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Homecoming Day of Father of the Nation



PRESIDENT
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH

Message

Today is the historic 'Homecoming Day' of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I along with grateful nation recall with deep respect the great leader on this very auspicious day.

On this day of 1972, the architect of independent Bangladesh and Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who led our War of Liberation and struggled for independence, returned to sovereign homeland after being freed from Pakistani prison. With the return of the great leader, who faced deadly challenges of life for his brave leadership in various struggles for the country's independence and cherished the dream of sovereign Bangladesh for his whole life, the people from all walks of life were overwhelmed with endless joy and enthusiasm. Returning from the gallows, on this day, Bangabandhu, the undisputed leader of Bengal uttered with emotion at the then Race course Maidan that his lifelong dream had come true. Bangladesh emerged as a free and sovereign state. The independence let not be spoiled till the last Bangali remained alive.

I believe our independence and sovereignty would remain ever constant as long as we will stay with the ideal of Bangabandhu. On that day our great leader urged all to build a 'Sonar Bangla' (Golden Bengal). I am confident that we shall be able to materialize the dream of Bangabandhu by rendering our collective efforts imbued with the spirit of patriotism.

I call upon all, irrespective of party affiliation, to work unitedly to build a happy and prosperous Bangladesh. Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Md. Abdul Hamid

Joi Bangla: Joi Bangabandhu

Syed Shamsul Haq

March of Seventy-one, midnight, twenty-five twenty-six – Pakistani soldiers come down, armoured carriers, Killing spree continues, setting fire, the whistle of siren Blowing through the skull. But how swiftly –

Above the roar of cannons a voice floats over the ether: From today Bangladesh is free and independent! Thunderous voice of Mujib! With the 'Joi Bangla' slogan The Bangalis go to war; Daybreak shatters the darkness of time.

Bangla's sky gets a sunrise of reddish hue – Sixteenth December! Victory after nine months. Surrender at Ramna ground! It doesn't end there – Collaborators of the time remain even today on Bangla's soil.

Bangla's flag is torn, the martyrs' monument broken! It is against them that this final war begins. Got back the weapons, Bangabandhu has returned – That slogan of Joi Bangla! – I keep my ears stretched.

Translation:Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed

A Footstep Completed the Independence

Swadesh Roy

Bangladesh achieved its victory through a long blood-spattered way on 16 December 1971 but then the world's eyes were on a Jail of Pakistan because, a prisoner in the Pakistani jail was the hope, wishes of 75 million people along with the fulfillment of the newly born country's independence. It was the first time of the world that, a head of the state of a newly born country was a prisoner of his enemy-country. It was the first time in the world, a leader who took the leadership of his newly government returning from the jail of enemy.

Pakistan was the enemy of the newly born Bangladesh but they were bound to release him under the pressure of the world community. The then President of Pakistan Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto could understand that he had no way without releasing of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Father of the Nation and the President of Bangladesh. A petite hope was in his mind that if he could play any game to take Sheikh Mujib but after taking power shortly, he understood, his first task was to bring Sheikh Mujib from Jail to the prestigious guest house, and he did it. At a UN press conference on 22 December 1971 the then Indian Foreign Minister Sardar Swaran Shingh told, "I have seen a press report that Sheikh



Emotional Bangabandhu after returning motherland

International Media Bangabandhu's Trial Release and Homecoming

Dr. Abu Md. Delwar Hossain

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman gave birth to a nation, a country, as well as a new map. Just as he had the required leadership quality for attaining these, similarly were there the 3 million martyrs and the sacrifices of 200 thousand mothers and sisters. This saviour of the Bangalis had to traverse tough terrains over a long period of time starting from the language movement up to the Liberation War. He had to go to jail seventeen times between 1938 and 1971. This indomitable man could never be held back by the Pakistani autocrats. Despite being framed in the Agartala conspiracy case and sentenced to death by hanging through the farcical trial of 1971, he repeatedly returned to his nation and birthplace due to the qualities of courage and patriotism.

