



26 March Great Independence and National Day



Special Supplement

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



پیرو اللہ العزت الرحمن
بঙ্গا
PRESIDENT
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH
Message

On the eve of our great Independence and National Day, I extend my heartfelt greetings and felicitations to the fellow countrymen living at home and abroad. The great Independence Day is a glorious one in our national life. On this historic day, I recall with profound respect Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who proclaimed country's independence on March 26, 1971 after inspiring the whole nation with Bangali nationalism and preparing them for independence for over two decades facing various ups and downs. Under his leadership, we achieved our long-cherished independence through a nine-month long armed struggle and manifold forbearance and patience. Today, I recall with deep gratitude the heroic martyrs who made supreme sacrifices in the war of liberation for achieving our independence. I also recall with deep reverence our four National Leaders, valiant freedom-fighters, organizers, supporters and people from all walks of life for their unmatched contributions and courageous role that accelerated the process of our victory. The contributions of those valiant sons would be written in golden letters in the history of our independence forever. One of the prime objectives of our hard-earned independence was to build a happy and prosperous Bangladesh. Keeping that in mind, the Government is making untiring efforts in materializing the objectives of independence. In the meantime, we have achieved some significant progress in the fields of agriculture, education, health, rural infrastructure, communication, energy and power, trade & commerce, ICT, SME sectors. It is notable that the country has attained food-sufficiency owing to huge development in agriculture. We have also been able to export food grains in a small scale. The pace of advancement in the sector of youth & sports, women and children along with empowerment of women is continuing. Maternal and child mortality rate has been reduced and life expectancy rate has simultaneously been raised. At the same time we have also attained remarkable development in private sector including the area of readymade garments, pharmaceuticals, ceramic and ship-building industry. Country's financial sector along with Bank and Insurances has been expanded. Bangladesh is now being branded as a role-model of development in the outside world. Our achievement in international arena is also commendable. Bangladeshi Peacekeepers, under the auspices of the United Nations, have brightened the country's image abroad presenting their professionalism and competence. Our expatriate Bangladeshis have also been making significant contributions to our national economy through sending their hard-earned remittances. Nevertheless, we have to go a long way for achieving the desired goals of independence. I believe that sincere and concerted efforts from all strata irrespective of party affiliation are imperative to reach the goals. The people of our country are democratic and peace loving. They do not support violence including militancy and terrorism. We should keep in mind that the overall development of the country would not be attained without functioning and institutionalizing democracy. Continuous practice for democratic norms and values, maintaining tolerance and fortitude and showing mutual respect are the preconditions for thriving democracy. Therefore, we have to maintain patience, self-restraint, forbearance along with showing respect to others' opinion in a democratic pluralism. Let us make our Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) a centre of discussion to resolve all national issues. I am confident that everyone would play one's responsible role from respective position in fulfilling the desired goals of independence and hopes and aspirations of our people. The Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman cherished a dream of transforming Bangladesh into Sonar Bangla. The present Government has taken up 'Vision 2021' for materializing the dream into reality. It is my expectation that people from all strata would contribute to build an IT-based happy and prosperous Bangladesh through implementing the vision by the golden jubilee celebration of our independence. On this auspicious day of independence I urge all, living at home and abroad, to work unitedly imbued with the spirit of war of liberation to expedite overall development and democratic advancement of the country. Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Md. Abdul Hamid

