

Talking about Independence Day

(Continued from previous page)

Simultaneously, Bangabandhu adopted a non-violent non-cooperation programme much to the surprise of the world. Up to March 25, Bangabandhu was in full control of Bangladesh. The Government House and the Cantonments were the only exceptions. Offices, court houses, educational institutions, banks, transport systems were taking instructions from Bangabandhu alone.

Between March 16 and March 2, there was a series of meetings between President Yahya Khan and Bangabandhu as well as his other advisors. No decisions, however, were reached. Meanwhile, on March 15, the leader of the People's Party of Pakistan Zulfikar Ali Bhutto observed that due to the physical distance between the two wings of Pakistan, the representation of the majority should not be taken into account in choosing the Premier of the country; instead, the highest representatives of each wing should take over control of their respective areas. Elsewhere, on March 1, Major Shafiullah revolted when his men were asked to disarm a battalion of soldiers from East Bengal regiment who had earlier defied the order to shoot Bangalee at Joydevpur. March 23 was marked as a day of protest that saw torching and tearing down of Pakistan flags. Flags of Bangladesh were hoisted in different places including EPR Head Quarter at Jessore. Even Bangabandhu's car in which he went to meet Yahya fluttered the new flag of Bangladesh. The indiscriminate shootings at Syedpur and Rangpur, following a riot between Bangalee and non-Bangalee on March 24, led Bangabandhu to call for a strike on March 27. Yahya returned to Islamabad on March 25 and gave a public speech, accusing Sheikh Mujib's non-cooperation as high-treason: 'Mujib had run a parallel administration for three weeks, defiled the flag and photographs of the father of the nation of Pakistan, and tried to separate the eastern wing from the country. He could not be allowed to go unpunished for his attack on the national solidarity and integrity of Pakistan.'

Mujib had already been taken into custody on the night of March 25. However, through EPR he managed to send a radio message that declared war

against Pakistan. March 25 witnessed one of the most heinous mass-murder of human history. The tanks came out of the cantonment and attacked EPR, Rajarbagh police line, residential dorms of Dhaka University, certain newspaper offices, localities with pre-dominantly Hindu residents and city slums. Houses were set on fire and anyone who tried to come out of the burning houses was shot at. Students were lined up in front of ditches and then shot from close range; their bodies were buried and the ground was leveled with bulldozers. None was spared: rickshaw-pullers, children feeding on his mother, as if Pakistan was trying to send a strong signal to those

who might try to resist them. A section of the world media, present in Dhaka, covered the news of atrocities to the utmost horror of the world. Similar attacks of Pakistan army were carried out at other places. The initial resistance to such brutal force was soon found inadequate. Some young men got hold of a radio transmission system at Kalurghat, Chittagong and they started Shadhin Bangla Radio Service from which Major Zia announced the message of independence on behalf of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib. This message inspired the people, but the sporadic resistance lacked the bite and intensity to defeat an organized army.

From March 25 there was a countrywide curfew. Once the curfew was relaxed, the general secretary of Awami League Tajuddin Ahmed and Barrister Amirul Islam took the first available opportunity and headed for India on March 27. With the help of Indian military personnel, they managed to reach Indira Gandhi. They sought her help for the formation of a government in Bangladesh and for the liberation war. A council was constituted with all the members who won the national and provincial elections in 1970. They drafted a declaration of independence in tandem with Bangabandhu's message and stated Bangladesh as a sovereign Republic country. The draft resolution made Bangabandhu the president of the Republic. It was decided that until the constitution is ratified, Bangabandhu would remain the president. In the absence of Bangabandhu, Syed Nazrul Islam, the vice president, acted as the president. Tajuddin Ahmed became the prime minister of the Republic. The other cabinet members were: Captain Mansur Ali (Finance), AHM Quamruzzaman (Home, Disaster and Rehabilitation), Khondakar Mostak Ahmed

