



"As we win the war, we must prepare to win peace"

Here we publish Mr. Tajuddin Ahmad's speech addressed to the nation on December 8, 1971. He was the Prime Minister of the Mujibnagar government.

My dear countrymen and comrades, The Pakistani generals have plunged the sub-continent into a calamitous war. It was clear for months that they were seeking this evil consummation of their folly and crimes in Bangladesh.

The aggression against India has taken place in the background of Pakistan's humiliating reverses at the hands of the Mukti Bahini and India's warm-hearted support to the people of Bangladesh in their just struggle.

The peril from the common enemy has brought the people of Bangladesh and India closer than ever. Our forces are now fighting shoulder to shoulder with Indian forces, and their blood is mingling with ours on our soil. This seals the bond between two peoples who are destined for friendship.

The people of India had always recognised us in their hearts and now their Government has accorded formal recognition to the People's Republic of Bangladesh. It is a tribute to the martyrs in the cause of our freedom and a triumph for all classes of people in Bangladesh, their elected representatives, and the Mukti Bahini whose efforts, sacrifices and impregnable unity have won them diplomatic recognition as an independent and sovereign nation. It is also a triumph for the people of India whose united wish was for Bangladesh to be recognised. This is indeed a fine hour for both Bangladesh and India.

This is but natural that India, the largest democracy in the world, should be the first to welcome us to the comity of independent nations. Her commitment to humanity and freedom, evident in her caring for ten million uprooted Bengalis and bearing the brunt of war to defend their democratic rights, must be regarded as a marvel of our time. We rejoice at India's bold decision, and thank Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the Government of India, the members of the Indian Parliament, and the people of India for their historic contribution to the consolidation of our statehood. The Bengali nation owes an infinite debt of gratitude to Sreemati Gandhi's sagacity and statesmanship. Following India Bhutan has given us recognition,



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and we are also grateful to the King and people of that country.

India's recognition of the People's Republic of Bangladesh is a big event. As far as our relations with India are concerned, their foundation will be friendship and mutual respect. The tie we have forged with the Indian people in adversity and war will endure in peace and will, I am confident, bring lasting benefits to our two nations.

The joy of the people of Bangladesh is, however, darkened by a cruel irony. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the father of the Bengali nation, is in the prison of the enemy at this hour, when Bangladesh, his dream, has come true on the international plane. The Bangabandhu, whether away from his people or among them, is always in their hearts. He is the symbol of the consciousness that has changed the past for us and is part of the mythology that will sustain this nation in the future. And yet his absence from us now is painful.

The emergence of free Bangladesh should be welcome to all progressive nations. The new state represents peaceful co-existence, non-alignment in international politics and opposition to imperialism and colonialism in all forms and is committed to democracy and a secular and socialist way of life. I invite the nations to follow the example of India and Bhutan and accept the reality of seventy-five million people.

The alternative to this is flying in the face of common sense.

The West Pakistan Government is being engulfed by the evil it has brought into existence. The attempts of her patrons in the UN Security Council to save her from Nemesis have so far been unsuccessful. The American resolution calling for a cease-fire in the subcontinent without attending to the root cause of the conflict in Bangladesh is, in fact, a monument to America's blindness and perversity. China is also guilty of the same failure of judgement. The people of Bangladesh are grateful for the Soviet veto.

We in Bangladesh must now complete the task assigned to us by history and drive the last nail into the coffin of the fascist state led by crazy militarists. The ring of death is fast closing around the enemy. He is in retreat everywhere and reeling under the blows of the Mukti Bahini and our ally. The hour has struck for the people of Bangladesh to rise against the invader to a man and give him the coup de grace he has earned. They must at the same time and the liberator in every possible way, help maintain law and order, and co-operate with the administration of the Government of Bangladesh. Let it not be said of anyone in Bangladesh, whatever his station in life, that he failed when the call came.