The Onset of Armed War Rafiqul Islam Bir Uttam

A liberation war does not start in one day. Behind it lies the history of many years of political struggle. In line with this tradition of political struggle, the longstanding liberation struggle of Bangladesh took a complete shape through an armed liberation war in the final stages of 1971. Led by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Awami League won absolute majority in the national election of Pakistan in 1970. President Yahya Khan then declared that the session of the national parliament would sit in Dhaka on 3 March 1971. The masses were expectant that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman would form the government and frame such a constitution that the rights of the people of eastern part would be preserved. Suddenly on 1 March, an announcement was made through radio on behalf of the military junta and President Yahya: 'The parliamentary session of 3 March has been suspended due to unavoidable reasons'. The Bangali nation exploded in anger. The Pakistani soldiers killed many innocent Bangalis by firing indiscriminately. Meanwhile, Bangabandhu announced that there would be strikes in Dhaka on 2 March and throughout the country on 3 March, and he would speak in detail about the next course of action at a public meeting to be held on the Racecourse Maidan on 7 March. I was then discharging the responsibility of adjutant at the EPR sector of Chittagong. We had no other option except to keep a sharp eye on the political developments. Before that, a ship named MV Swat arrived at the outer anchorage of Chittagong Port on 28 February with 10 thousand tons of arms and ammunition. Around the same time, many soldiers were being brought to East Pakistan from West Pakistan. President Yahya Khan probably made a plan that by buying time the number of Pakistani soldiers would be raised to such a level that the movement could be suppressed through violent attacks on the Bangalis. After considering all aspects, it appeared to me that if they attacked, the first targets would be Bangali political leaders alongside Bangali military officers. I thought, if we could attack them before they attacked us, then there would be much possibility of our survival. With that objective, I started to prepare the Bangali soldiers of EPR.



The situation deteriorated very rapidly from 1 March. I discussed with the JCOs and others the essential parts of a plan that I had chalked out in my mind. I told them, the weapons depot, all vehicles and the wireless centre would have to be captured immediately after getting my orders. I gave them directives after framing the plan so that the non-Bangali soldiers of EPR did not get any weaponry. Yahya Khan then declared pre-emptively that the session of parliament would sit on 25 March 1971, so that Bangabandhu did not get the pretext of declaring independence on 7 March. In this way, he tried to slightly ameliorate the state of agitation generated among Bangalis. But Bangabandhu called for a non-cooperation movement in his public meeting of 7 March attended by over 10 lakh people and declared, "The struggle this time is for our freedom, the struggle this time is for independence." In the meantime, I held secret meetings with some senior leaders of the Awami League including M R Siddiqui through an eminent Awami League leader of Chittagong Dr. Zafar. I said that I

(Continued to the next page)

پیرو اللہ العزت الرحمن
بঙ্গا
PRIME MINISTER
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
Message



I convey my heartiest greetings to my countrymen as well as to all expatriate Bangalis on the occasion of the great Independence and National Day of Bangladesh. The 26 March is the day of earning self-identity; it is a day of breaking the shackles of subjugation. On this auspicious occasion of Independence day, I pay my deep homage to the greatest Bangali of all time, Father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, under whose dynamic leadership we earned our great independence. I recall with deep gratitude the 3 million martyrs and 200 thousand women who lost their innocence in the War of Liberation in 1971. We earned our desired victory through their supreme sacrifices. I also pay my humble tributes to four national leaders who led the liberation war. I pay my respect to the valiant freedom fighters, including the wounded ones. I extend my sympathies to those who had lost their near and dear ones, and were subjected to brutal torture. I recall with gratitude our foreign friends who had extended their whole-hearted support and cooperation to our liberation war. The Pakistani occupation forces started killing innocent and unarmed Bangalis launching sudden attack on the black night of the 25 March 1971. The father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman proclaimed the Independence of Bangladesh at the early hours of the 26 March. Bangabandhu's proclamation was spread all over the country through telegrams, tele-printers and the wireless of the then EPR. The proclamation was also circulated in international media. Earlier on the 7 of March at Suhrawardy Udyan, Bangabandhu made a fervent call for waging independence struggle. He declared: "this time the Struggle is for our freedom; this time the struggle is for independence." He directed the Bangali nation to resist the enemy. The ultimate victory was earned on the 16 December after 9-month bloody war carried out under the directives of Bangabandhu. The independence earned through the sacrifice of millions of people is the greatest achievement of Bangali nation. To make the achievement meaningful, all would have to know the true history of the liberation war, retain the spirit of the independence. It would have to be spread generation to generations. Bangladeshi Awami League whenever came to power remained devoted to take the country forward with the spirit of independence and freedom fight. During the last six years, we implemented huge development works in all sectors, including agriculture, education, health, communication, energy and power, ICT, urban and rural development, human resource, social safety-net and women empowerment. As a result, peoples' purchasing power, per capita income, forex reserve, export, FDI and employment opportunity have multiplied manifold. Bangladesh has turned into a role-model for development. Various nations and world bodies have lauded and recognised our achievements. The trial of the war criminals is going on and the verdicts are being executed. The conspiracy of the anti-liberation communal and anti-democratic forces is continuing to frustrate the war crimes trial, democratic process and development spree. The BNP-Jamaat hoodlums are carrying out subversive activities in 71-style. They are killing people by hurling petrol bombs. On this auspicious day, I urge the countrymen to face unitedly any ill-attempt against independence, democracy and anti-country activities. We are committed to reaching the fruits of our independence at each home. Our target is to turn Bangladesh into a middle income country by 2021 and a developed one by 2041. We have relentlessly been working to realise the target. I hope that every Bangali being imbued with the mantra of patriotism would engage themselves from their respective positions and with the highest sincerity, dedication and honesty to turn Bangladesh into a peaceful, non-communal and middle-income country at the Golden Jubilee our independence. Bangladesh would be established as a dignified nation in the comity of nations. Let us come and build Sonar Bangla as dreamt by the Father of the Nation. This is our vow on this great day.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.
Sheikh Hasina

