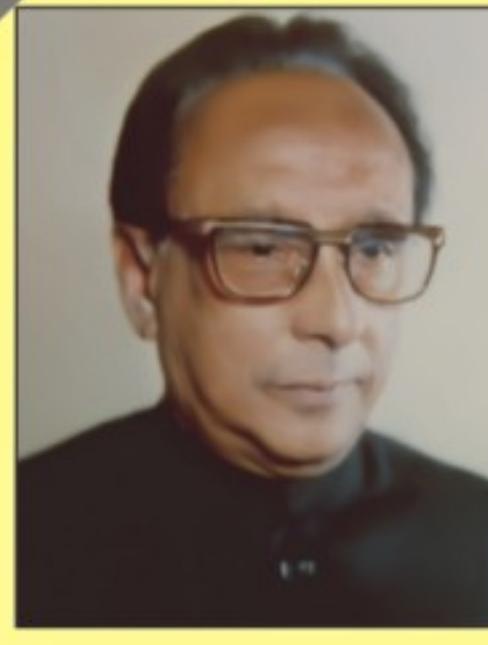


16th December

40th Anniversary of the Glorious Victory

Special Supplement

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



PRESIDENT
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH

Message

16th December is our victory day. On this day in 1971, we achieved our long-cherished victory through nine-month long War of Liberation. On the eve of our great victory day, I extend my sincere thanks and congratulations to my fellow countrymen living at home and abroad.

The significance of victory day is of paramount importance to the checkered history of Bangalee's independence. The historic declaration of independence proclaimed by our great leader Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on March 26 in 1971 came true on this day through attaining ultimate victory. Bangladesh, therefore, emerged as an independent and sovereign state in the world atlas.

Today, I pay my deep tribute to the valiant freedom fighters who made supreme sacrifices in the war of liberation in 1971 for the cause of country's independence. On this very day, I also recall with profound respect the greatest Bangalee of all times Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who introduced us to the world arena as a sovereign nation. Shunning all sorts of oppression and repression throughout his life, he led the nation courageously for over twenty years to victory. Today, I also extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the heroic freedom fighters and their family members, organizers and supporters of the war of liberation and the people from all strata who directly and indirectly made immense contributions towards achieving our long-cherished independence. It is a matter of pride that the nation is going to observe the 40th anniversary of victory this year with huge enthusiasm. The observance of victory day, thus, bears enormous significance. As we all know that the one of the main objectives of our great liberation war was to attain geographical sovereignty as well as economic self-sufficiency and to establish just and equivalent society. By realizing our self-criticism, we would be able to understand that we could not fully attain the aims of our independence even after passing forty years of our victory. Since the independence, however, we have been putting our sincere endeavour to build the country. Father of the Nation and the then President of newly born Republic Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman devoted himself to rebuild war-torn country after coming back from Pakistan jail to homeland on January 10, 1972. He dreamt a dream to transform our country into a 'Golden Bangla'. But it is an irony that Father of the Nation and his near and dear ones had been brutally assassinated by an anti-liberation force on August 15, 1975 before fulfilling the dream turn into reality. This tragic incident and its consequences hindered the flourishing of democracy and development as well. Thus we lagged behind from the desired goals of institutionalizing democracy and achieving socio-economic development.

With the aspiration of our people, the democratic government is now established in the country after overcoming various acclivity and decility. The people of Bangladesh gave their huge mandate in favour of alliance led by H.E. Sheikh Hasina in the Ninth Parliamentary General Election which was held on December 29, 2008. After forming cabinet, the government has initiated manifold programmes and activities for the well-being of the common mass and has taken time-worthy endeavour to implement it. With the commencement of far-reaching activities, Bangladesh has attained some socio-economic development together with 6.7 percent growth last fiscal 2010-2011 despite worldwide recession. Our achievement in flourishing democracy, empowering women, establishing human rights and rule of law, strengthening local government, ensuring food security, developing power and energy, thriving information technology, expansion of women education and child and maternal health care is noteworthy. In the meantime, our Prime Minister H.E. Sheikh Hasina has been awarded the UN 'MDG Award' and 'South South Award' for attaining significant development in women and child health care as well as using IT for their well-being. The people of Bangladesh are greatly honoured with the 'Peace Model' placed in the UN General Assembly by our Prime Minister and for her deliberation in Bangla. Apart from regular activities, her outstanding endeavour to create worldwide mass awareness against the adverse impact of global climate change is being acclaimed by the world community. Therefore, our achievement both at national and international arena is not a few.

