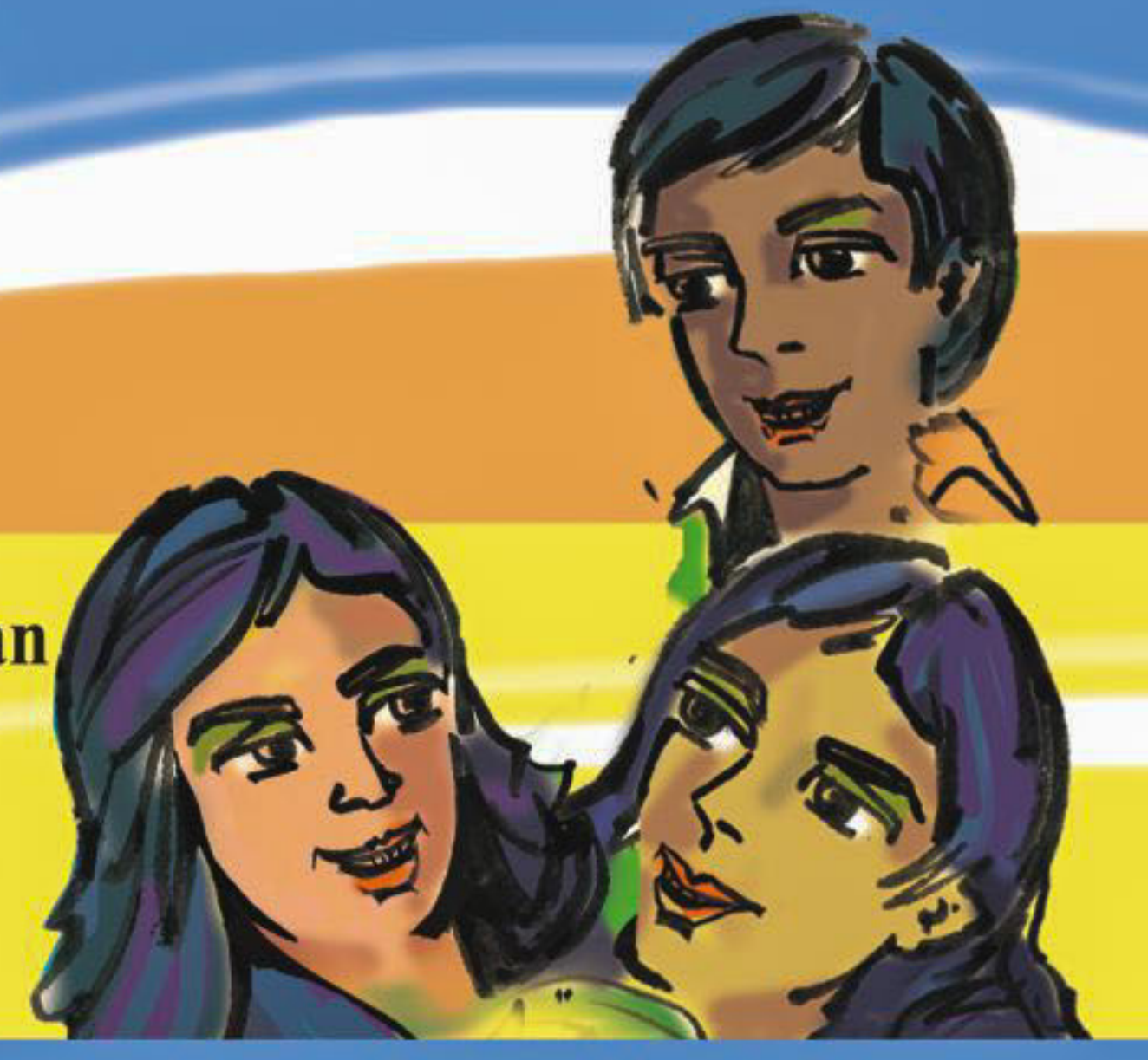


National Children's Day

Homage on the auspicious day of birth of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman



Special Supplement

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

PRESIDENT
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

Message

On the occasion of the 95th birth anniversary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, I pay my profound respect to the memory of this greatest leader. On this auspicious day, I also convey my heartfelt greetings and felicitations to the children of Bangladesh as this day is being observed as National Children's Day across the country.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the greatest Bangali of all time, was born in Tungipara of Gopalganj district on 17 March 1920. Since his boyhood he was very kind and generous but uncompromising on attaining rights. The leadership quality of Sheikh Mujib was noticed from his school life. In the early forties of the last century, as a young student leader, he actively participated in politics having close association with Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy and Sher-e-Bangla A K Fazlul Haque. He always cherished the thought of Bangla, Bangali and Bangladesh. He was the dreamer of Bangali nation and an ardent exponent of Bangali nationalism. This visionary leader led the nation in every movement towards attaining democracy and autonomy including the Language Movement in 1952, Jukta-Front Election in 1954, movement against Martial Law in 1958, Six-Point Movement in 1966, Mass Uprising in 1969 and the General Elections in 1970. For this, he was sent to jail several times and had to bear inhuman sufferings. Despite manifold challenges, he did never compromise with the Pakistani rulers on the question of establishing rights. Finally, this undisputed leader of the Bangalis declared country's Independence on March 26, 1971. Responding to his clarion call the people from all strata participated in the War of Liberation in 1971 and achieved ultimate victory on December 16, 1971 through a nine-month long armed struggle. For his extraordinary contributions towards achieving Independence, Bangabandhu and Bangladesh emerged as a unique symbol to the people of Bangladesh.

In the context of his overall contributions, Bangabandhu had appeared before us not only as a person but also as a unique history of the time. He would also remain as an ever surpassing personality in society, nation and in the contemporary world for his extraordinary qualities and works. He is the symbol of independence and the forerunner of freedom of the down-trodden and oppressed people of the world.

Just after the Independence, the Father of the Nation devoted himself to reconstruct war-torn Bangladesh and emphasized on making diplomatic relations with friendly countries and the world community on the principle of 'Friendship to all and malice towards none'. Bangladesh, therefore, was rapidly recognized in international arena for the world-wide acceptance and outstanding leadership qualities of Bangabandhu.

We have to build our young generation with the sense of noble qualities so that they can materialize Bangabandhu's dream of transforming the country into 'Sonar-Bangla' (Golden Bengal). Let us put our sincere endeavour to flourish the great virtues and intrinsic values of our children from their very childhood. Let us illuminate our young generation with giving them proper education and knowledge and igniting deep sense of patriotism and dedication as they can make themselves as worthy citizens and love the country and its people.

Bangladesh is one of the signatories to the UN Child Rights Convention and our Government is pledged bound to protect and preserve the rights of children. I welcome the initiative in observing the National Children's Day on the birth anniversary of Bangabandhu. I urge upon all irrespective of party affiliation to work unitedly for building a happy and prosperous Bangladesh and ensuring bright future of our children.

I pray to the Almighty for the salvation of the departed soul of Father of The Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on his 95th birth anniversary.

Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Md. Abdul Hamid

Sheikh Mujib My Father Sheikh Hasina

There is a beautiful picturesque village on the bank of the river Baigar. The name of that village is Tungipara. The river Baigar reaches the Madhumati river by following a meandering course. The river Baigar is one of the numerous branches of this Madumati. There lay a green foliage of palm-tomal-hijal trees on the both sides of the river. The songs of 'Bhatiali' float from the mouths of boatmen on this river with oars in hand; the chirping of birds and the ripples of river-water create a fascinating environment.

The river Madhumati had flown beside this village nearly two centuries ago. Habitats were then built up on its bank. Due to the inviolable law of nature, the river has now moved farther away. Many other villages also sprang up after the surfacing of shoals. Our forefathers had arrived in this small riverine village of natural splendour and beauty and settled down here with the goal of preaching Islam.



Sheikh Mujib in his boyhood: football was his passion, 1940

Their trading and commercial activities were centred around the port of Kolkata. They started cultivating crops in fallow lands here together with the local peasants. Gradually, they built up Tungipara as a self-reliant and affluent habitat. At the outset, boat was the only mode of transport. Later, a steamer landing port developed at the Gopalganj thana.

Our ancestors, purchased landed properties at Tungipara village for dwelling. They built houses there by hiring masons and technicians from Kolkata. Those were completed in 1854. The remnants of those buildings still remain as a witness of time. The Pakistani invading forces burnt down the two buildings which were used as residences till 1971. After starting to reside in those buildings, our family began to expand and the number of settlements around the place also rose. My great grandfather Sheikh Abdul Hamid built a tin-roofed house on the north-eastern corner of that building. My grandfather Sheikh Lutfor Rahman started his family life in this dwelling. And my father was born here on 17 March 1920. My father's maternal grandfather Sheikh Abdul Majid named him as Sheikh Mujibur Rahman during his *Akika* (naming ceremony). My father was the first son of my grandmother who issued two daughters earlier. My grandmother's father therefore donated all his properties to her and said during *Akika*, "Maa (daughter) Saira, I have given your son such a name that it will be famous all over the world."