Economic Attainment and Prospect of Bangladesh

Professor Dr. Abdul Mannan Chowdhury

When Adam Smith wrote his book *Wealth of Nations* in 1776, he identified Bangladesh as one of the rich countries of the world. Later on, during nearly two hundred years of the British regime in the subcontinent and then 23 years of the Pakistani regime the people of this country, it may be said, were in fact poor. In 1970-71 the growth rate of the undivided Pakistan was 2.3% but its only beneficiaries were the west Pakistanis and the immigrants from India. So, the golden Bengal as mentioned by Bangabandhu or his dream of transforming Bangladesh into a golden Bengal was not at all absurd. Basically, our 23 years' struggle for freedom and 9 months' liberation war were as much for the attainment of economic solvency as that of political freedom. After the political freedom in 1971 we had to start a struggle for emancipation from hunger, poverty and superstitions, and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib was in the leading position of this struggle. After his death the economy of this country began to proceed lamely. But after the remarkable success in the last decade, we assume that the country is going to materialize its dream of becoming a middle-income country by 2021 and a high-income country by 2041. Our growth rate has been prevailing above 6% since 2006. During this time the gross growth rate has been about 13%. After liberation the amount of gross domestic product (GDP) was 4,511.2 billion taka. The amount of GDP at current price was 4,674.97 billion taka in 2006 and 6,923.80 billion taka in 2009; and it rose to 7,745.39 billion taka at constant price and 13,509.2 billion taka at current price in the fiscal year 2013-2014, considering 2005-06 as the base year. Agriculture, construction, real-estate, rent and other businesses, health and social services sectors made a gradually uprising contribution to the GDP. There was a time when, because of the agricultural backwardness caused by floods, drought and cyclones, a day labourer could be hired for 1.25 taka per day in the peak harvesting season. After the harvesting, labourers were available just for their daily meals. But now a labourer is paid at least 3-4 hundred taka a day. The real purchasing power of the working class people also has increased many times. In 1869-1870 people's per capita income was 20 taka with which people could buy 14 maunds of medium-quality rice. The per capita income gradually increased but the buying capacity came down to 7.6 maunds in 1968-1969. Considering the year 2005-2006 as the base, if we assess the picture of growth we will see that our economic growth has increased a lot compared not only to the British regime but also to the Pakistani regime.

