



Special Supplement

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## Message

December 16 is our Victory Day, a glorious and memorable one in the history of the Bangladeshi nation. On this very day in 1971, we achieved ultimate victory through a nine-month long war of liberation. On this occasion, I extend my sincere felicitations and warm congratulations to my fellow countrymen living at home and abroad.

The undisputed leader of the Bangladeshi, the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared the historic independence on 26 March 1971 and it came true through a nine-month long armed struggle. Today, I recall with profound respect, the greatest Bangladeshi of all time, Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, whose boundless sacrifices and uncompromising and charismatic leadership contributed to the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent and sovereign state in world atlas. I pay my deep homage to the valiant freedom fighters who made supreme sacrifice in the war of liberation for the cause of country's independence. I also extend my deep gratitude to the organizers and supporters and the people from all strata who directly and indirectly made meaningful contributions to our war of liberation.

The importance and significance of great Victory Day is boundless in our national history. On the one hand victory has given us our own identity and on the other hand it has elevated us to world arena as an independent nation. But it is an irony that the path of development and the practice of democratic norms were not functioning smoothly all the time. The emergence of military autocracy and undemocratic government came into being after the assassination of Father of the Nation on 15 August in 1975 that hindered the flourishing of democratic pluralism. Democratic government has now been established in the country through a long struggle and various ups and downs. The country is now marching towards development and progress. With the formulation of appropriate planning and making its best implementation, Bangladesh has achieved manifold successes both at home and abroad. The rate of poverty has come down. The mega project of Padma Bridge is underway by our own resources. It is heartening to note that Bangladesh is now being considered as a role-model in the world community for flourishing democracy, empowering women, expansion of women education, strengthening local government, development of agriculture, health and education; ensuring food security, developing power and energy, thriving information technology and ICT etc. The government has successfully attained the targets of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and now providing its continued efforts to achieve the targets of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

Our foreign policy is being exercised in accordance with the principle of 'Friendship to all, malice towards none' as adopted by the Father of the Nation. It is my firm conviction that, in light of this policy, our bilateral and multilateral relations with other nations would be further deepened and widened in the days to come. Along with establishing world peace, Bangladesh's efforts in mitigating negative impact of global climate change and thriving information technology are being acclaimed by the world community transcending domestic boundary. It is a matter of pride that our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been awarded with 'Planet 50-50 Champion' and 'Agent of Change' this year by the respective UN bodies for her outstanding contributions in empowering women. I believe that it is also a great achievement for the Bangladeshi nation.

We have to work together to make our hard-earned independence more meaningful. The government has set 'Vision 2021' and 'Vision 2041' for transforming Bangladesh into a developed country. I am hopeful that we would be able to materialize the 'vision' within the stipulated time by utilizing our huge human resources and information technology. Insha-Allah. On the eve of our great victory day, I call upon my fellow countrymen irrespective of party affiliation: let us contribute to the nation from our respective positions to realize the spirit of war of liberation.

On the occasion of great Victory Day, I hope that the coordinated efforts of everybody will turn Bangladesh into a hunger and poverty free prosperous 'Sonar Bangla' (Golden Bangla) as dreamt by Bangabandhu. Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Md. Abdul Hamid

## Victory of Bangladeshi Nationhood

Dr. Harun-or-Rashid

16 December is our glorious Victory Day. 45 years ago on this auspicious day 93 thousand Pakistani occupation army led by General Niazi surrendered to the joint command of the freedom fighters and the Indian allied forces at the historic Race Course (now Suhrawardy Uddyan). Victory of the Bangladeshi following the 9 month long armed struggle for freedom was thus achieved against the Pakistani occupation forces. This victory was achieved as a result of the unflinching and relentless struggle under the leadership of none other than the greatest Bangladeshi of all time, legend of our history, architect of independent Bangladesh, the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Is the victory of 16 December merely a victory achieved in 9 months freedom struggle or its perspective is spread over a broader horizon? What is the significance of 16 December victory? In one word, the War of Liberation of 1971 and the victory that followed were the culmination of the long historical process of setting up of the Bangladeshi nationhood and national struggle that spread over thousand years.

