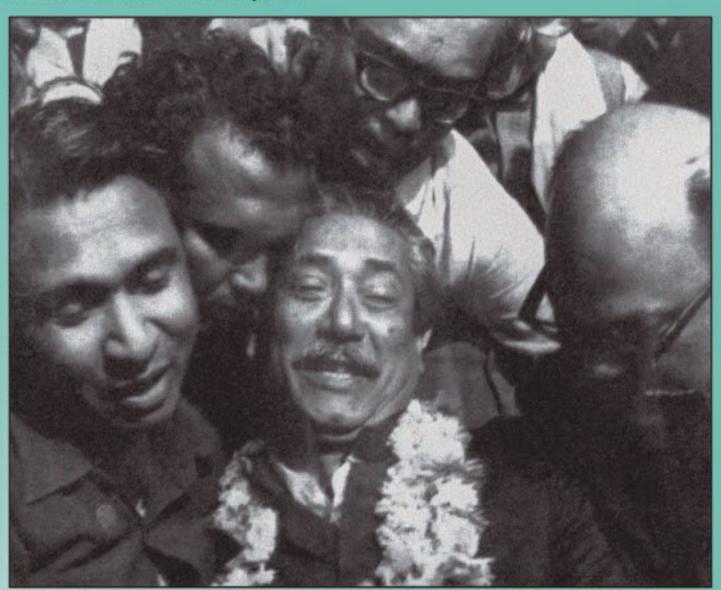
'The day we passed yesterday was yet a day of wiping out the sorrows of a poor mother, the mother Bengal. It was a day of the highest degree of our joy. It was not a day of celebration for a person or a class or a group; It was the joy of the whole country and the nation.'

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 'Rajaakars'. 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.

A Great Man Arrives...

Tofail Ahmed

anuary 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 'Bhabi' 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 illuminated 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 warravaged 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 guardof-honour. Bangabandhu took salute from the dais. At that moment, the commander of Bangladesh Forces Colonel Ataul Ghani Osmani, 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.



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার





বাঙালির মুক্তি সংগ্রামের ইতিহাসে ১৯৭২ সালের ১০ই জানুয়ারি এক ঐতিহাসিক দিন। এদিন পাকিস্তানের কারাগার থেকে মুক্তি পেয়ে স্বদেশ প্রত্যাবর্তন করেন সর্বকালের সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ বাঙালি, জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান।

মুক্তিযুদ্ধের নয়মাস বঙ্গবন্ধু পাকিস্তানের বন্দিশালায় অসহনীয় নির্যাতনের মধ্যে এবং প্রহসনের বিচারে ফাঁসির আসামী হিসেবে মৃত্যুর প্রহর গুণছিলেন। বাঙালি জাতির বিজয়ের ফলেই জাতির পিতা আমাদের মধ্যে ফিরে আসেন।

স্বদেশে প্রত্যাবর্তনের পর তিনি যুদ্ধবিধ্বস্ত দেশকে পুনর্গঠনে সর্বশক্তি নিয়োগ করেন। ভারতীয় মিত্রবাহিনীর সদস্যদের দ্রুত দেশে পাঠানোর ব্যবস্থা করেন।

তাঁর আহ্বানে সাড়া দিয়ে জাতিসংঘসহ বিভিন্ন আন্তর্জাতিক সংস্থা এবং বন্ধু দেশসমূহ দ্রুত বাংলাদেশকে স্বীকৃতি প্রদান করে। বঙ্গবন্ধুর ঐন্দ্রজালিক নেতৃত্বে অতি অল্পদিনের মধ্যেই বিশ্ব দরবারে বাংলাদেশের দৃঢ় অবস্থান তৈরি হয়।

কিন্তু ১৯৭৫ সালের ১৫ই আগস্ট ঘাতকেরা বঙ্গবন্ধুকে সপরিবারে হত্যার মাধ্যমে বাংলাদেশের অগ্রযাত্রাকে স্তব্ধ করে দেয়। বন্দুকের জোরে ক্ষমতা দখলকারীরা গণতন্ত্র হত্যা করে, রুদ্ধ করে দেয় প্রগতি ও উনুয়নের ধারা।

