

17 March National Children's Day

Homage on the auspicious birthday
of Father of the Nation
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman



Special Supplement

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



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

PRESIDENT
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH

Message

On the occasion of the 97th birthday of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, I pay my profound respect to the memory of the 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 Father of the Nation and undisputed leader of the Bangali, was born in Tungipara of Gopalganj district on 17 March 1920. Since his boyhood this most distinguished great man 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 was the dreamer of Bangali nation and an ardent exponent of Bangali nationalism. The 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, he 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.

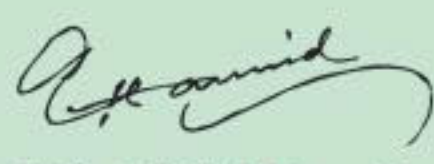
In the context of his overall contributions, Bangabandhu had appeared before us not only as a person but also as a unique history of the time. He would also remain as an ever surpassing personality in society, nation and in the contemporary world for his outstanding leadership and works. He is the symbol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

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

I welcome the initiative to observe the 'National Children's Day' on the birth anniversary of Bangabandhu. Our new generation will be able to know the life and works of Bangabandhu through observing the day and will contribute to build the nation imbued with the spirit of patriotism. I urge upon all, irrespective of party affiliation to take united efforts 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 97th birthday.

Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.


Md. Abdul Hamid

Bangabandhu's Birthday

From the Pages of Newspapers: 1971-1975

1971
Bangabandhu on his 52nd Birthday:
I am Your Man

Staff Reporter : 'The snakes are blowing out/ Poisonous breath/ Gentle message of peace shall convey/ Futile mockery'.

When I entered the Dhanmondi residence of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman yesterday, Wednesday, just before evening, the above-mentioned lines of Rabindranath's poem was being repeatedly recited by him.

Yesterday was the fifty second birthday of Sheikh Mujib. But there were no special arrangements for this in his house on road number thirty-two that was bedecked with black flag.

In the words of Sheikh Mujib, 'Who cares about the birth or death-days of Bangladeshi people! When someone attempts to kill them, they die. And I am merely one among those masses'.



Side by side with conveying such an attitude about birthdays before the foreign journalists, Bangabandhu told his fans and admirers, 'The only narrative of my birthday is that, our struggle shall continue till achievement of goal. Truth and justice are on our side. Our victory is inevitable'.

This call for struggle and the message of victory in the mouth of Sheikh Mujib became the prime theme yesterday. And many people flocked to the residence of their beloved leader with bouquets of flowers or cakes with the mental preparation of hearing such a message.

At one stage, I heard one student leader telling his peers, 'Everybody is bringing flowers or greetings on the occasion of birthday. What shall we give our leader? Handbombs or revolvers?'

The workers also came in with the basket of good wishes in the mouth of processions. In exchange, they got this same call for struggle from the leader.

When Sheikh Mujib returned to his well-wishers on the lawn in an informal setting wearing Lungi and Panjabi after delivering an inspirational speech before the workers, even then there was poetry in his mouth:

'A rebel tired of war/I shall become quiet on that day/When the wailing of the repressed/Shall not resonate in the sky and air/The swords of the oppressor/Shall not be wielded in the dreadful battlefield'.

[Daily Azad, 18 March 1971]

1972
Unostentatious on Birthday but Deep in Cordiality

Staff Reporter : The countrymen yesterday on seventeenth March observed the 52nd birth-anniversary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. It was unostentatious, but full of cordiality.

The visiting noble Prime Minister of India Srimati Indira Gandhi presented gifts of fruits and sweets to Bangabandhu on his birthday. She brought these fruits and sweets from her homeland. It was a token of good wishes, friendship and brotherhood from the fifty-five crore people of India.

Before that, hundreds of admirers had assembled on that much familiar compound of the house on Dhanmondi road thirty-two in a serene morning. Seeing them, the Father of the Nation Sheikh Mujib came out with a smiling face.

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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, the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on his 97th birthday and National Children's Day. I convey my best wishes to the countrymen, especially the children, on this auspicious day.

Bangabandhu was a legendary leader. From his boyhood, he was fearless, courageous and benevolent. He was the last resort to realise the righteous demands of the people of Bangladesh. Having keen memory and vision, the aim of Bangabandhu's long career was to free the Bangali nation from the shackle of subjugation. He led the movement to establish the state language. In 1948, State Language Movement Council was constituted comprising Tamuddun Majlish, Student League and other student bodies as per a proposal of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Bangabandhu was arrested as a general strike was enforced on 11 March 1948 to realise the demand for recognising Bangla as the state language. He was arrested time and again from 1948 to 1952. Bangabandhu led the Language Movement both from in and outside the jail. During the tragic incident of 21 February 1952, Bangabandhu gave directives from his internment. In line with this, the election of United Front in 1954, the anti-martial law movement against the military junta Ayub Khan in 1958, the movement against Education Commission in 1962, the historic 6-point movement of 1966, mass upsurge in 1969, general elections in 1970 and the independence war of 1971 were carried under the undisputed leadership of Bangabandhu.

