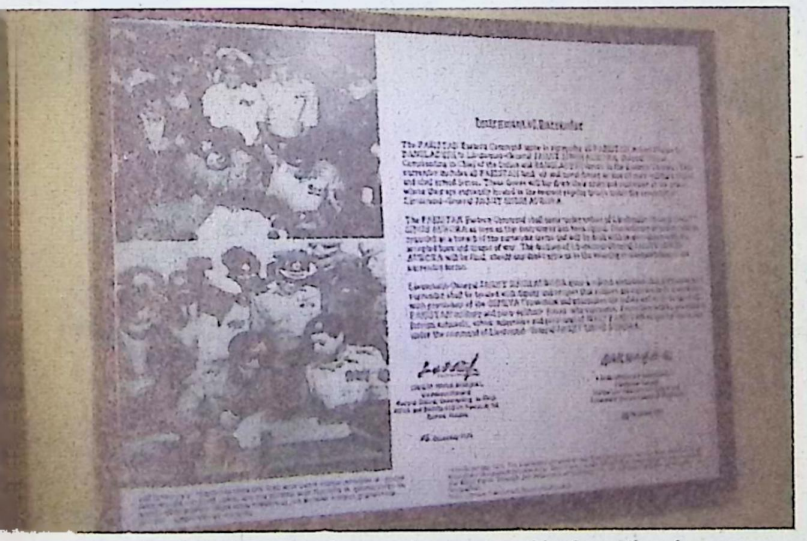
But the ring leaders of the war criminals were safely deported to West Pakistan. A list of 200 Pakistani officers were made who were directly involved with the crimes committed during the liberation war. But paying no heed to the plea of Bangladeshi victims, they were transferred to their country in exchange of the freedom of Indian prisoners and the stranded Bangladeshi Army officers in West Pakistan. Even most of the local criminals, who were responsible for the killing of intellectuals and are the perpetrators of many such atrocities, could not be held and properly tried. Still the dilemma of trying the war criminals is affecting the stability of our nation.

Bangladesh's sovereignty seemed meaningless without freeing Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Being captured by Pakistan Army he had to spend the entire nine months of the Liberation War in a Pakistani prison. He was given the death sentence by a military tribunal for sedition. In his absence, severe infighting among the political leadership broke out. The leaders who led the nation during the war could do little to save Bangladesh from an impending disaster thanks to the war torn economy and the pressure of a huge mass of refugees and victims. War heroes like Kader Siddiqui declared that he and his 50,000 men would not surrender their arms till Bangabndhu's return. People with unauthorised guns and ammunition were lurking all over the country. Abuse of law and orders were common. In some places, personality clash between the sector commanders and Indian forces created a distance between them. It went extreme when the Indian Army arrested one of the sector commanders, Major Jalil (Sector 9), for his "misconduct" with the Indian Army. In his memoirs Major Jalil claimed that he had wanted to stop the Indians from plundering and therefore they had captured him and he became the first political prisoner in independent Bangladesh. It clearly shows the level of instability going on in this new nation in the absence of its father.



Pakistani soldiers captured by Mukti Bahini.



The historic instrument of surrender preserved in the national museum.

When Bangabandhu landed in Bangladesh on January 10, 1972 he was received by ordinary Bangladeshis with the warmest and the most cordial of ceremonies. But such emotional moments soon became memory when the curses of war became evident. Bangabandhu's tactful diplomatic move resulted in the prompt withdrawal of the Indian troops. Sovereignty was restored but not the destroyed economy and industry. The outcome was severe famine. Mismanagement and greed of the political leaders fuelled the famine to reach its extreme stage. More than a million people died of starvation, malnutrition and disease. Corruption and gluttony of political big shots made people resentful of the ruling party. Bangabandhu's popularity nosedived. After a glorious victory, a blanket of darkness again covered our nation.

But it was not the end of the story. Overcoming such turmoil and disasters people of this land always have shown their resilience. In the heap of ruins, the future of Bangladesh again got its foothold. Industries reinstalled, economy refurbished and Bangladesh started its journey towards progress. Bangladesh became one of the biggest exporters of RMG and its Army became the icon of peace across the world. Since its cruel birth, Bangladesh has never succumbed to any crisis. Very few nation of the world survived so many disasters just after its beginning as an independent country. From the history of our previous glories we can certainly hope that we shall overcome the ongoing turmoil. But surely the responsibility to find a way is ours.

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