



# BANGLADESH

## BIRTH OF A NATION 1952 TO 1971

On 21 February 1952, a few brave Bengali youths laid down their lives to protect the dignity of their mother tongue. With that tragic event taking place on the streets of Dhaka, the seed of our nationhood was sown, which eventually sprouted and gave us the strength and fortitude to press for autonomy and eventually freedom from exploitation of the Pakistani regime.

They tried to deny our right to speak, think and write in our mother tongue, when they most unjustly declared that Urdu would be the only official language of the state of Pakistan. This declaration from the ruling quarters was a blatant denial of the right of the Bengalis who formed the majority of the population of Pakistan.

When the brave sons of this land most unselfishly embraced martyrdom to counter the designs of the Pakistani rulers, this step was written into history as the courageous act of a people who fought to uphold the dignity of their national pride. For the Bengalis, as the years passed by, the yearning to free themselves from the shackles of exploitation gained momentum as the world witnessed the political movements of the sixties ushering in the six-point charter of the Awami League, the 11-point demands of the students, the mass movement of 1969, and ultimately the Liberation War of 1971 that gave birth to Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is the only country in the world that had to spill its blood for the right to speak its lan-



guage. We are the only brave ones to have faced a trained, well-equipped army and defeated them.

By 1969 Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib ur Rahman raised the issue of full regional autonomy for East Pakistan. The election of 1970 saw the Awami League led by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib ur Rahman winning a majority of seats in the National Assembly to form a government. But that was never to happen.

The Pakistani military regime blatantly rejected the result and openly threatened the legitimate elected people's representatives of dire consequences.

On the night of March 25, 1971 the Pakistan Army executed Operation Searchlight and the world saw brutality the likes of

which has rarely been seen. We lost 3 million lives and 2 million women were violated. But the resilient people of the soon-to-be Bangladesh did not give up and they won. They won their freedom. They won their rights, and they won their mother tongue.

It has been 64 years from 1952 to 2016. We have crossed all major hurdles Bangladesh could have faced and we still stand tall and so we shall as long as we remember our history and culture. As long as we remember our past, present and future nothing will and no one can deter Bangladesh.

By Shahed Latif

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- \* প্রোটিন এবং ভিটামিন সরবরাহ করে।
- \* চুলের ভাঙন রোধ করে।
- \* চুল করে মজবুত, শক্ত এবং সুন্দর।

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