(Foreign and Law). On April 17, the cabinet was sworn in at a place called Vaidynathtola under Meherpur district which was later named as Mujibnagar. A good number of people from the press came to the inauguration of the country. Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmed told the gathering of foreign journalists: "Bangladesh is at war now. We do not have any other option but to fight for our independence to resist the colonial imposition of Pakistan. Pakistan has died under a heap of dead bodies that itself has responsible for." The guiding principles of the country were identified as democracy, socialism and secularism. The cabinet appointed Col (retd) Osmani as the commander in chief, Group Captain A R Khandaker as his deputy, Col (retd.) M A Rob as the Chief of Staff, and Major Khaleed Mosharraf, Major Ziaur Rahman, Major KM Shafiullah and Major Abu Osman Choudhury as commanders of various sectors of war. These appointments galvanized the liberation war. Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury, who was then in London, was assigned with the responsibility of a special emissary and an envoy to the UN. An all-party advisory council was formed with Maolana Bhashani at the helm. Members from both factions of Awami League, two factions of National Awami League, Pakistan National Council and Communist Party were included to show solidarity and give everyone involved the message that the war was waged for a national cause participated by all parties irrespective of their affiliations. Prof Mozaffar Ahmed, Monoranjan Dhor, Moni Shingh along with Awami League representatives Tajuddin Ahmed and Khondakar Mostak Ahmed were among those who attended the Council.

But by then it has become a people's war. People from all walks of life have joined in. They have taken up training on guerilla warfare. Local administration was formed and free zones were being created. Shadin Bangla radio spread fiery words to inspire the freedom fighters; overseas Bangalee started collecting fund for the war and lobbying for international support. Many of the Bangalee diplomats who were with Pakistan foreign service defected from their jobs and joined the war. Support for the war saw many international programs: an international convention was held in Delhi, a rally in London, a concert in New York and a demonstration was staged in front of Pakistan-bound ship carrying weapons in Baltimore. Millions of people were forced to leave their homes due to the brutality of Pakistan army forced, and India became their eventual shelter. The number of refugees in India was estimated at 10 million. Those who went to India brought stories of ills and depravation, tortures and troubles, and angers and anguish. Bangabandhu was put on a trial in Pakistan, but before the sentence on him could be carried out, the tide of history had turned.

The freedom fighters started having considerable success; various key sites in Dhaka were attacked that were being protected by Pakistan army. At the face of inevitable defeats, the Pakistan army tried to diffuse the focus of the war by attacking India. The result was the surrender of Pakistan army to allied forces of

Declaration of Independence by Bangabandhu : Its inner message

Syed Shamsul Haq

Wires sent the message in an instant to the world:

End of shackles! Liberty!

And the stars in heaven wrote in fiery letters

A name: Mujibur!

His declaration of Independence,

At the strike of zero hour of March 26:

Are forever etched on the face of time.

Bangalis are free from tyrants today!

Arise, my people! Go to fight!

My call to the Nations of the world: Stand by us!

We are writing a new chapter of history

With our blood.

O, write on! Write in blazing letters:

After this, death shall have no domain.

Bullets will be banned in Bangladesh.

People shall seize the power of the State.

This our land of thirteen hundred rivers

Shall be a field of golden harvest from now on.

The stars shall sing out a chorus of Life

And descend to break the curfew imposed if

Ever by any tyrants. In Bangladesh

Mothers' milk shall never cease to flow again.

After this, from every palm of ours will issue

The mighty rush of Great Brahmaputra,

Of life, of a great creativity again.

Adapted by the Poet himself in English

India and Bangladesh. There was a last minute attempt to remove all the brains of the country by killing the intellectuals. The local agents and collaborators of Pakistan kidnapped some of the best brains of the country and killed them. Many of the dead bodies were never found; and bodies of those found bore signs of tortures. The flag of an independent, sovereign Bangladesh finally pierced through the sky to give lie to the plotting, brutalities of Pakistan; the flag is purchased through a heavy price of sighs, tears, and blood. In the last four decades of independence, we had to cross different terrains and see various political ups and downs. Somehow the dreams of the liberation war have remained incomplete. We must strive and work together to make the country worthy of the sacrifice that our martyrs has made.

Translation : Dr. Shamsad Mortuza

Thoughts of New Generation

(Continued from previous page)

progress of the country for the misuse of power by the anti-liberation forces years after years. It is not possible to make progress in any sector unless a competent government fully utilizes its power. Our very first step shall be to mete out deserving punishment to the war criminals. After this, our expectation is to have a right and well-organized bureaucracy absolutely free from corruption.



