



Special Supplement

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پیوندائے برکت
রাষ্ট্রপতি
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH

Message

16th December is our Victory Day. On this day in 1971, we achieved the ultimate victory through a nine-month long War of Liberation. On the eve of our great victory day, I extend my sincere felicitations and congratulations to my fellow countrymen living at home and abroad.

The significance of the victory day in the context of chequered history of independence is endless and manifold. The historic declaration of the independence by our great leader, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on March 26 in 1971 became true on this day through attaining the final victory. Bangladesh emerged as an independent and sovereign state in the map of the world on this day. Today, I pay my deep homage to the valiant freedom fighters who made supreme sacrifices in the War of liberation in 1971 for the cause of country's independence. On this very day, I also recall with profound respect the greatest Bangali of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who presented us in the world arena as a sovereign nation, shunning all sorts of oppression and repression throughout his life. Today, I also extend my deep gratitude to the valiant freedom fighters, organizers and supporters of the War of liberation and the people from all strata who directly and indirectly made huge contributions towards achieving victory.

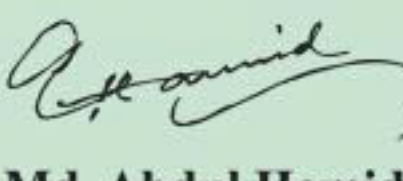
This year, the nation is celebrating the 43rd anniversary of victory with huge enthusiasm. The people of Bangladesh are peace and democracy-loving. They want unbroken democratic advancement and development. But the path of democratic practices was not smooth. Over last four decades, our democratic pluralism has been advancing through various ups and downs. Democratic government has now been established in the country. The present government has been implementing various programs aimed at ensuring the well-being of the people. With the commencement of far-reaching development activities, Bangladesh has attained great socio-economic development together with continuous economic growth despite worldwide recession. Our achievements in enriching democracy, empowering women, strengthening local government, development of agriculture, health and education, ensuring food security, developing power and energy, thriving information technology, expansion of women education and ICT etc. have been praised by the world community. Nowadays we are exporting world-class readymade garments, knitwear, frozen foods, jute and leather goods, tea, pharmaceuticals, ceramic items, handicrafts, and ocean going ships to the international market. I am also happy to note that our expatriate community is making significant contributions to our economy by sending their hard-earned foreign currency. I extend my sincere thanks to our wage-earners for their patriotism and contributions to the motherland.

Our foreign policy is being exercised in accordance with the principle of 'Friendship to all, malice towards none' as declared by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Our bilateral relations with the international community along with neighboring countries are gradually widening and deepening. I am confident that our relations with other nations would be further consolidated in the days to come. I am happy to note that Bangladesh is closely working with the international community to establish world peace and mitigate the negative impact of global climate change.

To celebrate the Golden Jubilee of our independence, the present Government has set the 'Vision 2021' for transforming Bangladesh into a middle-income country. It is my firm conviction that we would be able to materialize the vision within the stipulated time by utilizing our huge human resources and information technology, Inshallah. On the eve of our victory day, I call upon my fellow countrymen irrespective of party affiliation to contribute more from their respective position towards building our country upholding the objectives and spirit of War of Liberation.

On the occasion of great victory day, it is my expectation that with the concerted efforts of all, Bangladesh will turn into a happy and prosperous 'Sonar Bangla'.

Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.


Md. Abdul Hamid

The Great Victory Day is the
Noblest Achievement of
Our Liberation Struggle

Tofail Ahmed

Many memories come to my mind in December – the month of victory – after the expiry of another year. We achieved our noblest victory on 16 December 1971 by freeing our motherland at the cost of over three million martyrs and the honour of over 200 thousand mothers and sisters. The Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Mujib had carried forward stage by stage our intense struggle for long 24 years and sacrificed his own life for realizing the dream of independent Bangladesh. His cherished dream – dearest motherland Bangladesh – was liberated on 16 December 1971.

I rushed to the headquarters of the Mujibnagar government, located at Kolkata's Theatre Road, immediately after our victory was formalised following the surrender of the Pakistani forces at the historic Racecourse Maidan (present Suhrawardy Uddyan) at 4.30 pm on the afternoon of 16 December. Our revered leaders Acting President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Syed Nazrul Islam, Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmed, cabinet members Monsur Ali, Quamaruzzaman and others were present there. We all were overwhelmed with joy. The leaders took us in their arms and embraced us. There was euphoria and joy in our minds due to the realization that we had succeeded in freeing our dearest motherland from the clutches of the invaders; that feeling of ecstasy is incomparable! The picture of independent Bangla that the Father of the Nation painted with his own heart after arming the unarmed Bangali nation was articulated in his thunderous voice, "Nobody shall be able to suppress us". Through the unconditional surrender of the Pakistani invading



forces and the literal materialization of the words of the invincible Bangali leaders, the people of the world were convinced that nobody could suppress us on the question of realizing our just rights.