I call upon all enemy troops and *razakars* to lay down their arms and surrender. They can yet save themselves by heeding this call. I also call upon all citizens of Bangladesh to avoid the temptation to take the law into their own hands. We must remember that it is the prerogative of the state to punish offenders according to the due process of law. If a single citizen of Bangladesh is harmed or hurt because of his language or race it will be a betrayal of the ideals of the founder of the nation and the flag of free Bangladesh.

Bangladesh will carry in her bosom the scars caused by the occupation army for a long time, but there is comfort and exultation in the thought that the end of the invader has come, that Bangladesh is going to be completely liberated, and that her homeless stricken children will soon return home from their sorrow and exile.

As we win the war, we must prepare to win peace. The edifice of 'Golden Bengal' must be laid on the ruins left by a cruel war, and every one of her sons and daughters must take part in the exhilarating and humbling task of reconstruction and development. The revolution begun by Bangabandhu will end only when his ideals of democracy, socialism and secularism are fully realised.

JOI BANGLA.

An exit strategy for BNP

ABDUL MATIN

BEFORE the BNP chairperson's press briefing of March 13, many people expected that she would announce an exit strategy from the ongoing and over-stretched movement that had lost both steam and justification long ago. The people were, of course, disappointed when she announced continuation of the programme until it reached 'a logical conclusion.' What 'logical conclusion' has she in mind?

The so-called blockade, accompanied by *hartals* during weekdays, started on January 6. It cost about 130 or more lives. Numerous commuters were injured and have been receiving treatment at hospitals. The economy suffered badly. The worst affected sector has been education. It is said that one way to destroy a nation is to destroy its education system. Are we not doing it now? For more than two months, most educational institutions have been closed. The BNP chairperson asked for a small sacrifice for the greater interest of the country. What greater interest will be served if we keep our children ignorant?

Is continuation of the blockade and the *hartal* a feasible proposition? Out of necessity, people go out to work, supply of essential commodities continues, industries run and vehicles, trains and launches operate even though occasional torching accompanied by injuries or deaths continues unabated. It is not physically possible to stop human activities by calling blockades/*hartals* for too long like it is not possible to stop the flow of a river by building a dam across it.

It is well known that no movement succeeds without the participation of the people and without serving their interests. The present movement, whatever are the reasons for it, is not serving their interests. The BNP had started a similar movement before the January 5 election, which they boycotted. It failed to reach its desired objectives because it turned violent. Nobody wants to reward violence. For this reason, the government took a hard line against violence and, not surprisingly, has been getting the support of the people.

Under the circumstances, the 'logical conclusion' of the movement is clear. It is bound to fail like it did a year ago. The BNP must now look for a respectable exit strategy. There were ample opportunities for them to take a safe exit in the past, particularly before the Bishwa Itjema or the SSC examinations. Unfortunately, they missed both of them.

The prime minister said she would not talk to the perpetrators of violence. The secretary general of the Awami League (AL) requested the BNP chairperson to create a congenial environment for dialogue. The schedules for the city corporation elections in Dhaka and Chittagong have been announced by the Election Commission. There are indications that the BNP is willing to participate in the elections. This will be a positive move on their part and it provides another golden opportunity for the BNP. Obviously, blockade/*hartal* and polls cannot go side by side. The BNP chairperson can now announce a halt in the movement to allow the BNP supported candidates to take part in the elections. This will be an excellent exit strategy for them. Once the violence is stopped, the AL will be under obligation and tremendous pressure, both from within and outside, to talk to the BNP. It will be another blunder if the BNP misses this opportunity.

The writer is a senior nuclear engineer.

A basic instinct

NO STRINGS ATTACHED



AASHA MEHREEN AMIN

IT'S hard to say when it will hit you, usually when you will least expect it. For me it was when I was in Kindergarten in London, with very limited fluency in English. But I knew enough when suddenly in the playground a girl with golden hair who looked almost exactly like the doll I had left at home in Bangladesh, called me 'Blackie' several times and poked me lightly on the shoulder. She wouldn't stop so I slapped her. I was taken to the principal's room and after a good talking to had to bear the humiliation of the dinner nannies suddenly changing their motherly affection to shaking their heads and saying "Oh what a naughty girl you are." It was bewildering -- the white girl was the one who had made the remark and I had retaliated with a slap -- ahem -- and a few Bangla abuses but they didn't know that -- and I was the one being punished. Where was the justice in that, my outraged soul demanded silently. But

what it taught me even at such a young age was that I had to stand up for myself, for the colour of my skin and for the place where I belonged.