Mostofa Tousif (17)
BSc (CSE) (First Year)
North South University

I am a citizen of Bangladesh. I am proud of it. First I want to thank the Prime Minister of our country for she has advanced the information technology and continued development process. I passed HSC in

2011. I collect my HSC result through mobile phone which my elder brother could not avail during his time. This year I have taken admission to university. I collected and filled up forms of most of the universities' through internet and purchased the forms through mobile phone. Even I got my admit cards on the internet. From the peasants to the higher class businessmen, all have started to get the benefits of the development of information technology.



Md. Jakaria Khan (29)
BSS (Hons)
Dhaka University

I do not think there is any need to say in a new way about the necessity of technology. Now as much a nation is advanced in information technology so much developed it is considered in the world. Our government also realizes this thing very well, and as they realize, they have given special importance on information technology in the country's sixth five year plan. Many time-befitting decisions have been taken including to reach broadband internet to 30% population of the country for advancement of the information technology sector, increase tele-density upto 70%, making computer education compulsory at the secondary level and gradually making it compulsory at the primary level also. But the government has to be sincere in implementing these. There is insufficiency of quality teachers in most of the educational institutes of our country. So, technology-educated and skilled teachers are to be appointed. Internet should be easily available through reducing its cost of using. With the expansion of broadband internet, we have to think of its speed too. Side by side, appropriate application of all technological devices and internet shall be ensured. We have to prevent the misuses.



Ania Haque (19)
BBA (Student)
North South University

As a citizen of an independent country, I think the future of the country is brighter. In this connection, establishment of social equality carries much importance. During the 41 years of independence

the country has progressed a lot in communication infrastructure, education, health and information technology sectors. I think the trial of war criminals is an unavoidable duty. I feel proud to be able to live in a beautiful, green, independent country with the inspiration of the war of liberation.



Anika Intisar (18)
BSS (Anthropology)
Dhaka University

As a developing country the future of Bangladesh is doubtedly bright. Bangladesh has gained control over the issues like education, information technology, employment and social equality. Tourism industry is being expanded. Similarly, we find smooth progress in the education and technology sectors. It is an important duty to raise awareness among the new generation to make themselves into resources rather than a burden for the country. I become proud when I see the Bangladesh is applauded abroad for her successes. I become exuberant when I see the trial of the traitors and killers, and their agents are becoming a reality; I become full of joy when I see the youths, with whose hands Bangladesh will be transformed into a 'dream country', are inspired with the spirit of the war of liberation.



Rita Roy Mitu (36)
Bangladeshi Expatriate
USA

When I think in 41 years where we could go and where we are as a country, a nation, my mind is filled with a combined feeling of hope and frustration. But as I run my thoughts with the influence of victory,

I see things of hope to be bigger than that of frustration. I am awestruck at the homage and love the present generation showing towards the Father of the Nation. This generation has not seen the War of Liberation, still they are showing us pointing their fingers—how, without getting into debates, we can honorably make position for our own country in the world community. The meritorious boys and girls of Bangladesh are being scattered everywhere in the world, some are earning foreign currency by physical labour, some securing higher education and thinking of returning home, some are trying to sharpen their merit at some research centers of the developed countries of the world.

These children of today are the future of the nation. Here is my hope, here is my dream. The most hopeful thing is that our children are much aware, free from superstitions, much more modern than their predecessors, even though they have to go through a lot of hindrances. Now I can see the reflection of the new generation's thoughts on the facebook sitting at the other corner of the world. We are encouraged to see their awareness. The thoughts and concepts among the members of young generation about the country - its economy, politics, educational system, feeling of nationality etc are much obvious and clear. The educational system of the country has advanced a lot, copying in the examination has been contained, rate of passage in the examination has increased, youths are being self-employed. Rate of female education has increased. These are the indicators of success. A country advances this way, we will also advance.



Syed Jubayer Hossain (27)
BSc (CSE)
Junior Officer, AB Bank limited.

We have achieved independence of this country through great sacrifices. We had a great dream about the independence. We hoped that people of Bangladesh would live together. Mass people would be able to have two square meals a day. There will be no unemployment. Everyone will observe his or her religion independently and none will obstruct other's work; that is, every citizen will enjoy the benefit of independence. We have achieved a lot, but in some issues we have more to do. We have to come forward side by side with government in these matters. Things that we have to give more attention to are education, information technology, development of communication system, development of power and energy sectors, population growth control, development of tourism industry of the country and new job creation. If the government's pledges to the new generation, that is, making a digital Bangladesh, trial of war criminals, development of law and order situations etc. are achieved, we will be able to advance the country to the peak of progress.



