



10 January

# HOMECOMING DAY OF FATHER OF THE NATION

Special Supplement

Sunday 10 January 2016

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



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ  
  
**PRESIDENT**  
**PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF**  
**BANGLADESH**

**Message**

Today is the historic 10 January, the Homecoming Day of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Bangladesh achieved victory after a 9 month-long bloody war, but the victory of the Bangali nation was complete only after the homecoming of Father of the Nation. Bangabandhu himself had termed this event as a 'journey towards light from darkness'. On this memorable day of the Bangali nation, I pay my profound homage to Bangabandhu and pray for the salvation of his departed soul.

The Awami League had won absolute majority in the General Election of 1970. But as the Pakistani rulers were reluctant to hand over power, the people of the country started Non-Cooperation Movement under the leadership of Bangabandhu. On the dark night of 25 March 1971, the Pakistani invading forces started genocide by executing 'Operation Searchlight' in accordance with their preplanned blueprint to annihilate the Bangalis. Under these circumstances, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared the independence of Bangladesh in the early hours of 26 March and urged all segments of people to join the war of liberation. Immediately after that, the Pakistani forces arrested Bangabandhu from his residence of Dhanmondi road-32 and confined him in Mianwali jail of the then West-Pakistan. Bangabandhu had to undergo 9 months 14 days of rigorous imprisonment there. The liberation war continued in the name of Bangabandhu. He was the source of inspiration in the war of liberation.

Bangabandhu became very emotional after setting his feet on the country's soil in the garb of a triumphant hero. In front of thousands of people at the Racecourse Maidan, he then declared, 'I shall repay the debt of this love of the Bangali nation by shedding my blood.' The Father of the Nation kept his word. He had to give away his life at the hands of a bunch of traitors and anti-liberation forces in the independent country, although the Pakistani invaders never dared to put even a scratch on him. On 15 August 1975, he kept his word by shedding his fresh blood from the heart along with his family. The conspirators made a heinous attempt to wipe out the ideals of Bangabandhu and foil the independence and sovereignty of the country. But the Bangalis are a nation of heroes. As long as Bangladesh and the Bangalis exist, Bangabandhu will remain as the source of inspiration for all.

Bangabandhu sought economic emancipation of the Bangalis alongside their political freedom. With this goal, he had started rehabilitation work in the newly-independent war-ravaged country. But that forward-march was brought to a halt through the assassination of Bangabandhu. The present government under the leadership of the illustrious daughter of Bangabandhu Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is working tirelessly for the progress and development of the country. Bangladesh is already being considered worldwide as a 'role model' for development in various sectors, including education and health. Bangladesh is now being gradually transformed into a Golden Bengal of Bangabandhu's dream.

I am hopeful that Bangladesh will become a middle-income country soon and a developed country by 2041 through concerted efforts of all. Let us advance our country by becoming united with the spirit of patriotism and liberation war. Let this be our pledge on the Homecoming Day of Bangabandhu this year.

May Allah bless us all.  
 Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.

**Md. Abdul Hamid**

**Invincible Father of an Unbeatable Nation**  
 Mohammad Nurul Huda

The sleepless mother offers prayer by lighting the clay lamp;  
 The nation's father had arrived by setting his sail on the blue sky.  
 In your eyes smiled the rivers and seas of Rarha-Vanga-Horikel,  
 From the Himalayan peak to Samatata, up to the southern rivers.

In your sky burnt the lamp of stars, the light of nebula,  
 The thunder of victory lighted up your chest and face.  
 From your hands soared the unerring bow of classical age,  
 The seat of autocracy tumbled by the mantra of the masses.

In the string of nerves rang out the flute of Arjun:  
 Intense, sharp, rising: war's logic; tales of love.  
 The sound of your language were in the lips of familiar birds,  
 They flew from the trees to the heavens aiming at you.

You resonate day and night all over the green delta raising your fore-finger  
 The offspring takes food from alluvial water, paddy-grass, blessing of peace.  
 In the heart of an idyllic Bangali it was you who had planted the final triumph;  
 You are the idyllic Bangali, the father of an alluvial nation, the fearless poet.

