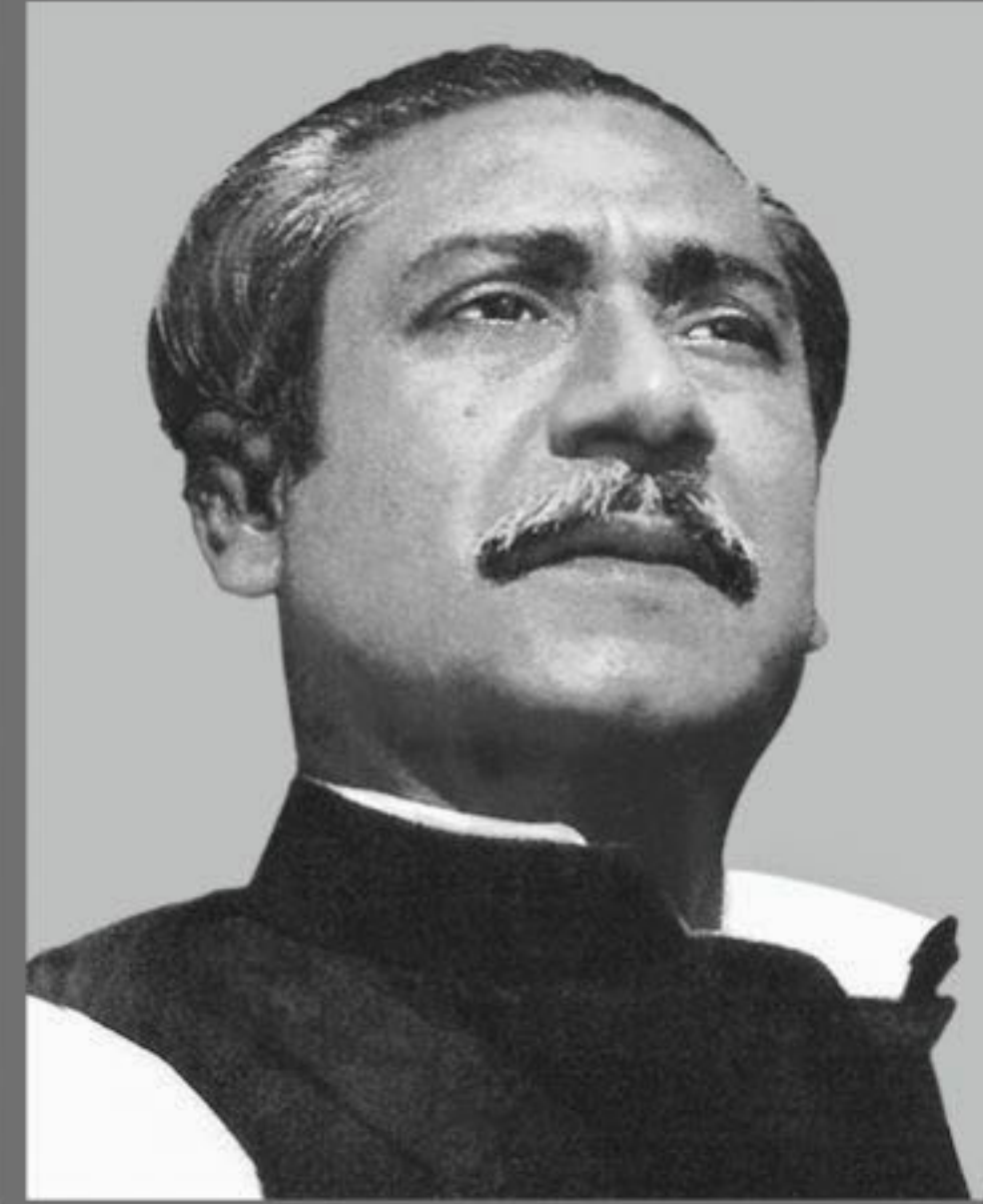


15 August National Mourning Day



Special Supplement

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پیوندہ الامت الکریمہ
PRESIDENT
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH

Message

Today is tragic 15 August, National Mourning Day. It is the day of mourning for the Bangali and Bangladesh and the 41st martyrdom anniversary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. On this day in 1975, the greatest Bangali of all time and Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman along with his wife, sons, daughters-in-law and near and dear ones embraced martyrdom. I pay my profound homage with heavy heart to them. I pray to Almighty Allah for the salvation of the departed souls on this Mourning Day.

