international support for a free nation. The whereabouts of his colleagues remained shrouded in mystery. But he was able to confront the situation by announcing the formation of a government, the first ever in the history of Bangladesh, on April 17, 1971. After the new government's oath, Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmad said in a press statement, "We do not aspire to join any bloc or pact but will seek assistance from those who give it in a spirit of goodwill free from any desire to control our destinies."

However, it was not easy being a prime minister and running the newly formed government.

The young leaders in the Awami League, like Sheikh Fazlul Haq Moni, thought they were ignored. Sheikh Moni claimed that Banbabandhu gave him the order to run a revolutionary force to free the country. When the party was bridled with pettiness within its own domains, Tajuddin was busy uniting a nation. He had to fight against two forces within the government- the opposing, unhappy leaders like Khandakar Mushtaq, and the young, aggressive force of Mujib Bahini. The intellectual in him was prepared to withstand the challenges his fellow Awami Leaguers were throwing at him.



In a Wrold Bank meeting.



Tajuddin Ahmad and Dr Kamal Hossain in a meeting with journalists.

In his first meeting with Indira Gandhi, he clearly stated that this war was being fought to free Bangladesh from oppression. "This is our war and we want to fight it on our own. We do not expect any interference from the Indian army. But we need training, arms and help for the refugees, who have taken shelter in West Bengal," he said.

His determination and flawless leadership attracted the Indian government. Indian politician-diplomat DP Dhar said, "Only Tajuddin was mentally equipped to lead Awami League out of a situation like this (the liberation war). That was his biggest strength. He took all the initiatives, while his rivals (within AL) failed to identify what else they were looking for apart from recognition from India."

On November 23, 1971, before the vigorous attack on the Pakistani army by Mukti Bahini, Tajuddin Ahmed delivered an inspiring speech to the nation, "We are fighting for our freedom in exchange of our tears and blood. The day of that final destination is very much within our reach. But we have to sacrifice more lives; we have to suffer even more. The inner meaning of independence is deep and profound. The essence of freedom is related to the price we pay for it during war