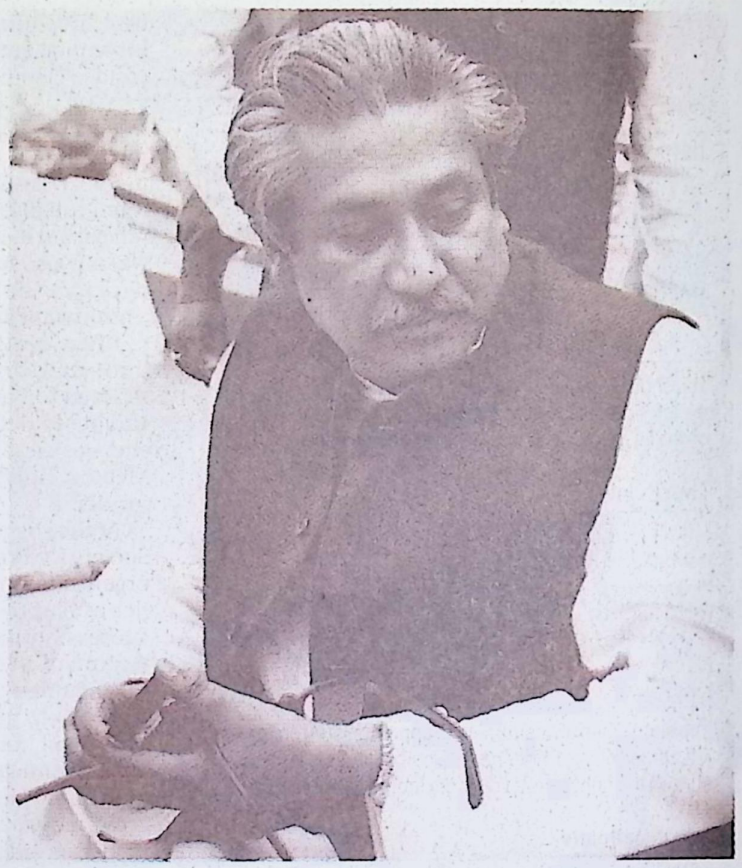
In August, memories swirl around us. It was in this month that darkness descended on this country through the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family. We as a nation have not quite recovered from the shock.

August again is a season which speaks to us of the evil which continues to lurk in the bushes. There are the macabre images which come back to haunt us, those of the explosions which claimed the lives of twenty two individuals at an Awami League rally in 2004, of the bombs detonated by religious extremists all across Bangladesh on a single day in 2005.

On 11 August forty two years ago, the murderous Yahya Khan junta placed Bangabandhu on trial before a secret military tribunal in Mianwali. Three months later, the sham tribunal sentenced the Father of the Bengali nation to death. On the rain-drenched evening of 18 August 1945, the plane carrying Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose came crashing down in Taipei, bringing to an end the life of a great Indian nationalist.



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

In August, We Remember . . .

SYED BADRUL AHSAN

Only days before Netaji's death, US President Harry Truman pushed tens of thousands of Japanese to death through dropping atomic bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In August 1983, the opposition Philippine politician Benigno Aquino Jr was murdered on the tarmac at Manila airport moments after he returned home from exile in the United States. Five years later, in 1988, Pakistan's third military dictator Ziaul Haq was blown to pieces when an aircraft carrying him crashed moments after taking off from Bahawalpur. Many others died with him.

In August 1946, the communalism let loose by the All-India Muslim League in support of its demand for the creation of Pakistan pushed anywhere between five thousand and ten thousand Hindus and Muslims to death in riots in Calcutta. Having called a Direct Action Day for 16 August, the Muslim League was unable to restore order in the city. Four days of murder and mayhem followed.

The obduracy of the Muslim League leadership led to the vivisection of India in August 1947, with the state of Pakistan taking shape in two improbable pieces of geography separated by a thousand miles of Indian Union territory. It was a division that was to have grave ramifications for South Asia, with India and Pakistan going to war three times in a span of twenty four years.

August remains memorable because of the freedom it brought to the people of Indonesia. Struggling for independence from the Dutch,