I call upon the new leaders to lead us with this heritage and honour in the next forty years. I call upon them to take the helm of this nation in their fist and navigate a course into clearer waters. Young men and women, pilots and navigators equally, we have shared our knowledge and our love of this land with you, in the intimacy of the classrooms and among the tall trees in the wide green spaces of Dhaka University. Many of our own gurus and guides are still with us, bestowing still upon us the light of their wisdom and idealism. Youngblood Bangalee men and women, I call upon you to look brightly upon the rising sun and chart a course towards the shining light of the awakening day. I call upon you to find a clear direction, uniting good faith and good counsel with the ethical values of democracy and liberal humanism. Culturally, communally, nationally, we have always cultivated the fine arts. Now, prove to us and to the whole world that you will cohere and perform better than the previous generation in global diplomacy and nation-building.

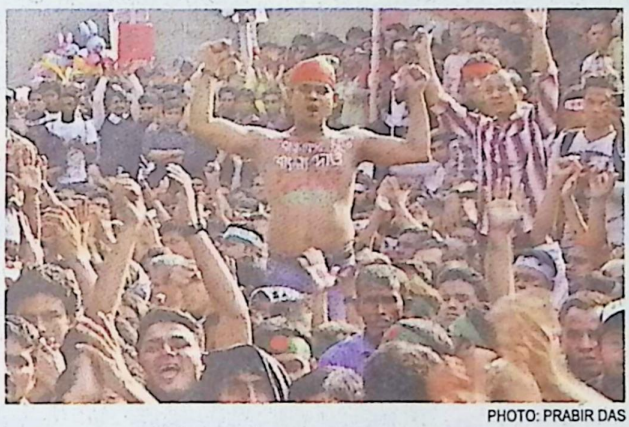


PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Cultivate, now, for your people and for your society, the even finer policies of stability and progress. Cultivate the harmony and health of our nation. Lead, by example, step upon step, with struggle for good governance: of civic goals of universal adult literacy, affordable public health benefits for all, and decent minimum wage without disparity between genders. Above all, for the lifeblood of our nation, seek collective connection: build bridges and protect the ecological balance, not only of the capital city, but of the whole country. Deforestation and denudation must stop now. Let the fresh water of the clogged rivers flow clean and swift to the Bay of Bengal once more. Let new rainfall drench this land to usher rebirth.

Let us grow strong, and let our people carry their heads high in pride as they toil hard days and nights all over this earth. Let the wandering tribe of the Bangladeshi people – children of the Diaspora— sing joyfully of their distant homeland. Let the children salute you in future gain and glory.

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PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

The new generation, however, must rekindle its own torch to light the path forward to a richer, more just and equitable society.