




# 10 January HOMECOMING DAY OF FATHER OF THE NATION

Special Supplement

Wednesday 10 January 2018

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



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ  
  
**PRESIDENT  
 PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF  
 BANGLADESH**  
**Message**

Today is the historic 10 January, the Homecoming Day of the greatest Bangali of all time Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. On this memorable day, I pay my profound homage to Bangabandhu and pray for the salvation of his departed soul.

The Awami League had won absolute majority in the General Election of 1970. But as the Pakistani rulers were reluctant to hand over power, the people of the country started Non-Cooperation Movement under the leadership of Bangabandhu. Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivered a historic speech on March 07, 1971 at Race Course Maidan which was indicated the ultimate declaration of our sovereign state. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has included this historical speech in the Memory of the World Register as World Heritage Document. It is a glorious achievement for the Bangali nation.

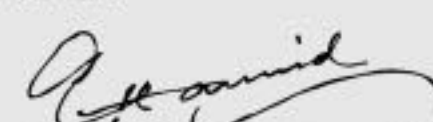
Overcoming various ups and downs, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared the independence of Bangladesh in the early hours of 26 March in 1971. With his clarion call, people from all strata participated the war of liberation. Immediately after that, the Pakistani forces arrested Bangabandhu from his residence, Road No. 32 of Dhanmondi and confined him in Mianwali jail of the then West-Pakistan. He was sentenced to death during his imprisonment at Mianwali Jail in Pakistan. Bangabandhu uttered, "I will say, while going to the gallows, I am Bangali, Bangla is my country and Bangla is my language. Joy Bangla". Such an example of profound love for country and people is rare in the world. Bangabandhu had to undergo 9 months 14 days of rigorous imprisonment there. The liberation war was conducted in the name of Bangabandhu in his absence. He was the source of inspiration in the war of liberation. He, therefore, made immense contributions towards achieving our independence.

The hard earned independence of Bangali truly completed after the homecoming of Bangabandhu as a triumphant hero on 10 January in 1972. On that day in an emotional speech in front of thousands of people at the Race Course Maidan, he said, "The dream of my life has been fulfilled today. My Sonar Bangla is now free and sovereign State". He further said, "If anybody wants to snatch the independence of Bangladesh, then Mujib will sacrifice his life first to protect the independence". On 15 August 1975, he kept his word by shedding his fresh blood along with his family members. The defeated forces of liberation war made a heinous attempt to wipe out the ideals of Bangabandhu and foil the independence and sovereignty of the country. But Bangali is a nation of heroes. As long as Bangladesh and the Bangalis exist, Bangabandhu will remain as the source of our inspiration.

Bangabandhu sought economic emancipation of the Bangali alongside their political freedom. With this goal, he started rebuilding works in the war-ravaged newly-independent country. But that progress was brought to a halt through the assassination of Bangabandhu. The present government under the leadership of the illustrious daughter of Bangabandhu Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been putting all out efforts for the progress and development of the country. Bangladesh, in the meantime, has attained the status of lower middle income country and I am hopeful that it will become a middle-income country soon. Bangladesh is now being considered worldwide as a 'role model' for development in various sectors, including education, health, agriculture and information technology. With this pace of development, Bangladesh will be a developed country by 2041, insha Allah.

Imbued with the spirit and ideology of Bangabandhu, we must continue our collective endeavours to build a non-communal and democratic Bangladesh. Let this be our pledge on the Homecoming Day of Bangabandhu.

Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.

  
**Md. Abdul Hamid**

## Discovering Bangabandhu

Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, BB, PhD

I feel overwhelmed in writing on or about a leader of the stature of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. His was a messianic journey through uncharted paths. As the past recedes, looking back, I am increasingly awestruck by the legacies he has left behind—reclaiming the identity of a nation, winning an independent country and setting out a bold vision for the future focused on the rights and dignity of ordinary people—carrying always the smell and touch of the earth he belonged to and identified with.

Generations of Bangladeshis born after the attainment of our independence are in the majority now. They read and hear about our past, our history as narrations of events. For us, those who lived through the momentous episodes of our independence, history is our memory and memory our history. Wouldn't it be worthwhile for them to read a firsthand account of the most defining moment of our history?

March 7, 1971. It had been a very eventful and exciting day. I was in Dacca on an 'official' visit from Meherpur, an excuse made out to be here to get a firsthand feel of what was happening in this provincial capital.

Amid hectic political parleys between the military junta and the Awami League led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, already anointed as Bangabandhu --- Friend of Bengal --- to find a 'political solution' to the impasse, rooted in the irreconcilable goal of the army to either rule directly or through its political surrogates from West Pakistan, and Bangabandhu's insistence on honoring the democratic outcome of the national election, Dacca was abuzz with rumors of all kinds—declaration of independence of the Eastern Wing could come any time soon, the Pakistan army was buying time as it brought in reinforcements of troops and supplies by sea and air, a military crackdown was imminent.