It is a matter of pleasure that our export market is steadily expanding. Nowadays we are exporting world-class readymade garments, knitwear, frozen foods, jute and leather goods, tea, pharmaceuticals, ceramic items, handicrafts, and newly added ocean going ships to the international market. I am also happy to note that our expatriate people are making significant contributions by sending their hard-earned foreign currency to our economy. I extend my sincere thanks to our wage-earners for their patriotic zeal and contributions to motherland.

'Friendship to all, malice to none' is the principle of our foreign policy which was adopted by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman just after liberation in 1972. With the basis of the principle, our bilateral and diplomatic relations with the international community along with neighboring countries are gradually widening. I am confident that the relationship among the nations would be further strengthened and deepened in the days to come.

Ahead of Golden Jubilee celebration of our independence in 2021, the present Government has set a 'Vision 2021' for transforming Bangladesh into a middle-income country. It is my conviction that we would be able to materialize the set vision by using our huge human resources and information technology within the stipulated time, *Inshallah*. On the eve of our victory and national day, I call upon my fellow countrymen irrespective of party affiliation to contribute more towards building our country from their respective position in order to realize and uphold the objectives and spirit of War of Liberation.

On the occasion of great victory day, it is my expectation that with the concerted efforts, Bangladesh may turn into a happy and prosperous 'Golden Bangla'.

Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Md. Zillur Rahman

Bangladesh: Achievements in 40 Years

Mohammad Hannan

For many reasons, the emergence of Bangladesh in the global map in 1971 as an independent nation invited worldwide wonder. It was a time when many other countries were fighting for independence. Vietnam and Palestine were among the notable countries to fight for decades for their freedom. Yet, it was Bangladesh that hoisted its flag of victory within nine months of the inception of the struggle. Contrary to this, the independence of Bangladesh had been a surprise to some quarters of the world. These quarters wanted to stem the birth of Bangladesh. When they failed to do so, they raised question about its survival and carried on anti-Bangladesh propaganda. Immediately after the independence of Bangladesh, Mr. Just Faaland and Mr. J. R. Parkinson, two World Bank economists who were stationed in Dhaka during 1972-74, in a joint research paper on the Bangladeshi economic condition stated that Bangladesh was the most difficult case in terms of development. If the problems of Bangladesh could be resolved, it could be said almost with certainty that development in other countries would also be possible. In short, they implied that the development of Bangladesh was almost impossible. This view was first published in the form of a book in 1976 from the University Press Limited in Dhaka. The title of their book is *Bangladesh- The Test Case of Development*. Many international newspapers and magazines joined this anti-Bangladesh propaganda. In one of their articles published on June 6, 1975, the *Financial Times* wrote, "Bangladesh is the end of the great development dream." This sort of negative publicity against a new-born country was utterly frustrating. Even a smear campaign against the newly born Bangladesh was spearheaded by the similar quarters by terming it as 'the bottomless basket'. Any unethical and dishonest statement and remark like this can simply destroy the self-determination and firmness of a new nation. The question, however, remains: Has the propaganda machinery stopped its campaign against Bangladesh even after 40 years of the Independence? The incidents of natural calamities like cyclone, flood, earthquake which visit Japan or the USA outnumber those in Bangladesh. But the same negative