This was all the more clear when later I befriended a classmate -- Martin -- he was one of those math whiz kids who also happened to be the most beautiful boy I had ever seen (not that I had a very wide reference point at that age). He asked me where I was from and mispronounced it 'Bangladesh?' I made him say it the right way because I explained, the way he was saying it, it would mean 'froggy country' ('bang' being frog in Bangla). The friendship was doomed to end as his smartness got him a double promotion to a higher class but I soon made other friends -- even the racist Katie. But my best friend was a little Sylheti boy called Monsa (I think it was actually Monsoor) and we were the only two brown kids in the class. But our alliance gave us comfort and courage in case there were other onslaughts.

But racism in those days was very blatant. Many days when my brother and I would walk home from school a pesky little boy would follow us and utter racial slurs -- 'brownie', 'blackie' etc. We ignored it for a few days until one day when my other-wise rather mild-mannered brother,

lost it and punched our stalker in the face. I couldn't be prouder of my sibling, especially since the taunting completely stopped after this.

The reason why I am recounting such ancient history is because it has always intrigued me how at certain moments of heightened sensitivity people instinctively hold on to their true identity. I don't even know why I was so adamant to make Martin pronounce my country's name correctly. I don't recall ever really realising that we were refugees in a foreign land, fleeing terror and possible death. Perhaps it was what I had picked up from my parents, perhaps it was something inherent in all of us.

We often talk about patriotism these days and we Dhakaites make quite a fuss about showing it off, wearing the right colour combination on the right day, attending rallies and singing patriotic songs. Which is all very well -- people should celebrate their country's freedom in any way they wish and it is wonderful to see so many thousands of Bangladeshis taking pride in their national identity. But sometimes our fervour to manifest our love for our motherland supercedes the basic premise on which such patriotism lies.

We are not doing our country any



Zainul Abedin, Freedom Fighter, Ink and wash

favour by being patriotic. We are not more Bangladeshi by tattooing our face with the Bangladeshi flag than the emaciated domestic maid who cleans and cooks for us every single day and never even asks whether she can take the day off on Independence Day. We are Bangladeshi because this is our land -- handed to us by those who selflessly gave up their lives, their limbs, their families and their personal dreams so that we could exist as citizens of a free

and independent country. We only have to think of the Palestinians who continue to live in constant fear of being thrown out of their own land. How rare and precious a gift would independence be for them!

As a nation we have made remarkable progress in terms of economic growth and also in some areas of development. But in terms of being united in our determination to make sure that every single Bangladeshi has

the luxury of feeling exuberant on Independence Day, we have failed miserably. Our leaders have failed us, mocked our faith in their direction and shamelessly pursued self aggrandisement and material gratification. Some of us have given up and gone to greener lands where basic things like 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness' are guaranteed; and what is wrong with that? Others, out of sheer desperation, have risked their lives to go to foreign lands so that they can send money back home, so that their families can survive. So that we can boast about the bulky remittances that boost our foreign exchange reserves.

Those of us who have chosen to stay back or come back -- there is nothing particularly noble or magnanimous about it. We have chosen this because ultimately this is the land that has given us sustenance, acceptance, respect and a sense of identity. Even if the rest of the world rejects us for our jarring poverty, backwardness, insane politics and inability to preserve our natural resources, or because we are 'blackies,' we can always call one place our home. Bangladesh.

The writer is Deputy Editor, Editorial & Op-ed, The Daily Star.