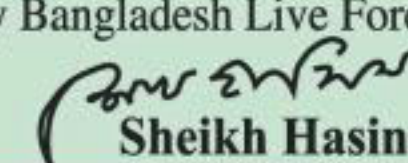
The charismatic leadership and personality of Bangabandhu brought the whole nation under one umbrella. As a result of this, we got the independence and sovereign Bangladesh. The Bangali nationalism flourished. The Father of the Nation was not only the leader of Bangali but also a forerunner in realising 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 him along with most of his family members on 15 August 1975. The spirit of the war of liberation, Bangladesh's democratic march and development spree were halted. The illegal military rulers then defaced the country's constitution, which was one of finest constitutions of the world. They rehabilitated the anti-liberation, war criminals and reactionary forces. The countrymen were deprived of their rights to life and vote. The history of independence and freedom struggle was distorted.

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 country 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. The verdicts on the killings of the intellectuals cases will also be executed. We are committed to materialising the unfinished tasks of Bangabandhu defeating the conspiracies of anti-liberation and undemocratic forces.

Bangabandhu had a limitless love for the children. That is why, the day of his birth has been declared as the 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.

We are pledge-bound to make our beloved Bangladesh as a safe habitat for the children. We have to work together irrespective of party affiliation or opinion to build the children developing their self-confidence, flourishing their patriotism, creativity and building their personality. They have to learn the history of our beloved motherland and the struggling life of the Father of the Nation.

Let us sacrifice our present for the welfare of our children's future. Let us get together 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

Your Birthday is Ours Too

Selina Hossain

Bangabandhu, we (the children of Bangladesh) have gathered on your birthday. Today is your 97th birthday. You please accept our love and respect on this day.

Bangabandhu, to walk with you is our dream. If there is anything bigger than the Himalaya, it is your height. We will conceive your height in ourselves and walk into a thousand years' Bangladesh. In our Bangladesh, flowers will bloom on roadsides, flocks of birds will sit on the branches of trees, fields will be filled with golden sheaves of paddy and all children will have a safe life. Overwhelmed with the pleasant sounds of children, Bangladesh will remember you, Bangabandhu. Bangladesh will also remember 3 million immortal martyrs.

That is why, we say in a chorus that your birthday is ours too. This is a day of joy, a day to learn and a day to make us brave. It is a day for learning history, a day for us to learn human rights. It is a day for us to learn how to love our country and our people. In everyday's remembrance a new sun will rise in our life. You as an eternal man of ours will survive in our history and tradition.

Bangabandhu, we are a lucky generation of people in your country. We have been the citizens of an independent country just after our birth. We have seen a national flag. We have sung the national anthem. We have a constitution. There is an open sky for us. We have fields filled with crops. We have extended greenery. We have mountains and rivers. We have achieved these things right after our birth. We have everything around us. Now we have to work hard to grow great. Bangabandhu, on your birthday we take an oath for this hard work. We also want to be brave like you, to stand beside the people in distress, and to love the country. Bangabandhu, we will grow big exactly like you.

We know that there are competitions in every field in the modern world— economic competitions, industrial competitions, educational competitions, competitions for knowledge and competitions in sports. Above all, there are also competitions in talent and creativity. We have to take part in all these competitions. We cannot lag behind. We have to ensure victory in every competition. We shall accept no defeat. We have changed the meaning of defeat. To us, the meaning of defeat is to face a challenge. Those who do not face a challenge are backward boys and girls. We shall not be backward children. We shall take defeats to a place of dream. If we go forward with dreams in our bosoms, victory is sure to come to our grasp. Bangabandhu, we shall persevere to be great men forever.

We are today's children. We shall become mature in the days to come. We have to take the responsibility of ruling the country. Not only that, we shall brighten the image of our country in the international world. That can be done in various ways. Our elder brothers have spread the glory of our motherland in many countries by winning the world in cricket. Our scientists have been engaged in world research in different countries. They are taking the country to a height of glory. Many of our students are studying abroad. They are making good results. They are doing well in competitions with children of many countries. Our sisters are scaling the Himalayan peaks. They have scaled many other mountain tops too. When the children of your country fly the red-green flags in any foreign land, the spring wind with the smile of the people of that country see that your name is dazzling there. Bangabandhu, you take us further away in this way. Your thunderous voice rings loudly in our ears. 'We shall win'— this desire for victory of ours has a reflection everywhere in your country, Bangabandhu. You place your hands on our head and bless us.