Mingling and becoming one with our national life, the month of December is also luminous with memories of joy and sorrow in my own life. I became a member of the Pakistan National Assembly in December 1970 at the age of only 27 years. We raised the slogan of independent Bangladesh for the first time on the occasion of Shaheed Suhrawardy's death anniversary on 5 December 1969. On that day, Bangabandhu had urged the assembled people, 'Please raise the slogan alongside me – my country your country, Bangladesh, Bangladesh'. In the historic election of 1970, the Awami League won absolute majority by winning 167 seats in the National Assembly in polls held on 7 December and 288 seats in the Provincial Assembly in voting held on 17 December. Each day of December is therefore highly significant in our national life.

The liberation war took a final shape from 3 December 1971 onwards. We were then standing on the doorsteps of victory. Devastated by the all-out attacks of the freedom fighters from all four sides and seeing no other options, the Pakistani forces unilaterally declared war against India on the day. The Pakistani air-force launched sudden attack on the air-bases located in western India, including Agra, as well as the eastern air-base of Agartala. In the backdrop of the emerging situation centring the liberation war, Prime Minister Sirimati Indira Gandhi declared a state of emergency at 10.30 pm after holding emergency meetings with the President Sri V V Giri and high officials. In a radio broadcast at 12.20 midnight, Mrs Indira Gandhi expressed her full support for an independent Bangladesh and stated in clear terms, "Today, this war has emerged as a war of India".

The following day on 4 December, the Acting President of the Mujibnagar government Syed Nazrul Islam and the Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmed jointly wrote a letter to the Indian Prime Minister requesting formal recognition of Bangladesh. The gist of the letter was, 'If we establish formal diplomatic relations, then our joint stand against the Pakistani military junta

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پیوندائے برکت
প্রধানমন্ত্রী
PRIME MINISTER
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH



Message

Today is the 16th December, the Great Victory Day. This is the day of greatest pride for the Bangali nation. Responding to the clarion call of the greatest Bangali of all time, the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Bangali nation earned the ultimate victory on this day in 1971 after 23 years of intense political struggle and a 9-month bloody war against the Pakistani occupation forces.

I extend my sincere greetings and warm felicitations to the countrymen at home and abroad on the occasion of the 43rd Victory Day.

On this glorious day, I pay my deep homage to the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I recall with gratitude the four national leaders, and three million martyrs, who sacrificed their lives and two hundred thousand women, who lost their innocence for the cause of our independence.

Bangali nation got prepared for independence waging the Language Movement of 1952, the Education Movement of 1962, the 6-point Demand of 1966, 11-point Movement and the Mass Upsurge of 1969 under the undaunted leadership of the Father of the Nation.

Awami League earned an overwhelming majority in the general elections of 1970 through which Banglali nation's aspiration for independence got legal basis. Bangabandhu realised that the oppression, persecution and deprivation meted out to the Bangali nation would not be ended without achieving the independence. Ultimately, on the historic 7th March of 1971, Bangabandhu in front of a million of people at the then Race Course Maidan declared that, "This time the struggle is for our freedom, this time the struggle is for the independence". Virtually, from that day, the final chapter had been started for achieving an independent Bangladesh. The countrywide non-cooperation movement had begun at the directives of Bangabandhu as part of the final preparations of the Liberation War.

On the fateful night of 25th March of 1971, the Pakistani occupation forces launched a brutal onslaught and committed genocide on the innocent and unarmed Bangalis. The Father of the Nation declared independence of Bangladesh in the early hours of the 26th March of 1971 resulting in the formal War of Independence.

On the 10th April of 1971, the proclamation of independence was announced by the elected people's representatives and the first Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh was formed with the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the President, Syed Nazrul Islam as Vice-President and Tajuddin Ahmed as Prime Minister. This government was sworn-in on the 17th April of 1971 at the historic Mujibnagar in Meherpur and led the war of independence. Under the leadership of this government, the liberation war had gained momentum. The heroic freedom fighters with the help of the allied forces earned the victory on the 16th December of 1971 by defeating Pakistani occupation forces and their local collaborators Rajakars, A1-Badrs and Al-Shams. The Nation ultimately earned an independent country, own national flag and national anthem. The heroism and patriotism of the Bangali nation created a new history in the world.