In your immense heart rests the collective courage of immortal warriors  
 From your being emanates the life-conquering beauty, colour, flavour of Bangla.  
 Freedom means creativity's war, the freedom fighter is forever busy in wars of creation:  
 The Bangalis are an unconquerable nation - never capitulating in the annals of history.

Translation: **Helal Uddin Ahmed**

government, members of your armed forces and your common people have given them in their distress and struggles."

Diplomatic representatives of more than 20 countries, most of whom were ambassadors, were present at the airport. The representatives were mainly from the Soviet block, though those from Britain, France, Belgium, Italy, West Germany, Norway and Denmark were also present. No one came from the United States, China and Saudi Arabia.

At the rally, Bangabandhu started his speech in English but was cut short by the crowd who were shouting for him to use Bangla. He smiled and resumed the speech, this time in Bangla to the cheers of the crowds.

Bangabandhu then went to the Indian president's official residence. While he was still in the plane to Delhi, Indian foreign ministry official Shashanka S. Banerjee, who was travelling with him, was told that withdrawal of Indian forces from Bangladesh was very important for Bangabandhu. When informed of this, Indira Gandhi talked to her advisers and said she would accept the proposal.

It was at that moment the Indira-Mujib dialogue began. The issue of Indian force's withdrawal was recognised in the Indira-Mujib joint declaration. It was first decided that the pullout would take place in June 1972 but it happened three months earlier as per Bangabandhu's will.

Bangabandhu arrived in Dhaka, his beloved city, via London and Delhi at 1:41pm on 10 January 1972. Showing respect to Bangabandhu's wish, the Comet aircraft whirled around the airport for about 45 minutes. Bangabandhu wanted to see his "Golden Bengal" from above. Although many diplomats came to welcome him, the consul generals of China and Iran didn't. Interestingly, Herbert D. Spivak, the consul general of the United States, was there. While shaking hands with Bangabandhu, he bowed his head a little in a courtesy gesture and said, "Welcome to Dhaka." With a smile, Bangabandhu replied, "Thank you very much."

It took him about two hours to reach the Racecourse Maidan, now Suhrawardy Udyan, from the airport because of the crowd of hundreds of thousands of people who had gathered on both sides of the road to welcome their leader. When Bangabandhu took the stage at the venue before a sea of people, he burst into tears like a child. Tears of joy were rolling down from his eyes. "Oh Bishwakabi [Rabindranath Tagore], you said, 'Oh bemused mother of seven crore children, you have kept them as Bangalis, not humans.' But oh Bishwakabi! The seven crore Bangalis have proved you false and freed this country shedding their blood."

In his 35-minute speech on a 100-foot-long stage shaped like the Awami League's electoral symbol-boat, Bangabandhu said, "I did not know if I would at all be able to come back to you. I told them [Pakistani captors], 'Kill me if you want to; but return my body to my Bangalis in Bangladesh.' I was ordered to be hanged and I was ready to sacrifice my life. I said, 'I was a Bangali, a man, a Muslim, and a man dies only once. Before I die I will proclaim again that I am a Bangali, Bangla is my language, Joy Bangla...'

**Bangabandhu's Landing at Dhaka Airport on 10 January**

**A Strong Foundation of the Republic**

**Professor Dr. Mijanur Rahman**

"Real leadership arises through a struggle. Nobody can become a leader overnight. He has to come through a struggle. He has to dedicate himself for the wellbeing of people. A leader must have an ideology," Bangabandhu said in a television programme titled "David Frost Programme in Bangladesh" in New York on 18 January 1972.

"Anyone having these qualities can only become a leader," he continued. "I remember Abraham Lincoln. I remember Mao Tse-tung, Lenin and Churchill. I also respect former American president John F Kennedy ... I have a deep sense of respect for Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, [Huseyn Shaheed] Suhrawardy, AK Fazlul Huq and Kemal Ataturk as well. I have special respect for Dr Sukarno who struggled against colonialism. All of these people became leaders through struggles."