Sadekul Hasan Shamim (27)
Assistant Professor
Dental College, Dhaka.

This is my expectation that with proper evaluation of the independence achieved in exchange for a sea of blood, the ideals of the War of Liberation would be made reflected in our national life. The new generation wants to know about the Bangladesh as dreamt of by Bangabandhu. If we could have disseminated this recognized history everywhere among the nation that would be the greatest achievement of our War of Liberation.



Nazia Rahman (26)
MBA (2011)
Dhaka University.

After 41 years of independence, the nation wants a lot from the new generation like me. It is no way possible to build a healthy nation without necessary health care. Whenever we look into a newspaper we see that hospital is there but there is no doctor, there is acute mismanagement and patients get nominal health care. So at first we have to establish new medical colleges at government and private levels to create doctors. We have to put our attention about how, within the existing capacity, the quality of health care be increased through allocation of money from the government and with it making a proper management. Besides, every young doctor might have to build a mind set within him or her to go to remote areas to provide health care services.



Sabrina Islam (18)
BA (Hons) (English, First Year)
Dhaka University

The name of a combined dream of several crores of people is Bangladesh. When I think about Bangladesh, I get a mixed feeling of pride and frustration. Starting from almost a zero in '71 the level where Bangladesh has reached now is much encouraging. We have seen, Bangladesh can advance a long way if she gets a little care and patronization—just as has happened in agriculture, ship and garment industries sectors. We dream of a Bangladesh rich in information technology. However, the dream

is being extremely obstructed to come into a reality. Although there are many reasons behind it, I want to draw attention to the poor condition of the communication infrastructure. We all know how much contribution a good communication infrastructure can make to the overall progress of a country. But the poor communication infrastructure from the remote areas to the big cities, even in the capital, is so acute that it really arouses anxiety about the future of our country. Thinking about future has been a lot, now we have no alternative but work.



Md. Ishtiaq Hossen Mitul (25)
Communication and Network Engineer
in a networking firm

The thinking and expectation of the new generation of the day is quick trial of the war criminals. After this long period of independence, the present government has taken initiative for the trial of the war criminals, for this the new generation is extending support towards the government. The government will begin and complete trial of the identified enemies—this is the expectation of the new generation.



Kazi Parvin (30)
MBA
Upper-division Clerk
Department of Food

I am a Bangladeshi. It is a matter of pride to me. But it is also a matter of shame and pains. There are so many problems in public life. We see in this Dhaka, how miserably people are living in slums beside a five-storey building. I do not see social equality and wonder whether we will see it at all in future. Here, the education and information technology are excellent. There was and still is lack of prudence in politics. If we are not aware, we shall never be able to make our environment good. For this reason, bringing the population under control is very necessary. True, there is publicity for it, but the situation demands more publicity. We should ensure that not a single freedom fighter is in negligent situation and that none of them complain about their troubled situation. How many more days they will live! New may be silver, but old is gold. We want trial of the *rajakars*, the *albadars*, the *alshams*—who are enemies of our war of liberation, the independence and the country and who killed the freedom fighters and intellectuals. Much development in tourism system is needed from both public and private sectors.



Md. Asaduzzaman (25)
MA (2009)
Dhaka University.

I am proud of the independence achieved in 1971 through our great War of Liberation and the international recognition of my beloved mother tongue. But along with this, I am ashamed of seeing that still today our freedom fighters are neglected and they are leading a humiliating life. Yet, I am always hopeful. The common people of Bangladesh fought to get rid of the clutches of 22 families, but what is the number of the millionaires in the country at present? Because of the corrupt politicians, businessmen and bureaucrats, our mass people have not yet got opportunities at all until today. Even though, I am hopeful, one day our educated new generation would establish our Bangla as a real 'Golden Bangla' through establishing justice, rule of law and social equality. I do not have any trust, faith and respect on the current trend of partisanship in the politics of the country.



Md. Kamruzzaman (25)
MA (2010)
Islamic University, Kustia.