My father's childhood was spent diving in the river-water at Tungipara and getting dusty on the rural-path passing through the field. He used to get soaked in the muddy waters of monsoon. How the weaver-birds built their nest, how the kingfisher went inside water to catch fish, where lay the nest of the magpie robin - the searching of all these were the usual activities of this romping boy. My father was greatly attracted by the sweet melody of the latter's sound. And that is why he liked to mingle with nature by moving around the fields and meadows with small children of the village. He used to teach the little 'shalik' and mynah birds how to speak or whistle after catching them. He used to rear monkey and dog, and they used to do whatever he instructed. Again, he used to give the responsibility of looking after them to his younger sister Helen. He could not tolerate the slightest negligence towards these animals. Sometimes the younger sister was scolded for that reason. There is a narrow canal on the north-western side of our house, which connects with the confluence of the rivers Madhumati and Baigar. A large 'Kachari Ghar' stood on its bank. And the teachers, *pundits* and *moulavi* sahibs used to reside in rooms adjacent to this house. They were appointed as house tutors and my father used to learn Arabic, Bangla, English and Mathematics from them.

The Gimadanga Tungipara High School was built by our ancestors. It was then a primary school, located almost one and a quarter kilometre from our house. Abba (my father) initially

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

PRIME MINISTER
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH



Message

I pay my deep homage to the greatest Bangali of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on his 95th anniversary of birth and National Children's Day. I convey my best wishes to the countrymen, especially the children, on this auspicious day.

From his boyhood, Bangabandhu was fearless, courageous and benevolent. He was the last resort to realise the righteous demands of the people of Bangladesh. The main aim of Bangabandhu's long career was to free the Bangali nation from the shackle of subjugation. The Pakistani rulers at the very outset made onslaught on our mother tongue. Bangabandhu was detained on 11 March 1948 while a general strike was in force to realise the demand of recognising Bangla as the state language.

During 1948 to 1952, Bangabandhu was put behind the bar time and again. Bangabandhu, however, continued to lead the struggle whether he was in jail or in freedom. During the tragic incident of 21 February in 1952, Bangabandhu was in confinement and was giving directives from internment.

As a continuation, the victory of United Front in 1954 election, the anti-martial law movement against the military junta Ayub Khan in 1958, the movement against Education Commission in 1962, the historic 6-point demand of 1966, mass upsurge in 1969, general elections in 1970 and overall the Independence War of 1971 were steered under the undaunted leadership of Bangabandhu. His charismatic leadership and personality brought the whole nation under one umbrella. We got the coveted Independence and a sovereign Bangladesh. The Bangali nationalism got flourished.

The Father of the Nation was not only the leader of Bangalis but also a forerunner in realising the rights of the oppressed and deprived masses of the world. When Bangabandhu devoted himself to rebuild the country, the anti-liberation and reactionary forces brutally killed Bangabandhu along with most of his family members on 15 August in 1975 to halt the spirit of the liberation war and development spree. The illegal military rulers then defaced the country's constitution, one of the finest constitutions of the world. They rehabilitated the anti-liberation, war criminals and reactionary forces. The countrymen were deprived of their right to life and vote. The legacy to distort the history of Independence and freedom struggle started.

Bangali nation was freed from the stigma at least to some extent through the execution of the capital punishment pronounced by the highest court of the soil in the Bangabandhu killing case. Efforts are underway to bring back home the remaining absconding killers to implement the verdict. The trials of war criminals are now going on and verdicts against the war criminals are being executed. We are pledged bound to materialise the unfinished tasks of Bangabandhu defeating the conspiracies of anti-liberation and undemocratic forces.

Bangabandhu had a limitless adoration for the children. That is why, the day of his birth has been declared as National Children's Day. On this day, I pray to the Almighty Allah for the peace of the departed soul of Bangabandhu and for the prosperous future of our children and juveniles.

On the eve of the birth day of Father of the Nation as well as National Children's Day, I urge the countrymen to take a fresh vow to transform our beloved motherland into a safe abode for the children. The children would have to learn the true history of our beloved motherland and struggling life of the Father of the Nation to build their personality and flourish their patriotism.