Bangladeshi nationhood is a mixture of various human races. Today's Bangladesh is only the part of that widespread areas of Eastern India where the Bangalis lived in ancient period. In course of time following various hurdles, ups and downs, addition and deletion there has been a gradual transformation from Banga to Bangal then to Bangla or Bangla, Suba Bangla, Nizamat, Bengal, East Bengal, then to East Pakistan through uniting in a single geographic entity, finally an independent Bangladesh.

During the Pala dynasty of 400 years following its establishment in the 8th century though there has been a probability of emergence of a separate Bangladeshi political entity, this did not get normal course to flourish attributing to the foreign rule particularly to the colonial intrusions and interventions. Following the Pala dynasty the foreign colonial powers that brought Bengal



under their rule included Sena dynasty coming from Karnataka of the Deccan (from the end of 11th century to the beginning of 13th century), rule of Turkish and Afghan Sultanate (1204-1575), Subahdari and Nawabi rule of the Mughal (1576-1756), rule of British East India Company (1757-1857), of British Raj (1858-1847), and finally, Pakistani rule (1947-1971).

The medieval period of Bengal was the rule of outsider Muslims which spanned over 550 years. There were two worth mentioning aspects of the Muslim rule. (one) Bangla language, literature and culture received patronisation from Muslim rulers, particularly from Muslim sultanate, (two) internally divided various areas were brought under the same geographical entity which was vitally important to found a state in course of time.

Though the influence of Buddhist, Brahmin and Islamic culture in shaping up the Bangladeshi psyche was evident all along, during this time a tolerant and harmonious culture was developed in the Bangladeshi life imbued by the liberal Islamic philosophy or Sufism preached by Sufis and Saints and 'vaishnabha' and 'Bhaktibad' of Shri Chaitanya (1486-1533), Kabir, Nanak etc from which it inherited a non communal and liberal culture.

The Bangladeshi culture, literature, and language are immensely significant in creating separate Bangladeshi national identity and independent state. The rhythmic literature 'Cherjapa' authored by Buddhist intellectuals during 8th and 9th centuries to the bilingual 'Puthi' literature written by



## Message

Today is the 16 December, the Great Victory Day. This is the day of greatest pride for the Bangladeshi nation. Responding to the call of the greatest Bangladeshi of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Bangladeshi nation achieved the ultimate victory on this day in 1971 after a 23-year intense political struggle and a 9-month bloody war against the Pakistani occupation forces.

I extend my sincere greetings and warm felicitations to the countrymen at home and abroad on the occasion of the 45th Victory Day. On this glorious day, I pay my deep homage to the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I recall with gratitude the four national leaders and three million martyrs, who sacrificed their lives and two hundred thousand women, who lost their innocence for the cause of our independence.

Bangladeshi nation got prepared for independence waging the Language Movement of 1952, the Education Movement of 1962, the 6-point Demand of 1966, 11-point Movement and the Mass Uprising of 1969 under the undaunted leadership of the Father of the Nation. Awami League earned an overwhelming majority in the general election of 1970 through which Bangladeshi nation's aspiration for independence got legal basis. Bangabandhu realised that the oppression, persecution and deprivation meted out to the Bangladeshi nation would not be ended without achieving the independence. Ultimately, on the historic 7 March, 1971, Bangabandhu in front of a million of people at the then Race Course Maidan declared that, "This time the struggle is for our freedom, this time the struggle is for the independence". Virtually, from that day, the final phase had begun for achieving an independent Bangladesh. The countrywide non-cooperation movement commenced at the directives of Bangabandhu as part of the final preparations of the Liberation War.