I went stealthily (lest I was discovered for what would be seen as a serious breach of discipline, a public official attending a political meeting) to the Race Course where the most important event till date was to take place—a new direction to be announced by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at a public meeting.

The spacious grounds of the Race Course on that day were like the giant arena of a Roman coliseum with the gladiators getting ready for the last deadly fight. Its layout with its surroundings presented an eerie parallel --- starting from the eastern end, going clockwise: first, the Victorian High Court—its domes rising high above the rain trees; next stood Curzon Hall, a university building housing Science faculties—a pleasant brick-red architectural blend of Mughal and Victorian; next, two pillars and their extended bases on the sides of the main road—all that were left of a gate the Mughals had built; close to them were the mosque and the tomb of Haji Shabbaz; then stood Burdwan House built by the Maharaja of Burdwan as his residence when he came to Dacca to attend meetings after the partition of Bengal in 1905—now housing Bangla Academy. We had come half a circle at the Atomic Energy Commission, a chic modern building as our footprint at the frontier of science. Next, in a line, on the other half of the circle, were three structures hugging together, all representing the arrival of architectural modernism—the Teacher Student Center (TSC) with two Greek cenotaphs on the edge of its lawn, the University Library and the Institute of Fine Arts; and the Kali Mandir across the street at the far end of the Race Course was an added charm; the abandoned nachghars of the Nawabs and a trendy shopping center with a Chinese restaurant called Sakura— rendezvous for young romantics stood next to Shabbagh, the first 'modern' hotel in Dacca and across, its unassailable rival, icon of the modern era, Hotel Intercontinental; the Dacca Gymkhana Club (Present Dhaka Club), a legacy of the British wherever they lived, was the hotel's elite neighbor and the circle came complete at the Botanical Gardens, popularly known as Ramna Garden, which had in 1961 hosted a reception to Queen Elizabeth (which I attended as a teenager).

The centuries of history frozen in this architectural swathe came alive to me, standing in full view, in silence, to witness a momentous event. What a real life setting, envy of any film director, to play out the last act of a drama that had started most recently with the Battle of Plassey, when the East India Company defeated the army of Nawab Sirajuddaulah, over two centuries earlier ! I was overwhelmed by the enormity of the moment I was about to witness.

A late spring afternoon bathing in bright sunshine. Procession after procession of hundreds of thousands of people kept converging with banners floating like sails, chanting defiant slogans with countless raised fists like specks of waves flickering in the distant ocean. Soon it became a sea of humanity. The Race Course, where the British Raj enjoyed their weekends and horse races, recollecting the many Derbies they missed back home—was playing host to the most daring of all gambles—the destiny of a nation.

There were whispers in the crowd that the Pakistan army might crack down; even an air strike was not ruled out. I chose to stand on the sidelines, across by the TSC, ready to run if such an incident were to take place.

The speeches had already started. The flag of Bangladesh, designed by the students, had been raised on the podium amid thunderous applause. But all were waiting to hear Bangabandhu. Then came the thunderous voice: "Bhaiera Amar" (my brothers). The crowd stood frozen.

In a short spellbinding speech, in his baritone voice, hallmark diction and laconic yet pithy style that endeared him in the hearts of Bengalis, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman gave the background behind the nation's arrival at this historic crossroads. He recounted the litany of deceptions, exploitation and repression meted out to the people of Bangladesh by the ruling Pakistani junta whenever they stood up for their rights—the story writ poignantly with the blood of countless many. Even after Awami League won the election, becoming the majority in Pakistan, General Yahya Khan was going by the urgings of Bhutto and had postponed calling the National Assembly into session. Now a new date had been set for 25 March. When the people responded to the call for peaceful strikes, closed down factories and offices, spontaneously came out in the streets with the vow to continue their movement, they were countered with point blank shots with the weapons bought by the sweat of their brow, presumably to save them from the external enemy! "General Yahya, you are the President of Pakistan, come and see how your troops have fired upon innocent people, butchering them, the air still heavy with the wails of mothers."

Bangabandhu called for a transfer of power to the elected representatives of the people, withdrawal of martial law and the troops to the barracks. I noted carefully—not once did he use the term East Pakistan.

He called for a total shutdown of Bangladesh for an indefinite period. Government, semi government offices, courts, including the Supreme Court, were to remain closed. No taxes were to be paid. Employees were to get their salaries before the month was out.

Next came his directives for the future struggle. "Make each of your homes a fortress. You shall have to fight the enemy with whatever you have... We shall starve them to defeat ...our waters shall be their cemeteries...none can cow us down once we have learnt to lay down our lives for a just cause..... This Bengal is home to all, we are brothers—Muslims and Hindus....it's our sacred duty to take care of those who are not Bengalis... we have to live up to our ideals."