The 15 August, 1975 is regarded as a disgraceful chapter in the history of the Bangali nation. On this day the undisputed leader and Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was brutally assassinated at his residence by a group of killers with the connivance of anti-liberation forces. His wife Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib, sons Sheikh Kamal, Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russel, daughters-in-law Sultana Kamal and Rosy Jamal, brother Sheikh Naser, peasant leader Abdur Rab Serniabat, youth leader Sheikh Fazlul Haq Moni and his wife Arzu Moni, Baby Serniabat, Sukanta Babu, Arif and Abdul Nayeem Khan Rintu were also assassinated along with Bangabandhu. This brutality was a rare occurrence not only in the history of the Bangali nation but also in the history of the world. The aims of the killers were not merely to kill a statesman but to annihilate the ideals of the war of liberation and reinstate the defeated forces.

Bangabandhu was a visionary leader and an ardent proponent of Bangali nationalism. Since the historic Language Movement in 1952, Bangabandhu led the nation at every struggle and democratic movement including Six-Point Movement in 1966, Mass Uprising in 1969 and the General Elections in 1970 which all were directed for attaining the right to self-determination and emancipation. He, therefore, had to go to jail for several times and had to face inhuman sufferings. Despite various challenges, he never compromised on the question of the rights of our people. This great leader always nourished in his thinking for the well-being of Bangla, Bangali and Bangladesh. Thus, Bangabandhu and Bangladesh have emerged as a unique symbol to the people of Bangladesh for his extraordinary contributions. Though the assassins killed the Father of the Nation, they could not wipe out his principle and ideals. I am confident that the name and fame of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman will remain ever shining in the mind of millions of Bangalis so long as the country and its people will stay alive.

Bangabandhu struggled for attaining political independence along with people's economic emancipation throughout his life. He dreamt of building "Sonar Bangla" (Golden Bengal) free from hunger and poverty. He started working to rebuild war-torn newly born Bangladesh. But the killers restrained the development activities committing barbarous massacres. Therefore, it is our utmost responsibility to build our country a happy and prosperous one by completing the unfinished task of Bangabandhu and in this way we can pay our deep tribute to this immortal soul of the soil.

The Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, daughter of Bangabandhu, has set "Vision 2021" and "Vision 2041" in order to transform Bangladesh into a prosperous developed country. Bangladesh is now on the verge of reaching a middle-income country and I am confident that this country would be a developed one by the Diamond Jubilee celebration of our independence. Imbued with the spirit of war of liberation, it needs concerted efforts and strong unity from all pro-liberation forces to establish a progressive society free from terrorism and militancy.

On the National Mourning Day, let us translate our grief into strength and devote ourselves to build a prosperous Bangladesh.

Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Md. Abdul Hamid

Listen Bangali, Listen: That Voice of Thunder

Momtazuddin Ahmed

I love Bangabandhu. We love Bangabandhu. The people of Bangla adore Bangabandhu. We cannot but love him. Where can we find such a friend, such a kin, such a dear person?

Bangabandhu also loves his Bangladesh. The rivers of Bangla are his favourites. The crops, birds, sky, mustard flowers of Bangla are all very dear to him. The mosques, temples, churches, pagodas of Bangla are dear to him. Everything is very dear to him. He watches the river while sitting on the steamer, ponders about Bangla while standing in the prison-cell, meditates about Bangla while undertaking fast unto death. Bangla is his dream, his deed and his movement. He said many times, repeatedly, 'Bangla is my soul, Bangla is my beloved'. On the bank of Baigra, a tributary of Modhumati, a fisherman's son Goutam plays his flute. Khoka sits beside him. He listens to the melancholic melody of the flute. He asks his dear Goutam: Why is your flute's melody so mournful? Goutam says: The cry of Bangla is in my flute. Khoka says: Why does Bangla cry? Goutam says: Don't know why!