On the fateful night of 25 March, 1971, the Pakistani occupation forces launched a brutal onslaught and massacred the innocent and unarmed Bangladeshi. The Father of the Nation declared independence of Bangladesh in the early hours of 26 March, 1971 resulting in the formal War of Independence.

On 10 April, 1971, the proclamation of independence was announced by the elected people's representatives and the first Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh was formed with Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the President, Syed Nazrul Islam as Vice-President and Tajuddin Ahmed as Prime Minister. This government was sworn-in on 17 April, 1971 at the historic Mujibnagar in Meherpur and led the war of independence. The heroic freedom fighters with the help of the allied forces earned the victory on 16 December, 1971 by defeating Pakistani occupation forces. The nation ultimately earned an independent country. The heroism and patriotism of the Bangladeshi nation created a new history in the world.

As Bangabandhu had engaged himself in the struggle to build a "Golden Bangladesh" reconstructing the war-ravaged country, the anti-liberation forces in collusion with the war criminals assassinated Bangabandhu along with his family members. Through the heinous killings of 15 August, 1975, the assassins initiated the policies of killings, coup and conspiracy and obstructed the process to try the killers of Bangabandhu through promulgating Indemnity Ordinance. They ruined the democracy by declaring Martial Law and formed an illegal government. They defaced the Constitution and gagged the press freedom.

Democracy was established after a long struggle and sacrifices in 1996. Bangladesh is now the 'Role Model' in socio-economic development in the world. We will turn Bangladesh into a middle income country by 2021 and a developed and prosperous one by 2041. Insha-Allah.

Let us come and uphold the development and democratic spree being imbued with the spirit of the freedom struggle. Let us all engage ourselves for building a service-oriented, hunger-poverty free and a happy-prosperous 'Golden Bangladesh' as dreamt by the Father of the Nation.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu  
May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Sheikh Hasina

## Special Supplement

## Victory of ...

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poetic rhythm during the medieval period gradually shaped modern Bangladeshi literature during 18th and 19th centuries. But the immense affinity of the Bangladeshi towards Bangladeshi language, literature, and culture was visible in the medieval period, which was reflected in the voice of poet Abdul Hakim (1620-1690) from the following verses-

"Those who hate Bangladeshi language despite being born in Bengal,  
the legitimacy of their birth is very much in question"  
(‘সে সব বঙ্গের জন্মি হিঁসে বঙ্গবাহী/ সে সব কাহার জন্ম নির্দিষ্ট ন জানি’)

It may be construed that the spirit of the language movement of the modern Bangladeshi was embedded in these verses of poet Abdul Hakim.

The British rule in Bengal and India spanning over nearly 200 years was marked by significant changes and development. The most remarkable and positive aspect of their rule was astonishing development in communication and infrastructural sector, revolution in intellectual practices and their unprecedented expansion. An educated middle class background leadership had emerged with western curriculum mainly as a result of introduction of English education, whose active presence was spread everywhere in the society and politics. On the contrary, the most negative aspect of the British rule was the rapid transformation of the tolerant and harmonious culture of the pre-colonial rule into communal psyche and thought. In spite of this, amidst a growing communal socio-economic environment, efforts to carry forward the issue of separate Bangladeshi national identity involving Hindus and Muslims was also there.

During the '40s, thoughts of a separate independent state for Bangladeshi had taken some place. The historic Lahore Resolution adopted in 1940 was the first formal expression in this regard. Establishment of an independent state in this part was incorporated in the Lahore Resolution tabled by Shere Bangla A K Fazlul Huq. On the eve of the partition of India the Chief Minister of undivided Bengal, namely Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy in continuation of the spirit of the Lahore Resolution took an initiative to establish an 'independent undivided Bengal state' taking on board Sarat Chandra Bose, Kiron Shankar Roy, Abul Hashim etc. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman played an active role in support of this initiative in Kolkata. But still then the ideal of the Bangladeshi nationhood irrespective of religious affiliations did not take clear shape, moreover this initiative did not succeed due to confusion and dilemma attributed to the so-called "Two Nation theory" of Jinnah. As a result, the Pakistan state was created with two parts separated by a distance of thousand miles.

