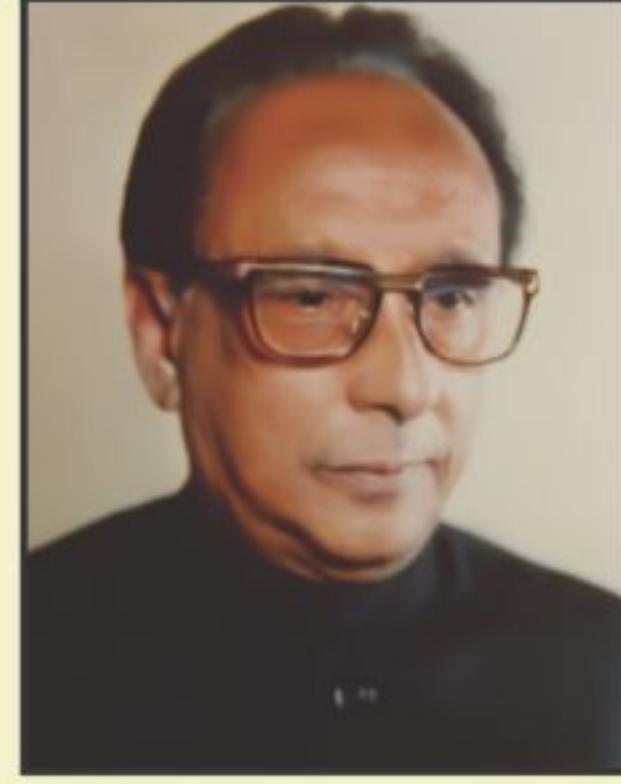


16 December

Glorious Victory Day

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

Special Supplement



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 felicitations 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 our 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 map.

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 time 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. Today, I also extend my sincere gratitude and appreciations to the valiant 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 victory.

This year, the nation is going to observe the 41st anniversary of victory with huge enthusiasm. Just after independence, Father of the Nation and the then President of newly born Republic Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman devoted himself to rebuild war-torn country and dreamt 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 the dream came into reality. This tragic incident and its consequences hindered the flourishing of democracy and the path of 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 ups and downs. 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 constant economic growth despite worldwide recession.

Ahead of Golden Jubilee celebration of our independence in 2021, the present Government has set '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 positions in order to realize and uphold the objectives and spirit of the War of Liberation.

On the occasion of the 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: The Journey towards a Middle Income Country

Professor Mustafizur Rahman

The Backdrop: Aspiration of a Nation

Bangladesh has set her ambition to be a middle income country by 2021 when our nation and our people will be celebrating fifty years of our glorious independence. This ambition has now got reflected in the ten year Perspective Plan and the Sixth Five Year Plan of the present government. The past performance and future potentials of the Bangladesh economy have also attracted increasing global attention and high appreciation. Inclusion of Bangladesh, according to a number of prestigious projections, as one of the prospective next eleven emerging economies of the world also reinforces the aspiration of Bangladesh and gives credence to our ambition to be a middle income country over the next few years. Setting this lofty goal for ourselves could also be interpreted as a way of paying our homage to our martyrs who made supreme sacrifice for the birth of our country, and a tribute to our valiant freedom fighters who took up arms and fought in our war of liberation, inspired by the visionary leadership of Bangabandhu who dedicated his life for a Bangladesh that will be free from hunger, poverty, exploitation, inequality and injustice. Our goal of graduating to a middle income country status ought to be guided by these ideas which go beyond mere economic well being, but also include ideas of inclusiveness in development and justice and fairness in distribution.

The Confidence: Impressive Track Record

Bangladesh's track record of achievements, in different sectors and according to various performance indicators, bear evidence that she is making impressive and encouraging progress towards attaining her goal of being a middle income country

(Contd. on Page-24)

Victory Day

Zillur Rahman Siddiqui

In 1971, the radio speeches of Tajuddin Ahmad exhibited his firm conviction and volition about the liberation of Bangladesh through defeating the Pakistan occupation forces. The Mukti Bahini (Liberation forces) from the very beginning took guerilla war as their strategy for they did not have the capability to fight against the Pakistan occupation army. Col. Osmany was charged with the responsibility of the Chief of Staff of the Mukti Bahini. He was also much aware of the limitations of the Mukti Bahini under his command. The nine months of the Liberation War was also a time for the Mukti Bahini to be strengthened step by step. Indeed, at the end, our freedom fighters began to be a cause of fear to the occupation forces. On one side, there was the well-trained and necessarily armed Pakistan army, and on the other side, there were Mukti Bahini men who included the mixture of people like army men, paramilitary men, and mostly civilians who got training in India, at especial arrangement, but who had enough mental strength. The new training they had, and their mental strength and courage were the basis of all the firmness of the Prime Minister Tajuddin. The direct involvement of the Indian forces was an issue after 3 December of 1971. India signed the treaty with the then Soviet Union on 9 August 1971. The article 9 in that pact was very important. The procedures under this treaty were prepared between 22 to 27 October. On 22 October the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union Nicolai Ferubin visited Delhi. There had been secret plans about that important visit so that the enemy could not be informed of. Pakistan could know nothing. It was decided that if Pakistan attacked, the allied forces of India and Bangladesh would conquer Dhaka in three days.