His final passionate call. Get ready to fight. "Ebarer shongram—Amader Muktir shongram. Ebarer shongram—Shadhinotar shongram."—This time, it's the fight for our liberty, it's for independence. Then his hand was raised to the sky and one last clarion call: Joy Bangla: Victory to Bengal. Two million thunderous voices roared: Joy Bangla.

The die had been cast.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, endearingly crowned as Bangabandhu, in my eye, transformed from a brilliant strategist and a politician to become the undisputed leader of the independent movement of Bangladesh. I was the SDO of Meherpur, the custodian of powers of the central government of Pakistan, its pampered surrogate in a remote corner. That day, at the Race Course, Bangabandhu, the pied piper, led me to cross the Rubicon. The freedom fighter in me was born and so also in hundreds of thousands more.

Back at my station at Meherpur, I was witnessing the nonviolent noncooperation movement mutating into a new version, to a cusp hitherto not seen in history. Government, semi government offices, banks, private sectors all were complying with the instructions from Road 32 of Dhanmondi residential area of Dacca, the residence of Bangabandhu and the unofficial seat of government. To give the movement further legitimacy, students marched in processions and raised

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ  
  
**PRIME MINISTER  
 GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S  
 REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH**  
**Message**



The 10 January of 1972 is one of the red letter days in the history of the liberation struggle of the Bangali nation. On this day, the greatest Bangali of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman returned to independent Bangladesh after over nine and a half months' captivity in a Pakistan jail.

Bangladesh Awami League achieved absolute majority in the 1970 elections under the leadership of the Father of the Nation. But the Pakistani military junta continued to cling to power ignoring the people's mandate staging various farces. Aiming at an ultimate target to free the Bangali nation, Bangabandhu in his address at the then historic Race Course Maidan on 7 March in 1971 declared, "This time the struggle is for our freedom, this time the struggle is for the independence". The Pakistani occupation forces launched brutal attack on the innocent Bangalis and carried out massacre on the night of 25 March in 1971. The Father of the Nation declared Independence of Bangladesh at the first hour of 26 March.

Just after his declaration of the independence, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was arrested and subsequently sent to a solitary confinement in Pakistani Jail. He was subjected to inhuman torture in the jail where he had been counting moments for being executed after his death sentence was pronounced in a farcical trial. In the face of death, he rejoiced the spirit of the Bangali nation. He was the inspiration of the freedom fighters. Under his undisputed leadership, the Bangali nation earned the ultimate victory waging the 9-month solemnly-vowed war. The defeated Pakistani rulers were finally been compelled to free Bangabandhu. The Father of the Nation returned to the independent Bangladesh on 10 January in 1972. On his return, he delivered a speech before a mammoth gathering at the Race Course Maidan where he narrated the inhuman torture of the Pakistani military junta meted out on him. The Bangali Nation got back the Father of the Nation and their victory attained the fulfillment.

After his return, the Father of the Nation devoted all his efforts to rebuild the war-ravaged Bangladesh. Bangladesh soon made its strong presence in the comity of nations under the charismatic leadership of Bangabandhu.

The anti-liberation forces in collusion with war criminals halted the march-forward of Bangladesh through killing the Father of the nation along with most of his family members on 15 August 1975. The armed usurpers marred the democracy, defaced the constitution. They distorted the glorious history of our independence and halted the path of progress and development.

The democracy has been reestablished after a protracted struggles and sacrifices. The Awami League government has uplifted the living standard of the people through tireless efforts. Bangladesh is now a universal model of development. The historic 7 March Speech of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has been included in the international memory of the world register as World Documentary Heritage by UNESCO. This recognition has made the nation proud again. The world is now acclaiming Bangladesh for attaining remarkable progress in socio-economic fronts.

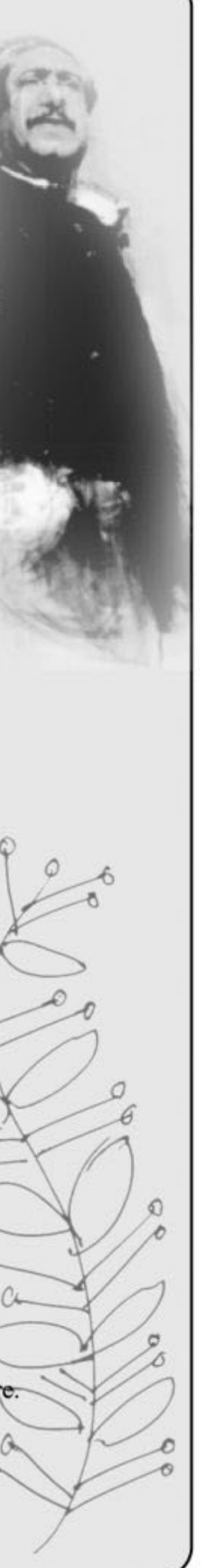
We will turn Bangladesh into middle-income country by 2021 and a developed and prosperous one by 2041 insha Allah. Let us build a hunger-poverty-free and happy-prosperous Sonar Bangladesh as dreamt by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu  
 May Bangladesh Live Forever.