From the very outset the state of Pakistan, whose creation could not have been possible without the massive support and votes of the Bangladeshi, the Bangladeshi became subject to exploitation, colonial type of rule, state sponsored oppression by the West Pakistani rulers. The Pakistani period of rule (1947-1971) was the ultimate and final phase of the liberation struggle of the Bangladeshi nation. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the great hero of this phase of struggle.

The first revolt of the Bangladeshi in the Pakistan state centred around the state language movement of '48 and '52. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was one of those taken into captivity in jail at the first phase of the language movement. During the life of Fazlul Huq, Suhrawardy and Bhasani under the Pakistani rule, even then Bangabandhu was the key person all along the liberation struggle of the Bangladeshi.

Though the 'juko front' cabinet led by Shere Bangla AK Fazlul Huq was formed following the massive victory in the 1954 election, it did not last for more than 56



## Bangladesh ...

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like this - 1947 was the main current of history, 1971-75 was an exception. The country reverted back to that main current after 1975. This philosophy was that of the subjugated, not of the victors. They did not stop at anything, ranging from putting the anti-liberation elements in seats of power to killing the freedom fighters. Not only that, attempt was made to kill the present Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during the rule of BNP-Jamaat, as she is the symbol of the victorious Bangladeshi.

The period between the assassination of Bangabandhu and the return of democracy in Bangladesh was an era of darkness. Whatever we had achieved were gradually erased during those 25 years. The country was ruled by the anti-liberation and pro-Pakistan elements. The period since the assumption of power by Sheikh Hasina has been an era of reinvigorating the spirit of the liberation war, a time for returning to light from that darkness.

There is a linkage between ideals and development. If we consider the chronology of Bangladesh's growth, we see that the trend of advancement during the time of Bangabandhu and Sheikh Hasina has not been observed during any other era. Even when we consider the time-span of 1954-56, we find that comparatively more development had taken place during the 25-year rule of Awami League. The country achieves progress when the Awami League remains at the helm along with likeminded forces.

I never thought that I would be able to see what I observe today in the Bangladesh of forty-five years. Many of the dreams of us Bangladeshi are being fulfilled because of the present Prime Minister. We wanted to see the trial of the killers of Bangabandhu and the four national leaders. Despite innumerable hindrances, this has been accomplished. She is also working to materialize a Golden Bangla as dreamt by Bangabandhu and the youths during his time. These trials, especially the trial of crimes against humanity will make her immortal.

At the same time, she is continuing her effort for De-Pakistanisation of Bangladesh. She has laid emphasis on economic growth and infrastructure development, which are inextricably linked with each other. We have observed that the growth rate did not go down

## THE GLORIOUS VICTORY DAY

Friday 16 December 2016



days due to interference by the Pakistani central government. The main aim of occupying the state power by General Ayub Khan was to establish West Pakistan-based civil-military bureaucratic control and absolute authority over the Bangladeshi, which continued for a decade in the best of so-called Basic Democracy.