propaganda of painting Bangladesh as a disaster prone country is going on. Even a section of Bangladeshi media relishes in presenting the somber side of the country. Nonetheless, Bangladesh has been advancing giving lie to all these propaganda and conspiracies. The last forty years since the birth of the nation have been a journey towards development. The people of Bangladesh love to indulge in dream.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman taught them how to dream of a prosperous nation. To everyone 'independent Bangladesh' was an unreal dream. But the great leader Bangabandhu made them realize the truth in it. The people of this country were inspired to equip themselves against all odds to materialize the dream of Bangabandhu's golden Bangla. Even it was unbelievable to some people that Bangalis knew how to take up arms against the foes. But under the leadership of Bangabandhu, the people of this country took arms against a well trained military force and achieved victory within an unbelievably short time. What was the status of this land in 1970? There were no socio-economic indicators by which the status of this nation could be measured. On 12 November 1970 about one million people were killed by a cyclone in the coastal area on a single night. The nation had to overcome such a disaster, and move on in pursuit of success. The nation has come up from such a situation under the leadership of Bangabandhu.

What was the situation of newly independent Bangladesh in 1972? The whole country was in dereliction - the roads, highways, railways, bridges and culverts were all

demolished during the war of liberation. The schools were turned into the camps for Pakistani military forces. The jute mills were shut down. People were jobless. The Bangladesh Bank treasury was empty. There has been persisting food crisis. Bangladesh started its journey from such a heap of crisis. Bangabandhu had to reconstruct everything. He made his people dream anew - the dream of 'the Golden Bengal'. But unfortunately, the heinous killing of the Father of the nation on 15 August 1975 halted the onward journey of the country. The poor and distressed people of the country once again fell apart from the main stream of the national development programmes. The continuity of the development programmes was restored after the assumption of power by the Awami League government in 1996.

The task of rebuilding the nation started with untiring effort. During the Pakistan period, the seventy five millions of Bangalis could not have two proper meals a day. But now almost double the people can have their meals. The country even has the record of exporting rice meeting the country's demand. This obviously is a great achievement for this nation. The horrifying *monga* referring to a seasonal famine in the north Bengal has already been eliminated as a result of the special programmes taken by the present government. According to a World Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) report of 2009, Bangladesh has made the greatest progress in food security in South Asia. How many buildings were there in this 400-year old Dhaka? The small town of Dhaka



Father of the Nation formally inaugurating Comilla Cantonment

Contemplations on the Occasion of Victory Day

Abul Maal Abdul Muhith

I wrote an article titled 'Bijoyer Muhurto' (moment of victory) one and a half decades ago. I wrote about the feelings which arose in my mind and the way I spent the day on 16 December 1971. It appears to me that there may be some repetitions from that piece in the present one, being written on the occasion of 40th anniversary of our victory this year. At the same time, I shall make some comments on the thoughts which crowd my mind this time around.

I was staying at the US capital Washington DC in 1971 and the day in question was a Thursday. We were more or less certain about victory from 13 December onwards. But we had apprehensions about what would happen to Dhaka. Would the city be destroyed? Would there be killings there? However, all uncertainties and anxieties were gone when we learnt that the Pakistani army would surrender to the joint command of Indo-Bangladesh Forces on 16 December noon. We learnt at midnight local time that the Pakistanis had surrendered. On the one hand, there was contentment and joy, and on the other there were sorrows and pains: How many lives were lost, how much resources were destroyed, to what extent the society was wrecked?

I left the Pakistan embassy on 30 June 1971. At that time, the question was whether we shall ever be able to return to a free Dhaka? However, there was no scope to harbour that suspicion at that time. Because, we could never nurture any doubt regarding our victory in a just war of liberation. Besides, the subsequent days were spent amid such hectic schedules that there was no time to even imagine anything else short of victory. It was true that the US government never supported our liberation war, but we never felt any shortage of supporters or helpers in America. The success stories of the freedom fighters were on the rise since the month of July



Historic moment of the surrender of Pakistan army

and by November there remained no further doubt that our victory was imminent. The place of my stay at that time was far away from the battlefield or the land of Bangladesh. May be because of that distance, the thoughts which swayed me at that time were not similar to the ones nurtured by those who were present on the battlefield or in Bangladesh.