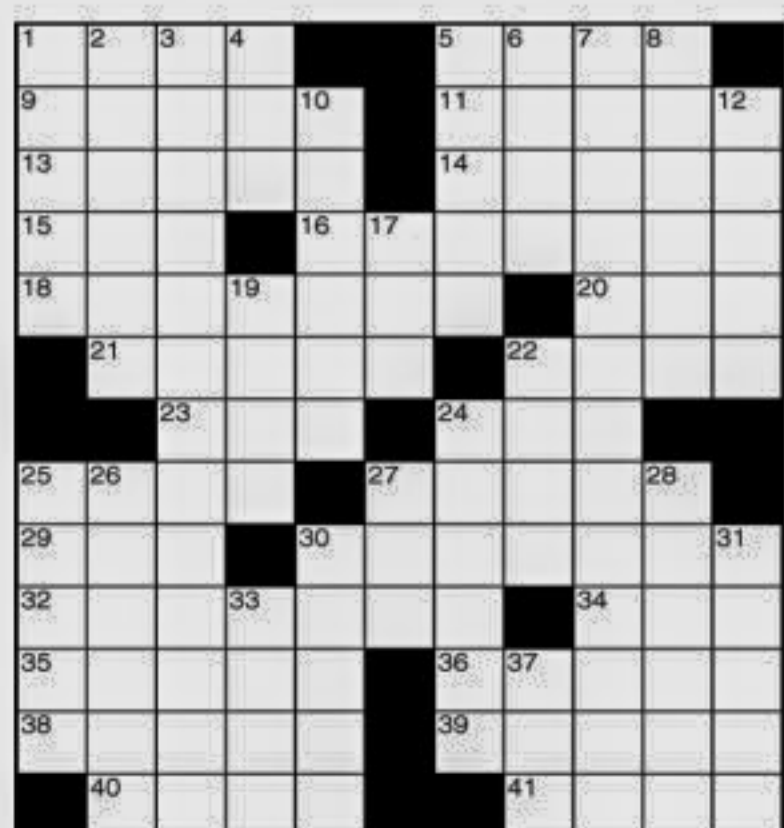
QUOTABLE Quote

No two persons ever read the same book.

Edmund Wilson

CROSSWORD by Thomas Joseph

- ACROSS**
- Bus. course
 - Airport line
 - Tourist stop
 - Cornfield units
 - Montana city
 - Sleuth Vance
 - Sense of self
 - Entrance way employee
 - Lawsuit award
 - Julep need
 - Sized up
 - Swift jets
 - Silent approval
 - Sound of delight
 - Flower feature
 - Radio dial
 - CBS sitcom
 - Fumes
 - Duds
 - Cobbler's cousin
 - Glisten
 - Stage comment
 - "Luck of Roaring Camp" writer
 - Full of caffeine, perhaps
 - New driver, usually
- DOWN**
- Plant, in a way
 - Tawny cat
 - 16th-century power
 - Trawling need
 - Targets for bulls
 - Massage target
 - Early-20th-century power
 - Choose
 - Like chairs and tables
 - Tender spots
 - Stop color
 - Physics bit
 - Some babies
 - Desperado
 - Big hit
 - 1935 Astaire film
 - Player's peg
 - Corporate shark
 - Go color
 - Actions
 - Pay to play
 - Caret's key



Yesterday's answer

SORE RACER
 A BOMB ALONE
 TAMPA MANTA
 UMAN SPANNER
 PANNER ORE
 ATOP TED
 MUTE OPED
 MAN NILE
 USE CANNER
 SCANNER IDO
 KATIE INTWO
 ERECT SERIF
 TANKS DONS

CRYPTOQUOTE 2-11
 VVAS ZJVWPUX CWWDX NJC WTSIX IOJCWIX GMNG ISDSJ'G SASJ GMSDS YSKWDS.
 - QOEJWJ QPVMZEMVOJ

YESTERDAY'S CRYPTOQUOTE:
 POETRY SPILLS FROM THE CRACKS OF A BROKEN HEART,
 BUT FLOWS FROM ONE WHICH IS LOVED.
 - CHRISTOPHER PAUL RUBERO

BEETLE BAILEY



by Mort Walker



HENRY



by Don Trachte