Arrest

As per the plan, of Pakistan government, Bangabandhu was arrested on 25 March at 1.30 am after midnight from his residence at Dhanmondi road 32. News of his arrest and the besieged city of Dhaka could be obtained from the foreign media and the interview given by Bangabandhu to David Frost after independence, although the news was not published in any Dhaka-based newspaper. In a report published on 30 March 1971, the Washington Post informed about the ransacking of Bangabandhu's residence and garden, and the shredding of the red, green and yellow flag of Bangladesh which was flying outside with bullets when he was arrested. Before his arrest, the Pakistani soldiers entered the building while firing in a commando style. One officer even wanted to fire at Bangabandhu, but he was saved due to another officer's intervention. He was held captive at Pakistan's Lyallpur jail a few days after his arrest.

Trial

The Pakistani government brought allegations against Sheikh Mujibur Rahman of burning the Pakistani flag, destroying the portrait of the Father of the Nation of Pakistan, armed mutiny and killings of Biharis. The Pakistani government decided to hang him from the very start of the farcical trial. Quoting Radio Australia,

dug just beside his cell. Although a special telegram was supposed to be sent to the jail authority for execution of the verdict, it was not sent due to the surrender by the Pak army in Dhaka.

Bangabandhu's Release

Although the Bangalis expressed their joy and delight after achieving victory on 16 December 1971, they were saddened by the martyrdom of 3 million people and the absence of their dearest leader. There were many write-ups in the international media on whether Bangabandhu was alive or not. In such a situation, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto clarified Bangabandhu's status to the journalists on 20 December after taking over the responsibility of the president of Pakistan. The global media were very eager for the release of our beloved leader. The New York Times published the announcement of the Pakistani government on Bangabandhu's release on 21 December and reported the next day that he was kept under house-arrest at an undisclosed place. However, he was brought to Rawalpindi on 23 December for discussions with Bhutto. Although Yahya had proposed hanging of Bangabandhu by showing an earlier date while handing over power to Bhutto, seasoned politician Bhutto made a last-ditch attempt to preserve the unity of the 'two wings of Pakistan' by putting pressure on Bangabandhu. News could be gathered from the mass media about the two meetings held between Bangabandhu and Bhutto on 27 and 29 December. The US, British and Japanese periodicals reported about these discussions. Bhutto had urged Bangabandhu to preserve the existence of Pakistan at any price. When Bangabandhu expressed his inability to make any such commitment before talking to the people after returning home, Bhutto put forward the proposal of at least a confederation between the 'two parts of Pakistan'. At the same time, he offered Bangabandhu the posts of the President or the Prime Minister.

After these meetings and while Bangabandhu was still in Pakistan, Bhutto expressed his optimism about the unity of the two wings and a political settlement during an interview with the Voice of America on 1 January 1972. The next day, he decided to release Sheikh Mujib at a meeting with policy-makers in Karachi. However, the US periodical 'Time' reported by citing Bhutto that this decision was based on an understanding between the elected representatives of the 'two parts of Pakistan'. Robert Paine, however, clearly wrote that Bhutto decided to free Mujib after failing to obtain any agreement or advantage through his meetings with Sheikh Mujib. He, however, did not announce any date for the release. In interviews given to the mass media on 6 January while Bangabandhu was still in Pakistan, Bhutto declared that he would visit Dhaka soon for the sake of the unity of 'two Pakistan'. Bhutto himself conceded to the newspapers about the pressures exerted by the world leaders and some progressive leaders, politicians, journalists and intellectuals of Pakistan for the release of Sheikh Mujib. At that time, Bangabandhu rejected Bhutto's offer of sending him to Turkey or Iran. The decision to send Bangabandhu to London was taken all of a sudden on 8 January.

The Hero Returns Home

Although Bangabandhu was released on 8 January, he had to go to London first. On behalf of Delhi where the British comet aircraft landed in Dhaka's Tejgaon Airport at 1.45 pm on 10 January, there were unprecedented scenes. Crossing a sea of people on a 5 kilometre stretch from the airport to the Racecourse (Suhrawardy) ground, Bangabandhu's motorcade reached the venue after two hours. The Bangali nation received their father figure and greatest son after a long wait of 10 months. The headline of the daily Ittefaq on that day was "Welcome the Dreamer of Bangla"; the daily Purbodh wrote "Mother, Your Mujib has Arrived"; the headline of the New York Times was "Sheikh Mujib Home: 500,000 Give him Rousing Welcome".

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Translation: Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed



PRIME MINISTER
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

Message

The 10th January of 1972 is one of the historic days in the chronology of the liberation struggle of Bangali nation. On this day, the greatest Bangali of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman returned to independent Bangladesh after over nine and a half months' confinement in a Pakistan jail.