We have heard that your last birthday was observed on 17 March 1975. You spent quite

a lot of time with children like us. You asked everyone to play and run. You said, "The field of Gonobhaban is open today for you to do whatever you like to do. The only restriction for you is not to snap any twigs of any tree and pluck any flowers. Okay? You have to learn how to protect the environment". "Bangabandhu, we won't destroy trees", promised the children together on that day. Then about 7-8 hundred brothers and sisters of "Kochikanchar Mela" (an association of young children), "Khelaghar" (another similar association), Scouts and Girlguides celebrated your birthday on that day at the Gonobhaban premises. Having you with them their joy knew no bounds. On that day the moment you got off your car, the brothers and sisters of the "Kochikanchar Mela" sang a song. From your autobiography we have gathered that in your adolescence you associated yourself with the "Bratachari Movement" (a movement for physical and spiritual purification). On your birthday the brothers and sisters sang a song of that Movement: " He is dear and loveable to all and welcome in all activities. Oh Lord, it's our prayer to you to give him a long and successful life". At that time our little friends prayed for your long life with a song. Bangabandhu, to us you are really a man of long life. You are physically dead but on the opposite side of that death you have a survival of a thousand years.

You said, "At the time of walking the gallows I shall say, I am a Bangali, Bangla is my country and Bangla is my language". You saw that a grave was being dug in the Pakistan prison. You told them to send your dead body to your country. The truth of your living was so fearless. Bangabandhu, in this very way you have fixed our ideal place. We do not forget that we fought for the dignity of our mother language. It is you who for the first time delivered your speech in Bangla at the UN General Assembly. We do not forget that we fought for our freedom and we have the glory of achieving freedom. It is you who told your people in a thunderous voice, "Our struggle this time is a struggle for emancipation, a struggle for freedom". You are the very leader who told your people to build a fortress in every homestead. You pointed your finger at the Pakistan government and said, "You

can no more suppress the seven crore Bangalis". These messages stay high before us like your forefinger.

Every child of every religious faith will remember that speech of yours. You said, 'There is no place for communalism in the soil of Bangladesh. Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Christians— whoever live in Bangladesh are the citizens of this country. They will enjoy equal rights in every sector'.

We know you came back to your country on 10 January 1972 after being released from the prison in Pakistan. On that day you said in your speech, 'I would like to say in clear and unambiguous terms that our country will be a democratic, secular and socialistic country. The peasants, labourers, Hindus, Muslims— everyone will live here in peace and harmony'.

Your thunderous speech from the Ramna Racecourse Field reached the hearts of people. Bangabandhu, everyone does not have the courage to show so much love and respect to the common people. You are an exceptional man. We also want to be a man of understanding like you.

You gave an order for the national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam to be brought to Dhaka for his necessary treatment and nursing. He was brought to Dhaka by Bangladesh Biman on 24 May 1972. The government instructed that a medical board be formed for the supervision of the poet's treatment. It is that immortal poet who wrote: 'Say, you hero! My head is high forever'. It is our pride that you showed respect to that poet who in his poetry gave us the idea of keeping our heads high.

The tasks you left behind are now being done by our loving Prime Minister as a part of her responsibility. We walk together holding her hands. In order to free our future from stigma, she has constituted a special tribunal to start the trial of the war-criminals. The Court has given its verdict for their crimes against humanity. Some verdicts have already been executed. She has taken us to a place of dignity. We will walk on the world streets raising our heads. We shall say, we have freed our country from stigma. We are a nation of heroes. We can do everything.

Bangabandhu, the children of this time will grow up with such very ideas. They will continuously say that man is above everything else. They will learn to understand human rights. They will learn that the concept of humanity is the biggest of all concepts. People may be rich or poor but they will never belong to a lower class because of their professions. The place of their human dignity will remain high. Bangabandhu, we are preparing ourselves with this belief.

In 2015 our Prime Minister received the highest award 'Champions of the Earth' from the UN Environment Program. She also received an award for the Sustainable Development in ICT. She has dedicated her awards to the people of the country. Bangabandhu, we will take this achievement further forward and her voice will resound there. We want to tell ourselves that she is not Bangabandhu's daughter only. She is an offspring of this soil. She has recognized children's rights. Various government plans about children are being implemented all over the country. She is a shade over our

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