As Bangabandhu had engaged himself in the struggle to build a "Golden Bengal" reconstructing the war-ravaged country, the anti-liberation forces in collusion with the war criminals assassinated Bangabandhu along with his family members. Through the heinous killings of the 15th August 1975, the assassins made an abortive attempt to ruin the heritage, culture and progress of Bangali nation. The aim of the killers was to destroy the secular and democratic fabric of Bangladesh. They initiated the politics of killings, coup and conspiracy and obstructed the process to try the killers of Bangabandhu through promulgating indemnity Ordinance.

They ruined the democracy by declaring Martial Law and formed an illegal government. They defaced the Constitution and gagged the press freedom. They prized the self-confessed killers of Bangabandhu through providing them with lucrative postings at various diplomatic missions of Bangladesh. They granted citizenships to the war criminals and anti-liberation elements, and made them partners to the state power. Thereby, the identified war criminals were politically and socially rehabilitated. The BNP-Jamaat alliance government of 2001 had followed the paths of their predecessors.

The Bangali nation reestablished the democracy and rights of the people in 2008 through a long struggle. The nation overwhelmingly voted in favour of Awami League, the party that led the War of Liberation, in the much-awaited parliamentary elections. The Awami League-led Grand Alliance Government ensured the franchise of the people by bringing the 15th amendment to the Constitution which prohibited usurpation of the state power.

The people of Bangladesh again made Awami League victorious in the 5 January elections in 2014 and thereby preserved the continuation of the constitutional process. Our government has relentlessly been working for the uplift of the country and its people as per its election pledges.

We have executed the verdict of the trial of the killers of Bangabandhu along with his family members. The verdicts of the trials of the war criminals are also being executed. We are pledged bound to free the nation from the disgrace through implementing the verdicts.

Besides, we have contained terrorism and placed the country's economy on firm footings. Over 6 percent GDP growth rate has been achieved. The forex reserve crossed USD 22 billion mark. The per capita income has been raised to UDD 1200 and peoples purchasing capacity has substantially been raised. The country has attained self-sufficiency in food production. The social and food security of people have ensured. The rate of poverty was reduced to 24 percent from 40 percent. Establishing of a Digital Bangladesh is not a dream but a reality now. The world is now acclaiming Bangladesh for attaining remarkable progress in socio-economic fronts. Bangladesh is now a role model for development, women empowerment and world peace. All these were possible through continuation of the constitutional and democratic processes.

We have been working to build a hunger-free, poverty-free and a peaceful middle-income Bangladesh by the year 2021 and a developed and prosperous one by 2041. We are hopeful of building a 'Golden Bengal' as dreamt by the Father of the Nation through implementing the Vision 2021 and 2041.

Let us come and uphold the development and democratic spree being imbued with the spirit of the freedom struggle. Let us engage ourselves for the services to the country and its people. Let this be our vow on the Victory Day of 2014.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.


Sheikh Hasina

Remarkable Socio-Economic Gains and
Future Outlook of Bangladesh at her 43

Dr. Mohammed Farashuddin

Bangladesh is amongst the few countries that defied the global meltdown 2006-09 to achieve heart-warming growth in Gross Domestic Products (GDP). Six percent plus annual GDP growth rate over the period 2009-14 is exemplary. The economic growth has also been significantly transformed into social progress. As the father of the nation and the head of the government, he articulated in 1972 the 7th March vow towards a planned socio-economic development for a welfare state. The First Five Year Plan, 1972-75 adopted in unambiguous terms, the goals of infrastructure rehabilitation and expansion, poverty reduction, subsidy in inputs and price support for output in agriculture, planned growth in population, a scientific and technology oriented modern education system with unified primary stream in mother tongue, industrialization and use of the fiscal instruments for growth with equity.

The Status
The following two tables give a comparative picture of Socio-economic development of Bangladesh in recent years:



Table 1 : Economic Achievement

	Annual GDP Growth %		Per Capita Income (PPPS)		Exports as % of GDP		FDI % of GDP	
	2013-14	2014-15	1990	2011	2007	2012	2012	2012
World	3.3	3.8						
Developed Countries	1.8	2.3						
Emerging Countries	5.1	5.4						
Bangladesh	6.2	6.5	741	1678	20	23	1.1	
China	7.5	7.4			42	27	3.6	
India	5.5	6.3	1193	3203	21	24	1.3	
Indonesia	5.4	5.8			29	24	2.2	
Malaysia	5.0	5.3			110	87	3.2	
Nepal	4.5	-	716	1106	13	10	0.5	
Pakistan	4.1	4.3	1624	2424	14	12	0.4	
Sri Lanka	7.6	7.5	2017	4929	29	23	1.6	
Thailand	2.2	4.5			73	75	2.9	
Vietnam	5.7	5.7			77	80	5.4	