Khoka is engrossed in contemplation - Why is there so much tear, why is there such sadness in the breast of my Tungipara! That Tungipara then becomes Bangla inside his juvenile mind.



The mother Saira Khatun watches his son enter home with only a wrapper on his body. O Khoka, O dearest, where is your fabric, your pajama? Khoka replies, I saw somebody in my path. He had torn clothes, was shivering in the cold. I gave him my shirt and pajama. Mother sees Khoka does not have the new umbrella. His face is red due to exposure to sunlight. O Khoka, where is your umbrella? Khoka says: Gave it to my classmate. He gets burnt by walking four miles to his home. He needs it more.

In bad days, Khoka opens up the granary of the house. Take away the rice. Please do not remain hungry, any of you.

The sorrow, poverty, tears of Bangla saddens Khoka's heart.

The chief minister of Bangla A K Fazlul Haque came to Gopalganj Mission School. He was accompanied by the labour minister Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy. The teenager Mujib blocked their path: Water trickles down the roof of our school-building, it has to be repaired. Please make necessary arrangement for that. Suhrawardy is surprised by the courage of the teenage boy. He said all steps would be taken. Meet me when you come to Kolkata, he asked.

A son was born in the household of Lutfur Rahman after the birth of two daughters. The
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PRIME MINISTER
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

Message

The 15 August is the National Mourning Day. On this day in 1975, the greatest Bangali of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, along with his family members, was assassinated in one of the most barbaric carnages in the human history.

Eighteen members of the family along with Bangabandhu's wife Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib, three sons Captain Sheikh Kamal, Lt. Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russel, two daughters-in-law Sultana Kamal and Rosy Jamal, brother Sheikh Naser, peasant leader Abdur Rab Serniabat, youth leader Sheikh Fazlul Haq Moni and his wife Arzu Moni, Baby Serniabat, Sukanta Babu, Arif and Abdul Nayeem Khan Rintu were killed on that fateful night. Bangabandhu's Military Secretary Col. Jamil was also killed. Some members of a family at Mohammadpur in the capital were also killed by artillery shells fired by the killers on the same day.

On this day, I pray to the Almighty Allah for the salvation of the souls of the martyrs of the 15 August.

Under the dynamic, courageous and charismatic leadership of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the people of this territory brought the reddish sun of the independence breaking the shackles of subjugation of thousands of years. The Bangalis have gotten their own nation-state, flag and national anthem.

But Bangabandhu was killed at a time when he had undertaken an arduous task of building a Golden Bangla reconstructing the war-ravaged country and unifying the whole nation. The defeated forces of the Liberation War made abortive attempts to ruin the tradition, culture and advancement of the Bangali nation. Their target was to destroy the secular democratic fabric of Bangladesh.

The anti-liberation forces linked to the carnage initiated the politics of assassination, coup and conspiracy. The trial of Bangabandhu's brutal assassination was blocked through promulgation of indemnity ordinance.

Ziaur Rahman usurped the state power and promulgated Martial Law suspending the constitution and overthrowing the people's elected government. The killers of the Father of the Nation were rewarded and given jobs at the Bangladesh missions abroad. The anti-liberation elements were given nationality. They were made partners of the state power and rehabilitated politically and socially. The subsequent governments of BNP-Jamaat alliance had followed the same path.

The people of the country made Bangladesh Awami League victorious in the 29 December general elections in 2008 to end the era of BNP-Jamaat regime's killing, corruption and misuse, and ensure country's socio-economic development. Overcoming the stagnancy left by the previous BNP-Jamaat government and global economic recession, we have put the country on firm economic footing. During the last seven and a half years since 2009, we have turned Bangladesh into a role model of development implementing huge uplift programmes in all sectors including agriculture, education, health, women welfare, social safety-net, rural development, communication, ICT and foreign relations. Our per capita income has risen to USD 1,466 and forex reserve crossed USD 30 billion. We have achieved self-sufficiency in food production. Bangladesh has already been graduated to a lower middle-income country. We are hoping to turn Bangladesh into a higher middle-income country by 2021 and a developed one by 2041.