  
**Sheikh Hasina**

## JANUARY 10, 1972 Kamal Chowdhury

The day he came back, the country's season Of cold wind and light turned.  
 The fallen leaves came to life as if in spring.  
 The branches were embroidered with leaves.  
 The sun rose among the cheers of millions.  
 Music was heard ending the silence.  
 The feared grey sky was filled with the chirping of the birds.  
 When he came back, the ground was still soaked in blood.  
 There was remorse and cries—signs of destruction, rampages and burns everywhere.  
 He came back, a *krishnachura* tree appeared in the ruins.  
 The *shimul* tree of patience was abloom.  
 Hope germinated from sorrows, blood pulsed with fine beats.  
 The tears of pain were wiped off by the shrubs, dust and flag as they burst into a laughter that said: 'Joy Bangla, Joy Bangla.'  
 Our rivers became more than rivers— they became fountains to dive within.  
 Our seas were no more silent, the waves were surged by waters.  
 Riding on whale-like waves came the bouquet of good wishes.  
 The forest was green again.  
 The white cloud walked down from the hill-top and reached our fields of crops, our poor villages, our grief-stricken houses.  
 A white cloud and doves of peace flew over the lean muscles of the workers, the dry hands of the farmers, the surprised eyes of a village bride waiting with the child in her lap, the sad lines on a mother's face awaiting the return of her son, the strange skulls of our kin scattered across this land.  
 The people of Bangla waiting anxiously were touched by his thunderous voice.  
 Children waiting for their fathers brothers waiting for their friends followers waiting for their leader a country for its father.  
 He came back—the country rose from ashes.  
 The guns of the freedom fighters showered bullets to add to the joy.  
 The roads from the Airport to Race Course were decked with flowers of love.  
 The air filled with cheers roaring 'welcome,' Festivity everywhere, joy everywhere, freedom everywhere.  
 He came back—amid tears of joy of countless and declared: "See, I am not dead. Your love has brought me back alive."  
 Translation: *Shamsad Mortuza*



the flag of Bangladesh atop my court cum office, the symbol of the central government of Pakistan.

Bangladesh, a land of 70 million people, was de facto independent with its flag asserting its new found status under the very nose of the ruling Pakistani Junta who had sent its army across the country to assert its hold. The authority of the government came to rest in the hands of Bangabandhu, who stood transformed from an individual to a force, energizing tens of millions across the whole country, who were ready to make the supreme sacrifice for the motherland. The nonviolent movement had attained new heights.

Mahatma Gandhi, often considered as the founder-prophet of the nonviolence movement, lost faith in constitutional methods for securing the independence of India after the Jallianwala Bag massacre in 1919 at Amritsar by Col Dyer of the British army that left 379 civilians dead and a thousand others injured. Gandhi called upon the Indians to resist British rule through nonviolent means, refuse to buy British goods, adopt the use of local handicrafts and picket the liquor shops. Millions of Indian nationalists responded to his call, sending waves of shock through the British Raj and undermining its very foundations and legitimacy. Gandhi promised Swaraj --- independence --- by 1922. But then a violent encounter in Chauri Chaura in the United Provinces between protestors and local police in 1922 disillusioned Gandhi about the sustainability of nonviolence.

To the disappointment of many Indian nationalists, he called off the movement.

Martin Luther King Jr, another star of the non-violent movement, followed in the footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi to give the civil rights movement in the US a new momentum and is remembered the world over for his 1963 "March to Washington" where he delivered his famous "I have a dream" speech. He was justly honored with the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 for combating racial inequality through nonviolent resistance.

Here in Bangladesh, in 1971, a set of peaceful affirmative actions added a new dimension to the limits of peaceful struggle. Bangabandhu went beyond the established domain of a non-violent non-cooperation movement and set a new threshold for the world. He was a pacifist who believed in the democratic process but also prepared the nation to stand up to aggression. Following on the guidelines he spelt out in the March 7

speech for resistance and an armed struggle, if it were to come, we adopted the strategy and tactics for guerilla warfare when the Pakistan army subsequently unleashed its men and armaments against the innocent and unarmed civilians of Bangladesh. The de facto independence that was achieved in March led to the Declaration of Independence by Bangabandhu on March 26 and the liberation of Bangladesh on 16 December 1971.

As the world stood witness to it, Bangabandhu made a unique history. Much of it remains to be discovered.

Writer : Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Affairs Adviser to the Hon'ble Prime Minister