16 December 1971: The defeated Pakistani forces are going to the historical Dhaka Reservoir Maidan (Suhrawardy Udyan) to surrender to the allied forces. Among others, the Commander of the allied forces Lt. General Arora, the Commander of Pakistani forces Lt. General A A K Niazi and Major Haider of Bangladesh Mukti Bahini are seen in the picture.

In fact the final decision from the allied forces was taken on 22, 23 and 24 October. From Bangladesh part, Syed Nazrul Islam and Tajuddin Ahmad were present in the meeting. The 19-day foreign tour of the then Indian Premier Indira Gandhi was the final move to get cooperation and help in favour of the imminent independence of Bangladesh. The tour did not bring any immediate result but received worthwhile moral supports.

On 3 December, Pakistan attacked India and in no time, the remaining clashes turned into a war between India and Pakistan. The United States of America proposed in the Security Council for retreat of army of the two nations inside their borders, but Soviet Union gave veto. Similarly, the next day, on 5 December, the proposal for cease-fire and the withdrawal of troops by eight countries were vetoed by the Soviet Union. On 6 December, India declared its recognition of Bangladesh as an independent nation. The overall situation went in favour of India-Bangladesh allied forces. Through a bilateral agreement, the captain of the Indian Eastern Command Lt. General Jagjit Singh Arora was assigned as the commandant of the Mukti Bahini. It was settled that General Arora would report to both the governments through General Manekshaw. In the next few days, one city after another was freed. The Pakistani army chief General Niazi did not surrender as he was expecting the arrival of that the Seventh Fleet from the U.S. in the Bay of Bengal and the Chinese army to interfere in India's Assam border. But at last no help came from the U.S. or China. At last, on 14 December, Indian Air Force bombed on the Governor's House.

During firing, Dr Malik, the Governor, could not decide if he and his cabinet would resign. He was advised to take shelter in the Hotel Inter-Continental. And he did so. Meanwhile, General Jacob, then staying in Kolkata was directed by General Manekshaw to immediately go to Dhaka and make final arrangements for the surrender of the Pakistan occupation forces. General Niazi could not but obey the ultimatum of Manekshaw - "do surrender on December 16 by 09:30 morning, or we will capture Dhaka".

That day, on December 16, at 5 in the afternoon, the Pakistani army commandant, General Niazi handed over his shoulder's epaulets and revolver without any argument to General Arora in Suhrawardy Udyan and surrendered to the India-Bangladesh allied forces. In the surrender ceremony, on behalf of Bangladesh, Wing Commander A K Khandker was present. Col. Osmani would not or could not attend. In the open air of the Udyan, this historical event was witnessed by a huge jubilant crowd.

The victory of the War was initiated through the formal surrender. In Bangladesh, more than ninety thousand troops of the Pakistan army were arrested by the allied forces. The prime duty of the Pakistani leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was now to safely take them back to Pakistan as quickly as possible. Meanwhile, a military court had passed life sentence on Sheikh Mujib. Bhutto knew well that if that order did come into effect, the army would be impossible to be freed. What Bhutto did not do in the face of international pressure during the last months, he was compelled to do by the pressure of the then situation. Sheikh Mujib, with two other prisoners Dr. Kamal Hossain and his wife, was set free and boarded on a plane bound for London.

The leading management of the Liberation War like the Prime Minister, acting President and other top leaders were not present on the Victory Day. Six days after the Victory Day, on 22 December they landed at Dhaka airport. Before that all departments were opened including the secretariat. The new government renamed the Governor House as the Bangabhaban. It was declared that the national language will be Bengali, and the war criminals would be taken under trial. The Cabinet decision was: the victory in the war within three days could not be accomplished. The allied forces had to adopt some careful means to reach Dhaka quickly avoiding any clash with the Pakistan army on the way.

What was the commitment of the Liberation War or the Victory Day? The answer could be found in the speeches of postwar Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmad delivered during the liberation war and afterwards. He repeatedly said that there was no way to go back under any system to Pakistan. He also asserted that the freedom of Bangladesh was absolute freedom, complete freedom. The release of Bangabandhu from prison was a demand that remained firm throughout the period of struggle. Parliamentary democracy is our cherished aim, socialism is our objective, and our commitment to socialism was beyond dispute. We have no scope to compromise with all these basic questions. And these questions received so much hails from the common people that after the war in only a year, under the guidance and leadership of Bangabandhu it was possible to form a Constitution by Dr. Kamal Hossain's tireless efforts. The People's Republic of Bangladesh's Constitution was written, and adopted by the Parliament. It was also a remarkable feat as was the nine-month bloody war.