In the year 1966 Bangabandhu placed before the countrymen the historic six point programme which was 'our charter of demand for existence' aimed at achieving overall emancipation of the Bangladeshi by dismantling the Pakistani colonial state structure. In order to destroy the movement based on the six point programme, Ayub government charged Bangabandhu with an act of treason as the principal accused under 'Agartala case' (1968). As a reaction to this mass upsurge took place in 1969. Despite Awami League's clear victory in the 1970 general elections under the leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Pakistan Junta instead of transferring power had a recourse to violence to destroy the Bangladeshi dream of independence for good through military might. On the 1st of March 1971, President Yahya Khan arbitrarily announced postponement of National Assembly session. In response, Bangabandhu called for an all out non-cooperation movement. On the 7th of March he made an historic address at the Race Course (Suhrawardy Uddyan) before the crowd of million of people with a clear guideline for an all-out resistance to the Pakistan forces. His 18 minute address is considered as one of the best speeches ever made by leaders of world stature. Bangabandhu in his address pointed out the reasons of conflicts between Pakistani state and the Bangladeshi, announced the elaborate programme of non cooperation movement, directed to put up resistance to the Pakistan forces all over Bengal, hinted to turn resistance struggle into a War of Liberation, advised to adopt guerrilla warfare strategies to face enemies, underscored the need for maintaining communal harmony in the face of any provocation etc then he proclaimed, "..... Create fortress at every homestead, brave changes like face enemies with whatever means you have. This time the struggle is for our emancipation, this time the struggle is for independence. Joy Bangla."

When on the night of 25th of March 1971 the Pakistani occupation army launched an all-out attack upon unarmed Bangladeshi in the name of 'Operation Searchlight', Bangabandhu after midnight i.e. in the first hour of 26th of March proclaimed Bangladesh's independence straightaway. The Declaration of Independence by Bangabandhu was nothing unusual or accidental. This was his lifelong dream culminating in the War of Liberation. The widely read Newsweek magazine in its April 5, 1971 edition wrote, "When Sheikh Mujibur Rahman proclaimed independence of Bangladesh last week, some of his critics declared that he was merely yielding to the pressure of the extremist supporters, seeking to ride the crest of wave in order to avoid being engulfed by it. But Mujib's emergence as the embattled leader of a new Bengal nation is the logical outcome of lifetime spent for Bangladeshi nationalism, his presence there is no accident."

On December 16, at the end of nine month long armed struggle an independent Bangladesh came into being defeating Pakistan occupation forces.

Our past history of peasant movement, bravery and resistance struggle of Shariatullah, Titumir, Khudiram, and Masterda Surayan, patriotic feelings and love for language of medieval poet Abdul Hakim (1620-1690), patriotism and humanism in the literary works of Rabindranath, Nazrul, Jibanananda Das, syncretistic culture of the medieval period, sufism, 'Bhaktibad', non-communal political ideals of Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das, Netaji Subash Chandra Bose, Shere Bangla AK Fazlul Huq, Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, and of Maulana Bhasani, dream for economic emancipation of Bangladeshi peasants and general masses behind Pakistan movement and on top of these, the desire of the Bangladeshi to create an independent state of their own were inherently rooted in the spirit and leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Firmly holding such indomitable spirit of the Bangladeshi, Bangabandhu had given it a final and fullest shape through the War of Liberation of '71. Separate Bangladeshi nationhood came out victorious resulting in the emergence of independent and sovereign Bangladesh.

Translation: AFM Nurul Saif Chowdhury

below 6 percent throughout her tenure. The whole world is today amazed at this. Bangladesh seems to be jumping ahead on all economic indices. It has occupied a position among top 10 countries of the world in producing garments, fish, meat, shoes, potato, etc. These are unprecedented developments for those of us who had spent most of their lives under military rule. All these prove that military rule is an obstacle to development, and symbolizes poverty.

Bangladeshi's biggest achievement during the past decade has been achievement of self-reliance in food-grain production. The Bangladeshi remained mostly unfed throughout their existence. The population has now doubled over the past 45 years. The area of cultivable land has also diminished by 20 percent. Today, there are no unfed Bangladeshi, no famine-like Monga. The new generation cannot realize what we understood by hunger.

The Bangladeshi have spread out in all directions all over the world with the passport that we got because of Bangabandhu. Bangladeshi are now building colonies in foreign lands. Bangladesh has made progress in all areas during the past 45 years, including education, sports, industries, and agriculture. Militancy and fundamentalism are on the rise in many countries of the world. But the Government of Bangladesh has suppressed these tendencies with an iron hand. Bangladesh has also remained ahead in achieving the Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations.

