

Special Supplement



PRESIDENT
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH

Message

August 15 is our National Mourning Day. On this fateful night in 1975, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the greatest Bangali of all time, embraced martyrdom. Today is the 39th martyrdom anniversary of Bangabandhu. I pay my profound homage with heavy heart to the architect of sovereign Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as well as to the memory of his family members who also embraced martyrdom on that day. I pray to Almighty Allah for the salvation of those departed souls on this Mourning Day.

The 15th August 1975 is regarded as a heart-rending and disgraceful chapter in the history of the Bangali nation. On this day the undisputed leader and Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was brutally assassinated at his Dhanmandi residence by a group of killers with the connivance of anti-liberation forces. His wife Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib, sons Sheikh Kamal, Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russel, daughters-in-law Sultana Kamal and Rosy Jamal, brother Sheikh Naser, farmers' leader Abdur Rab Serniabat, youth leader Sheikh Fazlul Haq Moni and his wife Arzu Moni, Baby Serniabat, Sukanta Babu, Arif and Abdul Nayem Khan Rintu were also assassinated along with Bangabandhu on this day. This brutality is rare in the history of the Bangali nation as well as in the history of the mankind. The aims of the killers were not only to kill Bangabandhu but also to annihilate the ideals of the war of liberation and reinstate the defeated forces.

The contribution of Bangabandhu in our national history is of paramount and ceaseless. Under his able and courageous leadership the Bangali nation achieved long-awaited independence. Starting from the historic Language Movement in 1952, Bangabandhu led the nation at every struggle and movement including the movement against Martial Law in '58, Six-Point Movement in '66 and Mass Uprising in '69 towards attaining the right to self-determination and fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of the masses. He, therefore, had to go to jail for several times and had to face inhuman sufferings. This great leader finally declared country's independence on March 26 in 1971 after inspiring our people with the spirit of the Bangali nationalism over two decades. Bangladesh therefore emerged as a sovereign state in the world map. Bangabandhu and Bangladesh is thus synonymous. The assassins though killed the Father of the Nation, yet they could not wipe out the principle and belief of Bangabandhu. I am confident that the name of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman will remain ever shining in the mind of millions of Bangalis so long as the country and its people will stay alive.

The trial of Bangabandhu's assassins had been completed in 2010 after 35 years of assassination. Today the nation is rather free from stigma. Now we should take all out initiatives to bring the death-sentenced fugitives back to the country in order to execute the verdict.

Bangabandhu cherished a dream of making a 'Sonar Bangla' (Golden Bengal) throughout his life. Therefore, it is our utmost responsibility to materialise his dream by putting our concerted efforts. Let us pledge to do our best to complete the unfinished task of Bangabandhu in building a Sonar Bangla. In this way we can pay our deep homage to this greatest son of the soil.

On the National Mourning Day, let us translate our grief into strength and devote ourselves to build a prosperous Bangladesh.

Khoda Hafez. May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Md. Abdul Hamid