We have executed the verdict of the Bangabandhu killing case. The trial of the killers of four national leaders has been completed. The verdicts of the cases against war criminals are being executed and the trial of 21 August grenade attack case is also progressing. We are committed to upholding democracy, constitution and rule of law.

But the defeated forces of 1971 are still engaged in various ill-attempts and trying to obstruct the nation's progress. They are trying to destabilize the country through militancy and terrorist acts. I firmly believe that there would be no room for terrorism and militancy in the soil of Bangladesh. Golden Bangla, as dreamt by the Father of the Nation, would be established - that is our solemn pledge on the National Mourning Day.

The killers were able to assassinate Bangabandhu but they could not erase his dreams and ideals. Let us turn the grief of the loss of Bangabandhu into strength. Let us engage ourselves to the task of materialising Bangabandhu's dream of building a hunger-, illiteracy- and poverty-free, non-communal Bangladesh perceiving the sacrifice and endeavours of Bangabandhu. We must be victorious.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Sheikh Hasina

Bangabandhu and Independence are Synonymous

Anisul Hoque

Bangabandhu and the independence of Bangladesh are synonymous. While writing history-based novels like 'Jara Bhor Enechhilo' (Those who brought dawn) or 'Ushar Duarey' (At the door of dawn), I had to explore the alleyways, streets and roads of history. As I continued to read history, the conviction became brighter in my mind that the very birth of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had taken place for liberating Bangladesh. He had worked throughout his life with a lone objective, he marched on to realize the independence of Bangladesh, the freedom of Bangladesh's people. He had to repeatedly face death in his quest for reaching this goal, he and his family had to undergo intolerable sorrow, pain and suffering, but he never deviated from his objective; he made us independent.

When did he start dreaming about the independence of Bangladesh?

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman wrote in his own language, 'It was in 1947. I then belonged to the party of Suhrawardy sahib' (Annadashankar Ray, *Itihasher Mohanayak*, Publisher: Bangladesh Awami League, 2011). The British left in 1947, and two countries - Pakistan and India - were born. The youth Sheikh Mujib summoned his close student-workers at Sirajuddowla Hall of Islamia College, Kolkata. He said, 'The struggle for independence has not been concluded yet. Now we shall have to go to the sacred soil of Bangla Desh. This independence is not at all freedom'.

After returning to East Bengal in 1947, Bangabandhu jumped into movements in protest against the anti-Bangali unjust behaviour of the Muslim League government and the West. He led a procession of state language movement as early as in 1948. He had to embrace imprisonment for providing leadership to the state language movement.

His leader Suhrawardy also wrote to him via mail to accept Bangla as a regional language, but Urdu as the state language. The secret reports of intelligence agencies claimed, 'Sheikh Mujib disapproved of the suggestion of Mr. Suhrawardy to accord regional status to Bengali. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had received the advice of Mr. Suhrawardy through a letter. Other workers also did not agree with Suhrawardy' (Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, *Life and Politics*, Editor Monaem Sarkar).

The intelligence officers used to track Sheikh Mujib like a shadow. Reports were sent to relevant offices of the government on what he did and when since 1948-49. He used to be regularly arrested. After his arrests, movements were started demanding his release. Crowds were formed when he was taken to court for obtaining bail. He then addressed the assembled people and spoke against the misrule of the Muslim League government. The following is a description about the whereabouts of Sheikh Mujib in an official file on 14 March 1951:

'Son of Lutfur Rahman of Tungipara, Gopalganj, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was

released on bail on 14 March. Some students came out with him in a procession and held a meeting. Mujibur Rahman addressed the meeting. He severely criticised the government detention of Moulana Bhashani and others without trial and urged the students to become united. Mujibur Rahman was arrested on that very day...The next day, strike was observed in Gopalganj for his release. The local students brought out a procession demanding the release of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, recognition of Bangla as the state language and in protest at the repression of Morocco by France. Decision was taken at a meeting after the march to continue the struggle for the release of Sheikh Mujib'. (Translated from Bangla)

That was a regular feature in those days. Sheikh Mujib was not concerned about jails or tortures. Courage, patriotism and uncompromising attitude were in his blood.