• We were thinking of how the war-ravaged country would rise up again?
• We were contemplating how the 10 million refugees would be rehabilitated?
• We were thinking about the kind of programmes which would have to be undertaken for rebuilding the new country and how that would be funded?

• We were contemplating how human rights and democracy, for which so much blood was spilled and so many sacrifices were made in the war, would be established in the new land. Certainly, the war-crimes and human rights violators will be tried.

Four questions that pricked my mind were crucial, and those questions were enormously relevant for the work that I was doing then.

• The first question was, how would we establish peace and discipline in the country. Around 65 million had stayed back in the country and led inhuman lives. They had to undergo torture at the hands of the army and the police. Besides, some people and groups had resorted to hostile acts against the motherland. So, how the rule of law could be established after driving away those people, and how the application of law could be ensured for people's welfare? I thought that we would build a small-sized army, but groom the nation as an armed one - 'a nation at arms'. I contemplated that the law enforcement agencies would remain under the control of people's representatives and their character would be welfare-oriented. I thought that establishment of human rights would be attached highest priority.

• The second question was, how would our Constitution be framed? In Pakistan, 9 years were spent for the purpose.

• The third question that came to my mind was: how would we restructure our administration?

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PRIME MINISTER
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH



Message

I extend my sincere greetings and warm felicitations to all citizens of Bangladesh at home and abroad on the occasion of our great Victory Day, December the 16th.

On this glorious day, I pay my homage to the three million heroic sons, who sacrificed their lives and two hundred thousand women, who lost their innocence in the War of Liberation. I salute the freedom fighters, who were ready to sacrifice their lives to free the country from the occupation forces.

My deepest respect goes to the greatest Bangalee of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Responding to his call, the Bangalee nation fought a 9-month bloody war against the Pakistani forces and earned the ultimate victory on December the 16th in 1971.

At this auspicious moment of the Victory Day, I also recall the four national leaders, who led the War of liberation under the directive of Bangabandhu. The occupation forces and their local collaborators - Rajakars - Al-Badr - Al-Shams - were defeated to the heroism of Bangalee nation and their patriotism.

The history of our Freedom Fighting was not a casual event. In fact, the freedom fighting was culmination of the struggle of Bangalee nation for twenty three years under the indomitable leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Roman.

The Bangalee nation arrived at the juncture of the crucial 7th March of 1971 voyaging a long path of struggle of the language Movement of 1952, the election oath 1954, the Education Movement of 1962, the six point Demand of 1966, the Mass Uprising of 1969 and the election of 1970. The champion of Bangalee nations freedom struggle Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared in front of a million of people at the then Race Course Maidan that: this time the struggle is for independence, this time the struggle is for our freedom. In fact the low chapter of freedom struggle got momentum from that day.

The defeated forces of 1971, after independence, did not remain idle. They snatched away to peoples' right through killing, coup and politics of conspiracy after the assassination of the Father of the Nation along with his family members on 15 August and the four national leaders inside the Dhaka Central jail on 3 November in 1975 through the killings, the defeated forces had wanted to undo the greatest achievements of the War of Liberation the constitution, democracy, humanity, culture and development.

The determined Bangalee nation has again reestablished democracy and rights of people through a long Struggle and unfathomable sacrifice. The nation gave its Verdict in favour of the spirit of the Liberation War development and charter of change in the much-awaited parliamentary elections in 2008.

The present government brought the 15th amendment to the Constitution to re-establish the spirit of the war of liberation and prevent illegal capture of state power.

The death sentence to the self-confessed killers of Bangabandhu has been already been executed. The retrial of the killings of four national leaders inside the central jail and trial of war criminals are underway. The government is committed to holding the trial of all killings to uphold the rule of law and human rights.

We are going to celebrate the golden jubilee of Bangladesh's independence in 2021. Our aim is to build a happy prosperous and peaceful Bangladesh with the help of all, irrespective of party affiliation.

Let us build a golden Bangladesh as dreamt by the father of the nation, where there will be no difference between rich and poor, and a boundless prospect will be available for all. Best wishes once again to all.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever

Sheikh Hasina

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