Bangladesh Awami League earned absolute majority in the 1970 elections under the leadership of the Father of the Nation. But the Pakistani military junta continued to cling to power ignoring the people's mandate staging various farces. A cruel persecution descended on the Bangali nation. Aiming at an ultimate target to free the Bangali nation, the Father of the Nation in his address at the then historic Racecourse Maidan on the 7th March in 1971 declared, "This time the struggle is for our freedom, this time the struggle is for the independence". The Pakistani occupation forces launched brutal attack on innocent Bangalis and carried out massacre on the 25th of March in 1971. The Father of the Nation declared Independence of Bangladesh at the first hour of the 26th March. The Bangali nation started the Liberation War.

The Father of the Nation was then arrested and sent to a lonely jail in Pakistan. Bangabandhu was subjected to inhuman torture in the Pakistani jail where he had been counting moments for execution of his death sentence pronounced in a farcical trial. In the face of death sentence, Bangabandhu rejoiced the spirit of Bangali nation. He was the inspiration of the freedom fighters. Under his charismatic leadership, Bangali nation earned the ultimate victory waging the 9-month solemnly-vowed war. The defeated Pakistani rulers had finally been compelled to free Bangabandhu from the jail. The Father of the Nation returned to the independent Bangladesh on the 10th January in 1972. On his return, he delivered a historic speech where he narrated the inhuman torture of the Pakistani military junta of Bangalis. The Bangali Nation has gotten back the Father of the Nation and their victory attained the fulfillment through his freedom.

After his return, Bangabandhu had devoted all his efforts to rebuild the war-ravaged Bangladesh. His heroic leadership ensured immediate withdraw of the Indian allied forces from Bangladesh's soil. Responding to his call, various international organizations, including the UN and the friendly countries, quickly gave recognition to Bangladesh. Bangladesh earned the membership of the OIC in 1974. Bangladesh soon made its strong position in the comity of nations under the charismatic leadership of Bangabandhu.

The assailants halted the march-forward of Bangladesh through killing Bangabandhu along with most of his family members on August 15 in 1975. The armed usurpers marred the democracy, defaced the Constitution and halted the trend of progress and development.

The democracy has been reestablished after protracted struggles and sacrifices. We are taking Bangladesh towards the desired advancement. We have reestablished the spirit of the Liberation War through the 15th amendment to the Constitution. It sealed off usurping power through any unconstitutional means and ensured the hope and aspiration of the people.

Let us come and build a hunger and poverty free, prosperous, non-communal, peaceful Bangladesh being imbued with the spirit of liberation. Let us build a "Sonar Bangla" as dreamt by the Father of the Nation where there will be no difference between the rich and the poor, and equal opportunity of prosperity will be available for all.

We should take a fresh vow on the homecoming day of the Father of the Nation so that no evil force could disrupt the ongoing march of our progress and development.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Sheikh Hasina

reorganization of the country as soon as possible and the other was withdrawal of Indian troops. But before the release of Shiekh Mujibur Rahman the world thought that it was only possible by the leadership of Shiekh Mujibur Rahman. So, the world renowned newspaper, The New York Times wrote an editorial on third January 1972 – "Bangladesh urgently needs Sheikh Mujib's leadership to unify its people for urgent task of rehabilitation, reconstruction and building the nation. India needs Mujib even more desperately to forestall a growing threat of anarchy and extremism in this new border state and promote the conditions that will facilitate the speedy return of the refugees to Bangladesh and withdrawal of Indian troops." Bangabandhu, the Father of the Nation returned home on 10 January 1972.

It is the part of the history that, Bangabandhu made possible the speedy return of the refugees. In our country, many of the researchers worked on freedom struggle but nobody did work on the refugee though within ten million refugee seven million was minority who were forced to go back to India not only by the torture of Pakistani army but also by the torture of Razakers and Albadars. Those Razakers and Albadars were their neighbors. So they were hurt physically and were suffering from mistrust. Returning of Bangabandhu gave them confidence. In addition, they believed that, Bangabandhu would give them security and he would trial them who had tortured them and killed their family members. Besides, after getting freedom there was an urgent need of building the nation first. Bangabandhu started it but after his sad demise it was stopped. Besides, the counter revolutionary or military government tried to confuse the nation regarding our nationality. They also tried to destroy the bond which was required to make our nation.

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