The government spies tried to elicit bonds from him, but he never obliged saying he would continue his protests against the injustices of the government. Now, it is seen from those official intelligence reports that the stance of that prisoner was very robust. He could not be made to vacillate.

A spy gave a report on an interview with him at Khulna Jail on 26 February 1951,



'He was not willing to execute any bond for release even when the detention could cause him to face death. His attitude was very stiff'. Notice these words, he would not sign any bond even when his detention might lead to his death. His attitude was very firm. Whenever the spies went to him to take his signature, they consistently found this attitude, and wrote about it. The intelligence report of 22 May also said,

'He (Mujib) is not at all repentant about his past political activities, rather he is determined to carry forward his work as a political worker after his release. He is reluctant to inform about what he would do. He is very keen to get released, but he is very firm about not signing any bond for the purpose. His attitude is very stiff... His outlook is very rigid'.

Bangabandhu undertook a hunger strike while in prison during the language movement of 1952. He could not be made to eat. His heart was weak, his life was at risk. Ultimately, the government had to bow down to his resolve. He was freed. He went to Tungipara. He wrote about an incident of that period in his book *'The Unfinished Memoirs'*:

One morning I and Renu were gossiping in bed. Hasu and Kamal were playing below. Hasu occasionally came to me calling 'Abba Abba' after leaving the game. At one point Kamal was telling Hasina, 'Hasu Apa, Hasu Apa, can I call your father Abba'. Both I and Renu heard it. I slowly got up from bed, took him in my lap and said, 'I am your father as well'. Kamal did not want to come to me. Today he hung on to my neck. I understood, now he could stand no more. Even one's own son forgets when not seen for many days. When I went to jail, his age was only a few months.

That was the reality. Sheikh Mujib was fighting for the freedom of Bangla's people, so he had to spend a lot of time in jail, while his son was thinking that he was his sister's father. If Sheikh Mujib had given priority to his own comfort and happiness, if Begum Mujib had attached importance to the happiness and safety of her family like any other ordinary female, then this country could not have been freed so easily. Bangabandhu was never afraid for his own life. What he told that intelligence officer who came to interview him in jail in 1951 was his motto up to the last day of his life: If death is to come, let it come, but no compromise on the question of freedom of Bangalis. He could have been hanged in the Agartala Conspiracy Case; at that time a conspiracy was afoot to kill him by gun-shot in jail. In his words, 'I came back from the jaw of death twice. The first time was in the conspiracy case while in Ayub Khan's jail. One of my companions warned me that going outside the cell during evening for strolling out was dangerous. They would shoot me from behind and would claim they fired as I was escaping. That kind of firing did take place in case of another person. The second time was in Yahya Khan's prison. My grave was being dug in front of me. I could understand that my time was coming to an end' (Annada Shankar Ray).

Sergeant Zahurul Haque, an accused of the Agartala Conspiracy Case, was shot dead in this way. When Bangabandhu was imprisoned in a Pakistani jail during 1971, his death sentence was delivered; a grave was dug for him beside his cell. A little compromise could have made the path of freedom difficult for Bangladesh. He did not choose that.

There was also Fazilatunnesa Mujib on the other side. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib's beloved Renu. What an extraordinary lady we got in our national history! Whose theme does not appear in history! That is because, the sacrifices and contributions of women and family-members remain hidden behind history. Begum Mujib had positively determined the direction of our history while maintaining silence during two critical junctures of history. One was the mass uprising of 1969. Sheikh Mujib was then imprisoned in cantonment as an accused in the Agartala Conspiracy Case. At that time, talks were being held on releasing Sheikh Mujib under parole in order
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