Why Bangabandhu will remain bright in people's minds

Muntasir Mamun

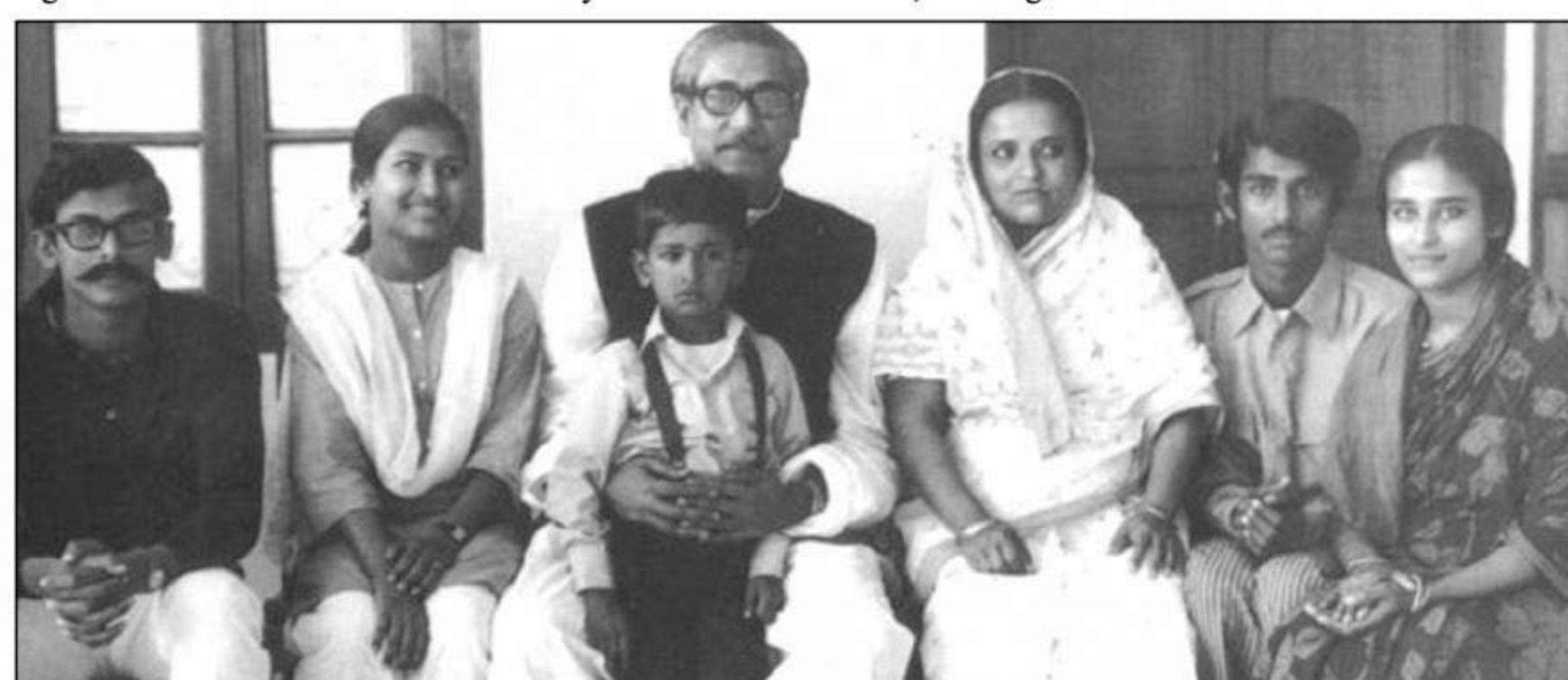
Once I went to Tungipara. The journey to and from this place has been very easy now. But think of the condition 70/80 years ago. It was then a totally inaccessible region. On the way back from Tungipara I was just thinking how a man from an ordinary family of such a remote village united a nation and created a country. Just a moment's thought about it makes our position and that of that man from Tungipara, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, clear. That brown-skinned man with a robustly-built tall stature came up from a completely rural and paddy-growing culture. His heart was as generous as nature and he wanted to cover with his generosity all the Bangalis and the entire Bangladesh. That is why we lovingly call him – Bangabandhu. The Bangalis also loved him in return as long as he lived. All of a sudden on the morning of 27 March 1971 major commanded the Bangalis to snatch away freedom and then they jumped into the struggle – the Bangalis are not like that. It took a long time to rouse them and that was possible only for Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. So some people may like it or not. Mujib must be called the sculptor of freedom. And did Mujib suddenly become Bangabandhu in 1969 and the father of the nation in 1971? That is not true either. It took him as long as three decades to become Bangabandhu. If we consider the period from 1940s to 1974, we will be able to see that there were several factors behind Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's turning into Sheikh Mujib or Bangabandhu. They were – his unwavering aim, strong determination to reach the goal, indomitable courage, compassion, humanity and tolerance. He had a strong desire to keep his bond with the large population intact through everything like his movements, costumes and everyday conversations.