It is unlikely that we shall slip down from the level to which the people's leader Sheikh Hasina has lifted Bangladesh, unless the dark age of BNP-Jamaat rule returns in the country and politics deviates from its ideological base. On completion of 45 years, we hope that even if we are not able to see fully the Bangladesh that we had dreamt of, our descendants will see it. That Bangladesh would be non-communal, and prosperous. It won't be a land of the people having Pakistani mentality. That country will be wholly for the Bangladeshi, and it will prove that the Bangladeshi are a victorious nation, and shall remain so forever.

Translation: Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed



## Bath of Fire

Shafique Alam Mehdi

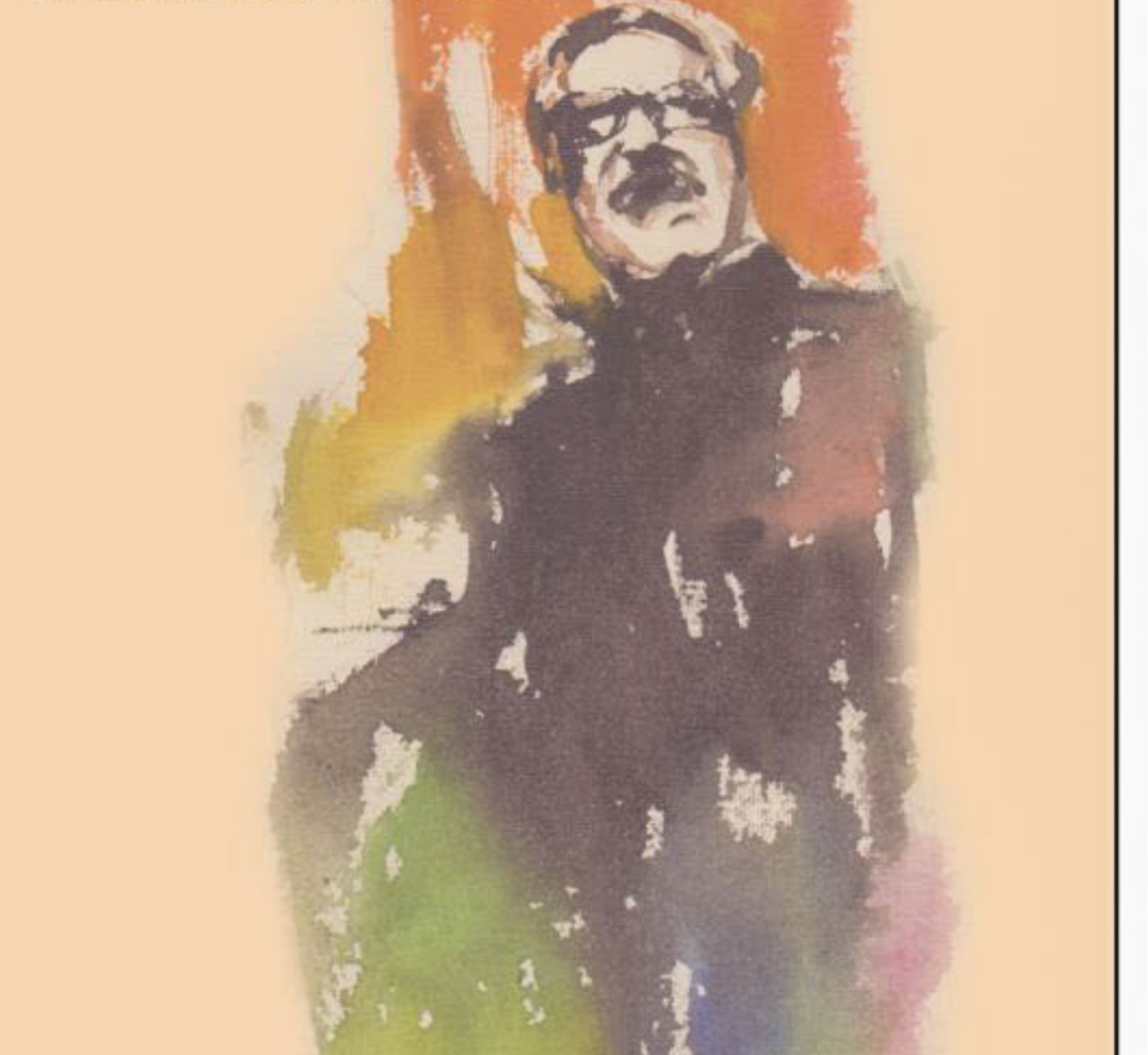
Come; let us revisit the memory-laden Seventy-one  
Let us gather from the fiery Seventh of March  
How was the green garden of Race-Course  
On that enchanting afternoon!