English poet and essayist T.S. Eliot (1888-1965) opined that every nation would have to wait long for freedom; a memorable, bold leadership should emerge through the centuries-long old tradition of a nation and that leadership could emancipate a nation from the shackles of bondage. Russian philosopher Plekhanov (1856-1918) said, "... although the subject matter of history is common people, the guide and creator of history is a single leader."

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is that great leader in the Bangalis' struggle for Independence. The people of Bengal, in their millennia-old history, had no idea of a modern state or what the spirit of freedom meant. The spirits of Bengali nationalism had never been manifested until 1971 when Bangladesh emerged as an independent nation, the first in this territory and in the history of the Bangalis. And Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is the architect of this nation.

In the words of German philosopher Frederick Hegel (1770-1831)- "Man's best creation is to establish a state." In the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent state, Bangabandhu's leadership was pivotal. Although he was imprisoned in Pakistan during the Liberation War, it was under his name and his leadership that the freedom fighters fought the nine-month-long war. Also, the Mujibnagar Government that oversaw the war was formed (on 17 April 1971) with Bangabandhu as its helm.

Even after the surrender of the Pakistani occupation forces on 16 December 1971, Bangladesh's freedom did not seem secure. But all fears, all apprehensions disappeared the moment Bangabandhu arrived in Dhaka on 10 January 1972 after being released from the Pakistani prison. Famous British daily *The Guardian* in its editorial titled "Recognise Bangladesh Now" on the day wrote, "Once Sheikh Mujibur Rahman steps out of Dacca Airport, the new republic becomes a solid fact." In the words of the Newsweek magazine, "The state called Bangladesh is the immortal epic of Mujib - the poet of politics." Eminent journalist and Bangabandhu's biographer Obaidul Haque (1911-2007) wrote, "If Bangladesh had the physical structure of a man, it would look like Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman."

It's true that the victory was achieved on 16 December, but it was incomplete. On 8 January the news was that after being released from Pakistan, Bangabandhu had reached London early in the morning. Until the special aircraft landed at Heathrow, neither Dhaka nor its close ally Delhi knew anything about his destination. This was because Bangabandhu did not want to reveal his destination immediately. It was announced in a news bulletin of Radio Pakistan that Sheikh Mujib had left Rawalpindi at 3am local time in a special flight chartered by the Pakistan government and the new Pakistani president Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, had seen him off at the airport. It was further said that his destination was not being revealed "to respect Mujib's wish".

However, Bangabandhu himself explained it all in the interview with David Frost. He revealed some shocking information which Bhutto himself had given him. Yahya Khan had regretted to Bhutto saying, "I have made the biggest blunder by not killing Sheikh Mujibur Rahman ... Sheikh Mujibur Rahman should be hanged through a backdated order before the transfer of power."

"Do you know what Bhutto had said in response?" David Frost asked Bangabandhu.

"Bhutto said, 'I cannot allow it because it will have a fatal reaction ... Not a single person will ever be able to return to West Pakistan from Bengal,'" Bangabandhu replied.

At that point of time, some 102 thousand military and civil personnel were held as prisoners by the Bangladesh-India joint forces. Besides, several hundred thousands of West Pakistanis, commonly known as Biharis, lived in Bangladesh back then.

In an hour-long discussion with the then British Prime Minister Edward Heath at the 10 Downing Street on 8 January night, Bangabandhu raised the issue of the United Kingdom's recognition of Bangladesh as an independent and sovereign state. He also thanked Heath for the latter's attempts to save his life during his imprisonment in Pakistan.

Bangabandhu had a telephone conversation for half an hour with the then Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on 9 January. Mrs Gandhi congratulated Bangabandhu and requested him to have a stopover in Delhi on his way to Dhaka. Bangabandhu accepted the invitation. Indira Gandhi initially wanted to send a special plane for him from India but changed her plan after talking to Heath. She informed Bangabandhu that Heath had expressed his desire to send him to Dhaka on a British Air Force Jet. Although Britain had not recognised Bangladesh yet, the British Prime Minister made all arrangements for sending Bangabandhu home on their plane. This in itself was a sort of recognition.