Many people can claim to have dreamt of Bangladesh. In the sixties of the last century Moulana Bhashani too spoke of an independent land for the Bangalis but his idea was that of an independent East Pakistan, not Bangladesh. Anyway, nobody was able to materialize the dream of an independent land. That dream came true on 16 December 1971 under the leadership of a pure Bangali, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. It was he who was able to create the geographical border of a state for the Bangalis. Bangabandhu, the father of the nation or Sheikh Mujib – by whatever name we call him, the moment the question of Bangladesh comes it is only his stature that crops up in our mind. And that is why his position has been fixed in history and that is why we remember him time after time.

On 15 August 1975 a group of assassins from the Bangladesh army killed Bangabandhu and his family members. Many people call it a mere massacre. Under

his rule people grew resentful and this massacre was the consequence of that resentment – this interpretation is wrong. There was certainly a local and foreign conspiracy behind the assassination of Bangabandhu and that conspiracy was enacted by Khondaker Mostak and Ziaur Rahman. It was not a mere assassination. Bangabandhu was the symbol of an ideal. Killing him was actually a murder of that ideal. That Ziaur Rahman was somehow or other involved in that killing is evident in the fact that he, in his reign, brought back the pre-liberation war situation and reestablished the Pakistani ideals and for this reason he illegally changed the constitution. He brought all the anti-liberation political parties to power. He reestablished the killers, *rajakars* and *al-badars* in the society and the state. It seemed that he was aggrieved at his having taken part in the liberation war and in the split of Pakistan. No other person could do as much harm to Bangladesh as Ziaur Rahman alone did. And it is not untrue that a group of Bangladeshi population followed the footsteps of Ziaur Rahman and dreamt of establishing Pakistan in Bangladesh and they are still active. Here emerge the characteristic features of a section of people in Bangladesh.

It is evident in history that the English who ruled the country from the 18th to the 20th century (until 1947) had never praised the people of Bangladesh. I have thought that they have written such descriptions perhaps because they were colonial rulers. But even those who came to Bangladesh as travelers in the ancient period wrote the same stories. Even in the *Mahabharat* (older than the narratives of the travelers) this region has been called "a land untraveled by the five sons of Pandu", meaning that it

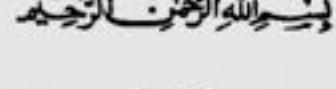


The Father of the Nation with the members of his family in Dhaka, 1972

15 August

National Mourning Day

Art & Design : Department of Films & Publications • Assistance : Press Information Department, Ministry of Information



PRIME MINISTER
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

Message

The 15th August is the National Mourning Day. On this day in 1975, the greatest Bangali of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, along with his family members, was assassinated in one of the most barbaric carnages in the human history.

Eighteen members of the family along with Bangabandhu's wife Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib, three sons Captain Sheikh Kamal, Lt. Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russel, two daughters-in-law Sultana Kamal and Rosy Jamal, brother Sheikh Naser, peasant leader Abdur Rab Serniabat, youth leader Sheikh Fazlul Haq Moni and his wife Arzu Moni, Baby Serniabat, Sukanta Babu, Arif and Abdul Nayem Khan Rintu were killed on the fateful night. Bangabandhu's Military Secretary Col. Jamiil was also killed. Some members of a family at Mohammadpur in the capital were also killed by artillery shells fired by the killers on the same day.

On the day of National Mourning, I pray to the Almighty Allah for the salvation of the souls of the martyrs of the 15th August.

The people of this territory snatched the glowing sun of the independence, breaking the shackles of subjugation of thousands of years, under the dynamic, courageous and charismatic leadership of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The Bangalis have gotten their own nation-state, flag and national anthem.

But Bangabandhu was killed when he had undertaken an arduous task of building a Golden Bangla reconstructing the war-ravaged country and unifying the whole nation. The defeated forces of the Liberation War made abortive attempts to ruin the tradition, culture and advancement of the Bangali nation. Their target was to destroy the non-communal democratic fabric of Bangladesh.

The anti-liberation forces linked to the carnage initiated the politics of assassination, coup and conspiracy. The trial of Bangabandhu's brutal assassination was blocked by promulgation of indemnity ordinance.