Table 2 : Social Achievement

	Life Expectancy at Birth (Years)		Infant Mortality Rate (Per 1000 live births)		Maternal Mortality Rate (Per 100000 live births)		Total Fertility (Children per woman)		Access to Improved Sanitation (%)	
	1990	2011	1990	2011	1990	2010	1990	2011	1990	2011
Bangladesh	59	69	97	37	600	194	4.5	2.2	39	56
India	58	65	81	47	600	200	3.9	2.6	18	34
Nepal	54	69	94	39	770	170	5.2	2.7	10	31
Pakistan	61	65	95	59	490	260	6.0	3.4	27	48
Sri Lanka	70	75	24	11	85	35	2.5	2.3	70	92

Source: UNESCAP, ADB, WB, Bangladesh Planning Commission and BMMS 2010

In 2013, the per capita income in Bangladesh had been 2364 measured in purchasing power parity dollar. Thus the country is poised to reach the Middle Income status by 2019 at the latest. Noble Laureate Professor Amartya Sen and others characterize the economic growth and its social transformation in Bangladesh to be excellent, an undiscovered gem and amongst the top in South Asia. Compared to 1972 (a) life expectancy at birth has increased from 43 to 69 years in 2011 which is second highest to Sri Lanka (75), (b) annual population growth rate has declined from 3.3% to 1.3% in 2014, (c) infant mortality has dropped to 34 per thousand compared to 179, and (d) maternal mortality has declined to 194 per hundred thousand live births (BMMS 2010). Total Fertility Rate (TFR) in Bangladesh is 2.2, the lowest in Asia. The primary enrollment is 99% and the dropout rate has

declined to 34 percent. The girl child enrollment in the primary and secondary is higher reflecting the demographic composition. 56% have access to improved sanitation and 64% have access to pure drinking water. The country is now almost self-sufficient in food production. There is no serious gap in clothing. In terms of housing (shelter), there are problems but no crisis. Primary healthcare service is on an improvement trajectory. Bangladesh has thus been paying successful attention to the five basic needs of its people. The social safety net has its own success and could be upgraded to a social protection programme.

The Evidence

Bangladesh has a formidable wave of positive vibration around its development journey. Goldman Sachs finds it to be amongst the topmost "next eleven". To J P Morgan, Bangladesh is a Top Five Front Liners. Leading Pollstar PEW research institute of USA has found in a 2014 survey that 71% of the citizens of Bangladesh are satisfied with their economic status, and 81% think that the posterity will be even better off. A New York based research organization in an applied research survey in 27 Asia Pacific, Middle Eastern and African countries finds that consumer confidence index in Bangladesh has jumped to 66.4 percent, the highest in its sample. UNCTAD 2013 Report views Bangladesh to be the second best destination for FDI. In the years 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013, the country attracted an ever increasing FDI of 0.70, 0.91, 1.14, 1.21 and 1.60 billion US dollars respectively. Bangladesh has ample opportunity to improve its development programming to attract significantly higher levels of FDI. The top buyers of RMG and knitwear products are increasingly leaning towards the Bangladesh source. The sector is striving hard and the recovery of the export momentum is in sight since the tragic Rana Plaza accident. Physical and working conditions are on an improvement track in the factories.

The exports of Bangladesh reached a level of \$3.03 billion in 2013-14; is expected to increase to \$33 billion in 2014-15. It is still very modest at 20% of GDP. Despite the problems in the Middle Eastern countries, the remittances bounced back to reach \$14 billion level in 2013-14, the 7th largest in the world. IMF lauds the macroeconomic stability of the country.

A determined and gutsy drive in the non-communal Bangladesh against fundamentalism, terrorism and crime against humanity has impressed the global community. In connection with a death penalty verdict against an accused proven guilty of specific charges of crimes against humanity during the war of liberation, the European Commission has clarified, it was not against such trials. Nor was the EU complaining about the procedures of the trials. The Commission was expressing reservation against death penalty each time such a verdict was pronounced anywhere in the world.

Three recent positive events would most likely add to the significant vibe of the Bangladesh progress. The Speaker of Bangladesh Parliament, Dr. Shirin Sharmin Choudhury contested and won on October 09, 2014 the Chairmanship of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA). Saber Hossain Chowdhury MP was elected on 16 October 2014 as the Chairman of the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU). Bangladesh was also elected to a seat in the UN Human Rights Commission in New York in October 2014. These events do reflect the global confidence in the people, democracy and the government of Bangladesh.

Resource Mapping

Bangladesh is a country of high potential. Its human resources, fertile soil and the riverine topography are its best assets. With 50 million of its 160 million people in the productive working age group of 15-35 years,

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