অনেক সংগ্রাম আর ত্যাগ-তিতিক্ষার পর দেশে আজ গণতন্ত্র সুপ্রতিষ্ঠিত হয়েছে। দেশ এগিয়ে চলছে কাজ্ফিত অগ্রগতির পথে। কোনো অপশক্তি যাতে গণতন্ত্র ও উনুয়নের এ ধারাকে ব্যাহত করতে না পারে, জাতির জনকের স্বদেশ প্রত্যাবর্তন দিবসে এই হোক আমাদের অঙ্গীকার।

আসুন, সকলে মিলে আমরা জনগণের জন্য একটি গণতান্ত্রিক, সুখী-সমৃদ্ধ অসাম্প্রদায়িক, কল্যাণকর এবং শান্তিপূর্ণ বাংলাদেশ গড়ে তুলি।

বঙ্গবন্ধুর স্বদেশ প্রত্যাবর্তন দিবসে আমি তাঁর রুহের মাগফেরাত কামনা করছি। জয় বাংলা, জয় বঙ্গবন্ধ

বাংলাদেশ চিরজীবী হোক Zw Engra

In that condition, he started his historic speech before a sea of people, beginning with his customary address 'My dear brothers'. Laying down all the offerings from his heart, he said in an emotion-choked voice, "I shall pronounce while climbing the gallows, I am Bengalee, Bangla is my country, Bangla is my language." I was then wondering how could a man who was counting his days in a secluded prison for 9 months 14 days could maintain his poise in such a tumultuous situation and utter, "Brothers, I told you one day, build fortresses in all your homes. Today, I am telling you, we all have to work in all our homes for our development." Even in such a situation he asserted, "Let it be known to all, Bangladesh is now the second largest Muslim country in the world and the position of Pakistan is fourth." It was a significant claim. He also said in the speech, "I want to spell out in clear terms, Bangladesh will be an ideal secular country. And its basis will not be any particular religion. Its base will be built on democracy, nationalism, secularism and socialism." Recalling the supreme sacrifices of 3 million people, he uttered in a sorrowful tone, "Independence has come to my Bangla in exchange for huge sacrifices. Three million people have died. You have laid down your lives, endured pains. My endeavour has been that Bangla's people would lead a free life, they would be well-fed, well-dressed and happy.' Expressing his gratitude to India, he said, "I know the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. I

express my reverence for her. Politics has got mingled in her blood. She had personally appealed to all heads of state of the world for my freedom. I had a discussion with Srimati Gandhi in Delhi. Whenever I say, the Indian army will go home." Regarding the warcriminals, he said, "The barbaric Pakistani army have killed almost all intellectuals of this country during these long nine months since 25 March. Thousands of mothers and sisters have lost their honour. The world must investigate these worst kinds of vile acts in the history of mankind. These heinous crimes must be tried by forming a neutral international tribunal." Making an appeal to all countries of the world and the United Nations, he said, "I

request all free countries of the world to immediately recognise an independent and sovereign Bangladesh. The United Nations should also meet Bangladesh's just demand by sanctioning a seat for her." Quoting from the poem of Rabindranath Tagore, he pronounced towards the end, "Oh my enchanted mother, you have kept your seven crore children as Bengalees, not as mature humans. The Guru of Poets, you please come and see, your Bengalees have today grown up as men." What an extraordinary statesmanlike speech! Bangabandhu had elaborately explained what the state should do in the immediate aftermath by delivering a significant policy-setting speech, which was short, indicative but significant. Hundreds of people had listened to him spellbound and felt satisfied by the conviction that they were really independent from that day.



From the podium, Bangabandhu went to a number-18 building of Dhanmondi, where his familymembers 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 epochmaking 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.]

Tofail Ahmed, M.P. Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Industry

Translation: Helal Uddin Ahmed