The sky was decorated beautifully in silvery blue hue  
In the shadows of tree-leaves and the humming of birds  
There was foreboding in the air of the mantra of freedom  
There were one million people on the carpet of grass  
Waiting eagerly for the arrival of the enlightened poet.

At last like the protagonist of an epic  
The poet arrived, standing upright  
He spelt out in a thunderous voice  
The greatest poem of all time called 'freedom'  
Within seconds the sea of people started to swing  
The heart of Bangla danced in the same rhythm  
The shouts of 'Joy Bangla' shook the earth and sky  
All became 'Mujibi' with a pledge to sacrifice lives.

The rest was history -  
None could return to their abode  
The father did not go back to the son  
The son did not revisit the mother  
Even the lover did not reach his sweetheart  
There were only the killings of beasts on water-land-air  
Following the blood-tears-bath of fire  
After nine long months the home-leaver Mujibi  
Again returned to their journey's beginning  
The Race Course, on Sixteenth of December,  
Amid the birth-cry of motherland Bangla.

Translation: Helal Uddin Ahmed



## Do You Remember, Remember at All?

Tarik Sujat

Don't you remember Motiur,  
He of the dreamy, magical eyes and loving face,  
And broadly-browed Sergeant Zohur,  
Whose corpse was borne aloft by the masses  
On days when hearts throughout Bangladesh  
Fluttered like unfurled boat sails!  
Don't you remember as well  
Martyred Zohar?  
From pens blood dripped then  
And from the pages of books, Bangla letters dipped in black took wings!  
March—that month when flames leapt high  
And when a sleep that had lasted thousands of years ended;  
For all Bangladeshi to hear a thunderous voice ring out!  
Do you not remember as well  
Seventy million pairs of eyes totally transfixed  
By an invincible finger  
Pointing at a path it had discovered after mastering history?

Do you remember, remember at all  
How your mother moaned because of the pain of labor?  
Do you not remember as well  
How a blood-red sun arose  
To wake up your sleepy motherland,  
And how to the sound of thirty hundred thousand martyrs  
Who moaned as an umbilical cord was severed,  
The red and green flag began flying forever?

A map would now be drawn  
But after much bloodshed, many deaths, and a lot of agony!  
Fifty-five thousand square miles  
Now reflect your immortal visage!  
Roused once more by your thunderous voice.  
Let the brilliance of our golden past dazzle again  
By the year two thousand and twenty-one!  
For now let us remember, remember fully  
The name of that greatest of Bangladeshi who dreamt  
Of golden Bengal;  
We will go your way, no matter where you lead us;  
Knowing how your destination is guided by his caring hands  
Much more than a soul extended!

The sun rises and sets again.  
Standing by Neelakomol's banks,  
One sees enclaves fully free.  
Now free the enclaves in your minds' caverns as well  
And in the radiant holy moonlight  
Be even more expansive than the Bay of Bengal.  
That stretches endlessly to the infinite.

Do you remember, remember at all  
The mother,  
Our motherland—  
A river in a crimson flood  
After dipping in which emerged  
All drenched with desire,  
Freedom ...

