



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman during Agartala case

FROM SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN TO OUR BANGABANDHU

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AS Bangladesh steps into its 46th year as an independent and sovereign nation, it is celebrating its vast achievements, while contemplating the intricate mechanisms needed to address its problems. Nevertheless, how can Bangladeshis ponder about the positives and negatives of their country, without honouring the man whose vision and voice drove the common people into establishing their inalienable rights of self-determination and freedom? It surely cannot. During the month of March, we not only celebrate the life of an iconic political figure, but pay homage to someone whose reach goes beyond the mere avenues of political division. As Bangladesh commemorates its Independence Day on March 26th, we simultaneously rejoice the life of the one and only Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Once an aid to Sheikh Mujib, Barrister

Moudud Ahmed now serves as a senior leader in the BNP. He had the unique ability to observe Bangladesh's Founding Father from a close proximity during the late 1960s and early 1970s. In his book, *"Bangladesh, era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman"*, Mr. Ahmed refers to an articulate description of Bangabandhu. He said "More pragmatic, efficient, capable and dynamic political personalities than Sheikh Mujibur Rahman might have emerged or may emerge, but it will be very difficult to find someone who has contributed more to the independence movement of Bangladesh and the shaping of its national identity". In reality, if one is to look at the career of Mujib, it was in his tenacity and willpower to sway political messages and movements which made him into this nation's most discussed personality. There were indeed more educated individuals in East Pakistan's political circle, than Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Yet as

Moudud Ahmed rightly points out, there is little to no doubt in the minds of the citizens of this country that the influence of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in regards to the construction of our national identity and our liberation struggle, is more profound and significant than any other national figure. Mujib did not become the Father of the Nation in one day. He did not make Bangladesh in one day. A series of key events and special moments made him who he was, and by extension gave birth to our country. It was indeed the journey of an individual which stemmed towards a sovereign Bangladesh. Every time the Pakistani leadership faltered, Mujib took the stage and stood tall. Every time democratic principles were threatened by the likes of Ayyub Khan and Yahya Khan, Mujib retaliated with a vociferous democratic platform.

In 1947, the Pakistani Government announced that Urdu, and only Urdu,

would be the state language of Pakistan. This naturally angered the large Bangali speaking population of the young nation. Mujib, who was still a young protégé of the iconic Husseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, took a key role in encouraging activists to launch strikes and protests against what many thought was an audacious decision. Senior Bangali leaders of the Muslim League, a party of which Mujib was a member, decided to break away from the traditionalist political establishment, and formed the Awami Muslim League in 1949. The likes of Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, and Suhrawardy were political celebrities to the likes of Mujib, and as such the Muslim League's prominence in East Pakistan, especially amongst the youth, was on the wane. The 1952 Language Movement