Let us come and sacrifice our present for the welfare of our children's future. Let us work together being imbued with the spirit of the liberation war and build a hunger, poverty and illiteracy-free "Sonar Bangla" as dreamt by the Father of the Nation.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Sheikh Hasina

Huge like Dream, Sacred like Faith, Awake like Conscience

Ranjit Biswas

He was 34 in 1954 [born on 17 March 1920]. Mujib was still a Mujib then. Becoming a minister at that age was not a record. But there were two other occurrences. Those were not only national records of a country, they were world records. When Bangabandhu became the state minister for social welfare in the provincial government of East Pakistan, the Pakistani government dissolved the provincial legislature by applying article 92 (a) of the constitution and disallowed the victorious united front to run the government.

If they had allowed it, then the illumined person named Sheikh Mujib would have become a minister before his age reached the mid-30s.

Despite being unable to achieve that, this extraordinary individual did not lack anything. In 1970, he became the undisputed leader of a nation comprising 75 million people; he became the symbol of their hopes and aspirations. The dreams of the countrymen sprouted around him as he was accorded the status of a tree. He wore and carried our dreams. He ignited a dream among us, made us nurture and nurse that dream. He became our beloved friend, our dearest Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. He also realized of his own that by keeping him in the middle like a nucleus, the 75 million people were lowering the root of their dream and its branches were spreading; the flowers were blooming and the foliage was being drawn.

A fifty-year old man was addressing the nation as 'you-your-yours', giving them direction founded on love, commanding them with care and affection, ordering them, advising them, guiding them towards the right path in the darkness of night; he became their biggest relative; the countrymen were accepting and taking these into account; they were gratified and satisfied, becoming faithful and courageous. He became as big as our dream, as sacred as our faith - such happening was unprecedented and never occurred in our society. It became a reality on this dusty terrain under the

sky. He became the architect of our freedom.

The greatest artiste of the Bangalis - Bangabandhu had drawn more such unique pictures. Before reaching the age of fifty, this man became our Father of the Nation. As minister at thirty-four, national leadership at fifty and becoming the Father of the Nation before reaching mid-fifty - such incidents had never occurred in the world. If anyone wants to say anything different, let him prove through research.

It was our good fortune that our leader and the nation's father could touch the pinnacle after reaching such a height. He introduced the most beautiful, aroma-filled, struggle-minded, glorious and promising country of the planet called Bangladesh and its extraordinarily lively people to the outside world with high esteem and honour. On the reverse side remains stuck the sticky affronts, pictures of irresponsibility and ingratitude. It is our misfortune that some derailed and unbelievably cruel persons living behind light and shade snatched him away from us quite prematurely with direct and indirect connivance of some rotten and pervert individuals. They snatched him away treacherously in cold blood by committing the cruellest family murder in the world.

Although the killers were self-proclaimed, they got the support and praise of some different kinds of animals who were devoid of human character. Becoming indemnified with their help, they were honourably rehabilitated at home and abroad. They became diplomats in overseas Bangladesh missions; they got

the rare honour of representing the country and the nation.

A sense of misfortune makes us small, ashamed, insulted and sends us underground when we see that the rotten and conspiratorial people do not allow our children, adolescents and youths, our sons, daughters, nephews and nieces to get the true picture of our great liberation war as well as the post-liberation motherland; they do not teach true history, they teach history of their own prescription; read this, don't read that and also don't ask any question about that; publicise what this man is not, lift him to the sky without any ground, and ignore or disregard that person despite the existence of thousands of reasons. They are incapable of comprehending

what the writer of our most favourite national anthem, the global poet and Bangabandhu's most preferred poet Rabindranath Tagore wrote in his 'Konika' in an extraordinary expression, "With what courage the fireworks say! / I throw ashes on the face of stars. / The poet says, nothing touches him / The ashes only come back behind you."

Now on the subject left behind. What happened in 1954? A group of people used to swear during the birth of Pakistan - 'We shall fight for bringing about Pakistan'. The name of that party was Muslim League. Many simple, humble-minded people also joined that party. The task of that bringing about was accomplished. But it was done on the basis of a



Bangabandhu is seen in a jovial mood in the midst of youthful members of Kanchi Kanchar Mela, Khelaghar, Boy Scouts and Girls Guide at the Ganabhaban Mall on 17 March 1975, his 55th Birthday

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