Ziaur Rahman usurped the state power. Martial Law was promulgated suspending the Constitution and overthrowing the people's elected government. The killers of the Father of the Nation were rewarded and given jobs at the Bangladesh missions abroad. The anti-liberation elements were given nationality. They were made partners of the state power and rehabilitated politically and socially. The subsequent governments of BNP-Jamaat alliance had followed the same path.

The people of the country made Bangladesh Awami League victorious in the 29th December general elections in 2008 to end the era of BNP-Jamaat regime's killing, corruption and misrule, and ensure country's socio-economic development. We implemented huge development programmes during the last 5 years as per our election manifesto 'Vision 2021'. The country has been put on a firm economic footing overcoming the stagnancy left out by BNP-Jamaat and impact of global recession. The country's people again made us victorious in the 5th January elections in 2014 disregarding the anarchy of BNP-Jamaat. We have been working hard to implement 'Vision 2021' and 'Vision 2041' aimed at building a prosperous Bangladesh.

We have implemented the verdict of the Bangabandhu killing case. The trial of the killers of four national leaders was completed. The trials of the war criminals and the 21st August grenade attack cases are also progressing. We are committed to upholding democracy, constitution and rule of law. No conspiracy will be able to distract us from establishing the truth and justice.

The killers were able to kill Bangabandhu but they could not kill his dreams and ideals. The ideals of long struggle of sacrifice of Bangabandhu are implanted in the heart of Bangali nation.

Let us engage ourselves to materialise his dream of building a Golden Bangladesh turning into strength the grief of the great loss of the Father of the Nation. We must win the struggle to establish an economically solvent democratic and non-communal Bangladesh which will be totally free from hunger, illiteracy and poverty.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever

Sheikh Hasina

is not a place worth visiting. If we analyse the event of killing Bangabandhu and the events following it, the reasons for distrusting those characteristics of the people of this country do not diminish. These characteristics are ungratefulness, hypocrisy, telling lies, mean-mindedness and what not. And Bangabandhu was an worse victim of all this nastiness.

Firstly, just four years after the creation of Bangladesh, not only he but also his family members and other relatives were brutally killed. A section of people of this country were happy to see it. One former Awami League leader has told me that on 11 August Sheikh Mujib had told him that Mostak should immediately be removed. But before he could do that it was Mostak who had 'removed' him. In this background one of my friends told me an event. He went abroad in 1975 after the assassination of Bangabandhu. He was in a taxi to his hotel from the airport. At one stage of his conversation with the taxi driver, the driver asked him which country he was from. When he said that he was from Bangladesh, the driver made a comment and it meant that the country where salt, killing and laws are violated is very dangerous. That means, if you eat someone's salt you should not be ungrateful to him. And killing someone or causing bloodshed is no doubt a crime but if the killers are not brought to justice it is worse and a violation of laws. Since then Bangladesh has still been known all over the world as a dangerous country and the country which has not yet been able to establish the rule of law cannot be recognized as a civilized country. And it is not an exaggerated idea. An indemnity act was introduced to avoid the trial of the killers of Bangabandhu. Bangabandhu's daughter has nullified that indemnity act and completed the trial. There was a lack of eagerness for this trial in the BNP regime and the then minister Moudud Ahmed created a lot of obstacles. Some killers of Bangabandhu are still absconding. Maybe sometime in future they can be brought back. However, as the trial of the assassination has been smoothly completed, it can be said that the country has got rid of the liability. The road to the restoration of the rule of law has opened up.

The rise of the BNP was for the eradication of the determination of Bangladesh and that required the erasure of the name of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The BNP was right from the beginning a pro-Pakistan party and it has now aligned and merged itself with the Jamaat. Those who see Jamaat and BNP as two separate parties are wrong. There is no big difference between the two parties now. Their main aim is to eliminate Bangabandhu's name from the hearts of the Bangalis. They are adopting and will adopt as many means as possible to achieve this end.

Begum Zia has changed her birthday to 15 August in order to harass Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur

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