Comparative Picture of Economic Success				
Field/sector	1972	2006	2009	2014-15
Rate of Poverty	91.8% (World Bank)	40% (2005)	40% (2005)	24%
Per Capita National Income (US dollars)	81.91 (Bangladesh Bank)	520	751	1190
GDP size (billion taka)	4,511.2 (1972-73) (Bangladesh Bank)	4,674.97	6,923.80	7,745.39 (2013-14)
Budget size (crore taka)	786 (1972-73)	61,057 (2005-06)	94,140 (2008-09)	2,50,506
Foreign currency reserve (billion dollars)	1.19 (1972-73) (Bangladesh Bank)	3.48 (2005-06)	7.50	23 (nearly)
Remittance received (billion dollars)	-	5.08	9.70	11.79 (February 2015)
Life expectancy at birth (years)	46.88	64.5	66.8	70.65
Maternal mortality rate (per 100 thousand)	-	322 (2001)	-	143 (May 2014)
Infant mortality rate (per 1 thousand)	-	45	41	33 (United Nations 2013)
Population for one hospital bed	-	2,766	3,320	1,698 (July 2014)
Rate of school enrolment	-	90.9%	93.9%	99.47% (March 2015)
Power generating capacity (megawatt)	-	4,583	4,942	13,283
Production of food grains (lakh metric tonne)	-	277.87 (2005-06)	333.03 (2008-09)	383.43 (2013-14)

It is seen in the comparative picture that the per capita average income in 2006 was 520 US dollars which has now come to 1,190 US dollars. In 1971 the amount was above 80 dollars. Immediately after the liberation the number of people under the poverty line was 91.8% and now the number is 24%. Among them the number of the extremely poor is 11%. Out of the present population of 16 crore, more than one crore people are now working abroad. Their number is increasing by 2.50 lakh every year. Whether a grand total of 2.50 lakh people from East Bengal were able to go abroad in the entire Pakistani regime of 24 years is doubtful. At present it is really very difficult to find a family from which not a single person has been abroad for earning money. Except a few exceptions, historically our import volume was higher than that of export. A balance was established in the foreign trades through huge loans. At present the people working abroad supply a lion's share of that money. The number of workers in the industrial sector now is not less than 50 lakh and 44% of them are women. Because of the employment of women in the workforce the familial dependency rate has been reduced by at least 34%. It is one of the factors for the increase of per capita income. If the monetary value of women's wageless labour were ascertained, their per capita income would be at least 75% higher. If calculated on the basis of purchasing power parity, the present per capita income would be two to three times bigger. The income, empowerment and determination of women and their intense urge

to go forward have played a contributory role in the enhancement of the rate of investment. This country was once a bottomless basket in the eye of western people but now it has become a model of development. Achievements in education, health and empowerment of women have surpassed those of the big neighbouring country India. Compared with the annual budget of 786 crore taka in 1972, the present one of 2,50,506 crore seems amazing. Our living standard should be improved as an index of total development. Huge investments are necessary for the progress of different human development indices related with the increased income. Our public investment is only one-third of the private investment. Growth can be increased if the efficacy of PPP is increased. It is possible to bring about a downward tendency in inflation along with the enhancement of the revenue income. In the last decade the revenue income in Bangladesh increased ten times with which it is being possible to extend education, health sector and social safety net. This is, in other words, advancing the economic success. The causes of our being in the vicious circle of poverty in the past were manifold. To come out of this vicious circle it is necessary to ensure more savings and more investments. Increased growth ensures increased income and it gradually reduces the dependence on foreign countries. It is a matter of pleasure that in our development budget the dependence on foreign loans or donations has come down to 30% from a former 60%. There was a time when foreign loans or donations in growth were above 12% but they have now come down to 1.8%. This has not only lessened our dependence on others but also increased our capacity to go forward with a strong confidence and self-dignity. 11 crore mobile phones are being used in the country. At present 3 crore 86 lakh people are enjoying the internet services. There was a time when only carts and push-carts or rickshaws used to ply on streets; one or two motor vehicles were scarcely seen. If anybody had gone to his village in a car, there would have been a huge gathering of people around it. Now the



(Continued to the next page)