The trial of the war criminals is one of the burning issues of the country. Freedom, at the cost of nine month long fight in 1971 and sacrifice of three millions of martyrs and honour of our two and a half lakh women, is the greatest achievement of the Bangalee nation. We feel proud of thinking that we are free now. But, we are shocked to see that even after 41 years of the independence the *albadars*, the *alshams*, the *rajakars* who committed heinous crime against humanity, violated our mothers and sisters, led massacre, set on fires, killed our intellectuals still dare not to recognize our War of Liberation.

Different governments of the post-liberation period did not put any importance to this issue. Even some governments created scopes for the *rajakars* to hoist our red-green flag on their cars. Fie on them! The present great alliance government has made the war criminals face trial for this, I want to thank the present government, specially the daughter of Bangabandhu Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. I demand the trial of all the war

criminals on the soil of Bangla. This trial after 41 years of our liberation might be tough but we shall over all the hurdles.



Salim Ahmed (18)
HSC (Student)
T&T College, Motijheel

The great hero of our liberation Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman gave a clarion call - 'the struggle of this time is the struggle for freedom' in order to liberate the nation from the shackle of slavery. At his call Bangalees from all walks stood against the Pakistani occupation force. Afterwards, this country gets the freedom at the cost of blood of three millions of martyrs. Nothing than this is more prideful to me. Today we are free and independent. Today we can stand up holding our heads upright. I respectfully remember those again and again who sacrificed their lives for our mother tongue and in the War of Liberation and those who are alive as wounded freedom fighters, valiant fighters. The nation will be free of stigma if the verdict of the trial of the killing of Bangabandhu with his family members is fully implemented and the trial of the war criminals is completed within a short period. People are the source of all power. So, I hope both the two major parties will carry on working for the welfare of the people. National Parliament should be taken as the center for solving all the problems for the interest of the people.



Arifin Avir (18)
HSC (Student)
Residential Model College, Dhaka.

It makes me proud that I was born in a free and sovereign country. The independence achieved through a long struggle and War of Liberation under the leadership of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is our greatest achievement. The goal of our War of Liberation was economic emancipation along with political freedom. The country is going ahead with that goal. Achievements in people's fundamental rights - food, cloth, shelter, education and health care service have advanced a lot - the poverty of the mass people has been reduced. This is the time for the new generation to come forward to advance the country further being stimulated by the inspiration of the War of Liberation. Bangladesh has to be shifted to the list of a developed country from that of a developing one. The present age is the age of information technology. In the advancement of information technology and building a digital Bangladesh, our today's educated new generation has to contribute their important role. They have to prevent the activities of political malpractices in the name of politics—setting fires, killing, destroying. It is needed to put attention so that the anti-liberation force cannot raise its head in this liberated Bangladesh. Government has to take more initiative in creating new sectors for the employment of the new generation. New generation has to come forward with the government in bringing social equality, development in communication infrastructure, education, health care service, information technology, environment, population control, fulfilling the inspiration of the War of Liberation, trial of the war criminals, flourishing and development of the tourism industry. New generation has to extend hands towards the government to fulfill its efforts to bring the country ahead even in the face of increasing population growth, natural disasters and much obstacles. I think, the new generation has opportunity to repay the dues of the sacrifices of the freedom fighters at least to a some extent.



Mehedi Hasan (Sweet) (24)
MBBS (Student)
Northern International Medical College

We have achieved a completely independent Bangladesh at the cost of the utmost sacrifice and perseverance of innumerable common people, freedom fighters, *Birshresthos*. But due to different anti-state activities like disputes, riots, selfishness, there arouse social inequality in this independent country. Those who are involved in such negative attitudes have perhaps forgotten that the children of this generation are none but children of those *Birshresthos* and freedom fighters. Self employment, development in long-range communication infrastructure, health awareness and proper family planning can bring a self-dependent, healthy Bangladesh. However, progress in information technology and its proper use and the achievement in the cricket have led our honour much ahead in the external world. To take the nation further forward, the concerning authority should think about how to save the country from those anti-state activities. Perhaps for this reason, the United States President Abraham Lincoln said, 'I walk slowly but never go backward'.

Translators : M. Liaquat Ali Khan, Munshi Jalal Uddin and Rifat Zaifreen