After August 15, 1975 there was no democratic government in the country for long fifteen years. The two generals and other military and paramilitary rulers governed the country violating the Constitution and did a serious harm to it. Though this black chapter ended in 1990, we could not return to our true Constitution of 1972. As long as we can't fully restore our Constitution, the Victory Day will bring back the question time and again to us, and the Victory Day of Bangladesh will not attain its full glory.

(Translated by: Subrata Kumar Das.)



PRIME MINISTER
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

Message

I extend my sincere greetings and warm felicitations to all the citizens of Bangladesh at home and abroad on the occasion of the 41st Victory Day.

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 for the cause of our independence.

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. Bangladesh Awami League earned overwhelming majority in the general elections of 1970. The people's representatives formed the first government of the independent People's Republic of Bangladesh with Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the President, Syed Nazrul Islam as Vice-President and Tajuddin Ahmed as Prime Minister at Mujibnagar on 17 April 1971. At the directive of Bangabandhu, this government conducted the freedom fighting and earned victory. Pakistani occupation forces and their local collaborators - Rajakars-Al-Badr-Shams - were defeated to the heroism, patriotism and heroic leadership of Bangalee nation.

The history of our Freedom Fighting was not a casual event. In fact, the freedom fighting of 1971 was the culmination of the struggle of the Bangalee nation for twenty four years under the indomitable leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The Bangalee nation arrived at the crucial juncture of the 7th March of 1971 voyaging a long path of struggle of the Language Movement of 1952, the election of the 1954, the Education Movement of 1962, the Six-point Demand of 1966, 11-point movement, the Mass Uprising of 1969 and the general election of 1970.

The champion of Bangalee nation's freedom struggle Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared in front of a million of people at the then Race Course Maidan, "This time the struggle is for our freedom, this time the struggle is for the independence". In fact, the new chapter of freedom struggle got momentum from that day. The Pakistani military rule got paralyzed owing to the non-cooperation movement. The Bangalee nation earned victory through armed struggle and freedom fighting with the help of the allied forces.

After independence the defeated forces of 1971 did not remain idle. They assassinated the Father of the Nation along with his family members on 15 August and the four national leaders - Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, M Mansur Ali and A H M Kamaruzzaman - inside the Dhaka Central Jail on 3 November in 1975. They formed an illegal government and defaced the Constitution. They initiated the politics of killings, coup and conspiracy. The defeated forces had wanted to undo the greatest achievements of the War of Liberation - democracy, humanity, history and Bangalee culture.

The uncompromising Bangalee nation has reestablished democracy and rights of the people through a long struggle and unfathomable sacrifice. The nation overwhelmingly voted in favour of Awami League, the party led the War of Liberation, in the much-awaited parliamentary elections in 2008.

The present government brought the 15th amendment to the Constitution to reflect the people's aspirations. This is a milestone in re-establishing the spirit of the War of Liberation and preventing illegal capture of state power.

The death sentence to the self-confessed killers of Bangabandhu has already been executed. The re-trial of the killings of four national leaders inside the central jail and trial of war criminals are also underway. The defeated forces of 1971 Jamaat-Shibir and their cohorts are engaged in fresh conspiracy to obstruct the trial of the heinous criminals. They are carrying out destructive activities. I urge the patriotic people of the country to get united to resist the conspiracies of the killers. The present government is committed to holding the trial of all killings and resisting the anti-nation conspiracy to uphold the rule of law, human rights and democracy.

The nation will 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. The rights of every citizen will be preserved.

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

Dream of a Digital Bangladesh: Potentials and Present Trend

Mustafa Jabbar

Prime Minister and leader of the masses Sheikh Hasina made the declaration about establishing a Digital Bangladesh while announcing her party's election manifesto on 12 December 2008. Fourth anniversary of the occasion will be observed soon.

Bangabandhu initiated the flourishing of information technology immediately after independence of Bangladesh by activating Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board. But advancement and technology got locked up following his brutal assassination. A historic opportunity to get connected with the information superhighway was also wasted in 1992. But leader of the masses Sheikh Hasina climbed on the stairs of a Digital Bangladesh soon after forming her first government in 1996. It was she who took measures like commencement of online internet in 1996, doing away with mobile monopoly in 1997 and withdrawal of duties and VAT on computers in 1998. The Digital Bangladesh of present era is a continuation of that effort. In fact, the golden era of information technology had started right after the assumption of office of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

In short, the principal foundation of the pronunciation of a Digital Bangladesh is the Golden Bangla as dreamt by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. We are terming 'Golden Bangla' as a Digital Bangladesh, because we want to build a Golden Bangla by utilising digital technology as a major tool. For this to happen, we need

(Contd. on Page-24)