Both Indira and Heath agreed on this as both wanted Bangabandhu to return to Bangladesh in good health and start reconstructing the war-torn country. The aircraft reached Delhi via Cyprus and Oman. According to the newspaper *Express* published from Delhi on 11 January, "The foreign minister of Bangladesh Abdus Samad Azad entered the plane and stayed there for a few minutes. Then came that desired moment. Bangabandhu, in a blackish grey overcoat, climbed down the staircase of the plane ... While President Sree Varahgiri Venkata Giri was embracing Bangabandhu and Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi was welcoming him, Bangabandhu was being congratulated with 21 gun salutes. The exchange of greetings being over, Bangabandhu received the guard of honour given by 150 members of three regiments and later when he reached the VIP pandal [stage], petals of marigold flowers were showered on him. No sooner had Bangabandhu taken his position on the salutation stage than a Gurkha band party began to play the national anthem of Bangladesh "My golden Bengal ..."

In his congratulatory speech at New Delhi's Palam Airport, President Giri said to Bangabandhu, "Sir, at this historic juncture, your homecoming as the head of your country will boost the expectations and possibilities of establishing long-term peace in this region."

In reply, Bangabandhu said, "For me, this is a very happy moment. On my way back to Bangladesh, I decided to have a stopover at this historic capital of your great country, because it is the least I can do to pay my respect to the government led by your great Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi and the people of India who are the best friends of my people. After nine months, I am finally going back to my dreamland, golden Bengal. My people have passed many centuries in these nine months."

Welcoming Bangabandhu at a massive public rally in New Delhi, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi said Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had promised his countrymen freedom and he had given it to them. India had pledged that it would free Bangladesh, free Mujib and send all refugees to their homesteads. "We have kept our promises."

Bangabandhu, in an emotion-choked voice, responded: "Bangladesh and its people will never be able to forget the all-out support and sympathy that you, the Prime Minister, your



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ  
  
**PRIME MINISTER**  
**GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S**  
**REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH**

**Message**

January 10 of 1972 is one of the red letter days in the chronology of the liberation struggle of Bangali nation. On this day, the greatest Bangali of all time, the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman returned to independent Bangladesh after over nine and a half months' confinement in a Pakistani jail.

Bangladesh Awami League earned absolute majority in the 1970 elections under the leadership of the Father of the Nation. But the Pakistani military junta continued to cling to power ignoring the people's mandate staging various farces. Bangali nation was subjected to history's inhuman massacre. Aiming at an ultimate goal to free the Bangali nation, the Father of the Nation in his address at the then historic Racecourse Maidan on the 7 March in 1971 declared, "This time the struggle is for our freedom; this time the struggle is for the independence". The Pakistani occupation forces launched brutal attack on innocent Bangalis on the 25 March in 1971 and carried out massacre. The Father of the Nation declared independence of Bangladesh at the first hour of 26 March.

The Father of the Nation was arrested and sent to a lonely jail in Pakistan. Bangabandhu was subjected to inhuman torture in the Pakistani jail where he had been counting moments for execution of his death sentence pronounced in a farcical trial. In the face of death sentence, Bangabandhu rejoiced the spirit of Bangali nation. He was the inspiration of the freedom fighters. Under his charismatic leadership, Bangali nation earned the ultimate victory after 9-months of bloody war. The defeated Pakistani rulers had finally been compelled to free Bangabandhu from the jail. The Father of the Nation returned to the independent Bangladesh on 10 January in 1972. On his return, he delivered a historic speech where he narrated the inhuman torture of the Pakistani military junta. The Bangali nation got back the Father of the Nation and their victory attained fulfillment through his freedom.

After his return, Bangabandhu had devoted all his efforts to rebuild the war-ravaged Bangladesh. His heroic leadership ensured immediate withdrawal of the Indian allied forces from Bangladesh's soil. Responding to his call, various international organizations, including the UN and the friendly countries, quickly gave recognition to Bangladesh. The country earned the membership of the OIC in 1974. Bangladesh soon made its strong position in the comity of nations under the leadership of Bangabandhu.