Translation : Fakrul Alam

## Bangladesh at Forty-five

Muntasir Mamun

Bangladesh has completed 45 years. Could I imagine in 1971 that I would be able to see Bangladesh complete 45 years? Certainly not! I knew that Bangladesh would become independent, but when that would happen was not known to me. I acknowledge that freeing the country in 9 months was a matter of luck. Example of any country becoming independent through a 9-month long bloody struggle is quite rare.

1. No country could achieve independence within such a short time after declaring independence.
2. In no other country since the Second World War, 3 million people were killed inside only in nine months.
3. In no other country after the Second World War, over 10 million people were uprooted from their homesteads within such a short time.
4. Over 10 million had taken refuge in no other country in nine months.

5. According to unofficial estimates, in no other country after Second World War over 500 thousand women were tortured.
6. In no other country was it possible to establish a government-in-exile within two weeks of declaration of independence.
7. No other country had received such support from the global civil society for achieving independence.

Another feature was our terming the independence war as a war of liberation. That was because, Bangabandhu had not dreamt of a mere geographic independence. He sought, and we also wanted emancipation in all its meanings and forms - religious, social, political, economic. With the exception of a few individuals, almost everybody participated in this liberation war, which was a rare occurrence. It was a people's war in the real sense. The assistance rendered by the Indian government and the people of India in achieving this freedom was also unprecedented.

The day a country becomes independent is usually declared as the Independence Day. For example, 14 August was the Independence Day of Pakistan. Our Independence Day falls on 26 March, and the day we won freedom is known as the Victory Day. This is also a special and rare occurrence. Bangabandhu had declared independence on 26 March; that is why the Independence Day falls on 26 March. The countries who won freedom after declaring independence are also very few in number. Probably, only we have a Victory Day.

Was 16 December declared as the Victory Day all of a sudden? Was this declaration spontaneous or planned? I do not know whether this mystery would be solved. But I can make a guess. The Pakistanis had exploited us in the name of religion. Our status in that

country was that of deprivation and harassment. It was always said about us then: 'Rice-eating Bangladeshi'. But they killed over 3 million people and tortured over 500 thousand women to maintain their rule in this land. Then 93 thousand 'Pakistani heroes' surrendered their arms to the 'rice-eating Bangladeshi' by folding their knees. It was such a victory, such an achievement that it does not always happen. This was the outlook that worked behind the declaration of the Victory Day. The victory of the Bangladeshi happened on 16 December. We recall the 3 million martyrs and those tortured on this day. We also recall the surrender episode of the Pakistani cowards. This victory is at the same time joyous. This victory is also simultaneously painful. Those who had killed unarmed humans, they cannot emerge victorious, and they cannot be known as heroes. Almost without arms, the Bangladeshi had won by fighting against the armed ones. They are heroes. Wasn't for this reason the slogan was raised: 'Heroic Bangladeshi pick up arms. Make Bangladesh independent'?

Bangabandhu wanted to build a Golden Bangla. We also sought a Bangla of Gold. But my contemporaries must be recalling what Bangladesh we obtained on 17 December 1971. There were lamentations everywhere. Almost everything was destroyed. There was no food. The conspiracy of the defeated forces also commenced from 17 December; an international level as well. Because the super-powers like China, USA and the Muslim countries did not support Bangladesh. Despite those numerous hindrances, Bangabandhu initiated development - from infrastructures to outlines. The biggest of these documents was the constitution of 1972. But just when Bangabandhu was instilling order in the country, when the harvesting season was approaching, the prices of essentials were declining, Bangabandhu was killed along with his family-members, and the representatives of Pakistan usurped power in the country.

We know about the happenings after 1975. Whoever came to power gradually erased what was taken up by Bangabandhu's programs including the constitution. Their goal was to bring back the Pakistani mentality. Their outlook was

(Continued in the next page)