The assassins halted the march-forward of Bangladesh through killing Bangabandhu along with most of his family members on August 15 in 1975. The armed usurpers marred democracy, defaced the Constitution and halted the trend of progress and development.

The democracy has been reestablished after protracted struggles and sacrifices. A positive change has been brought in the people's living standard. Per capita income has been raised to USD 1,314. Forex reserve surpassed USD 27 billion. Bangladesh is now a role model in the fields of agriculture, education, healthcare, communication, ICT, industrialization, trade and commerce and other socio-economic fronts. We have reestablished the spirit of the Liberation War through the 15th amendment to the constitution. It sealed off usurping power through any unconstitutional means and ensured the hope and aspiration of the people.

Let us come and build a hunger and poverty free, prosperous, non-communal, peaceful Bangladesh being imbued with the spirit of liberation war. Let us build a "Sonar Bangla" as dreamt by the Father of the Nation where there will be no difference between the rich and the poor, and equal opportunity of prosperity will be available for all.

We should take a fresh vow on the homecoming day of the Father of the Nation so that no evil force could disrupt the ongoing march of our progress and development.

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

"In my 7 March speech at the Race Course, I had said, 'Build a fort'. Today I again say, 'Maintain your unity'. I had said, 'I will free Bangladesh InshaAllah'. Today, Bangladesh is free and independent. I am saying this not as your president or your leader, but as your brother ... if the people of this country do not have food to eat, if the young do not get any job or employment, this freedom will be futile, meaningless ... Bangladesh will be an ideal state. It will not be based on any particular religious ideology. The basic principles of the state will be democracy, socialism and secularism," he announced.

It was a very emotional moment when Bangabandhu reached his Dhanmondi residence after the rally. According to Shawkat Anwar's description published in *The Daily Azad* on 11 January 1972, "The entire house was in a different mood from the early. The little ones had red flowers in their hands. And Russel (1964-1975) was obviously the centre of attraction. His joy knew no bounds as his 'Abbu was coming home'. Mrs Mujib heaved a sigh of relief to hear on the radio that the flight had landed safely ... It seemed that they had heard every word of the radio commentary with their hearts ... There was no television in the house. So, the radio commentary was the only means to capture his moments ... Around 5:45pm, a white Cadillac carrying the flag of the independent Bangladesh arrived at the gate of the house and the car doors opened. Those who came out of the car were Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmed, Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib ... When friends and relatives were busy showering flower petals on him [Bangabandhu], he hugged his two daughters-Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana. Then he knelt down before his 90-year-old father and touched his feet respectfully. As his 80-year-old mother entered the room, he embraced her and burst into tears..."

Within two months of Bangabandhu's homecoming, Indian forces who assisted the freedom fighters in the Liberation War of Bangladesh returned home. The Indian army held a farewell parade at Dhaka stadium on 12 March 1972. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman received the salute.

With the withdrawal of the last battalion of the Indian Armed Forces from Bangladesh on the following day, the Liberation War came to a formal end. What is going on now is our struggle for emancipation. It's the struggle that Bangabandhu spoke of in his 7 March speech-the struggle for economic emancipation. And it's Sheikh Hasina, daughter of Bangabandhu, leader of the people, who is leading this struggle.

The present government is working to make Bangladesh a rich and developed country by 2041, through which Bangabandhu's 'Golden Bengal' will become a reality and our struggle for emancipation will be successful.

Bangabandhu in his 7 March speech had proclaimed, "Nobody will be able to suppress us." Towards the end of his 10 January speech, he had said, "Bangladesh has achieved freedom. If anybody wants to snatch away Bangladesh's freedom now, Mujib will be the first person to lay down his life to protect it. ... The Bangalis will fight to the last person to protect their freedom." The defeated forces of 1971 are still hatching conspiracies at home and abroad against our glorious liberation. But we cannot let ourselves be daunted by them. We have to continue our ongoing struggle for emancipation braving all these conspiracies, all these evil forces.

Writer: Vice- Chancellor, Jagannath University, Dhaka.

Translation: **M. Jahurul Islam**

