



Special Supplement

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প্রজাতন্ত্রের  
প্রেসিডেন্ট  
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF  
BANGLADESH

## Message

December 16, the great Victory Day of Bangladesh. On this day in 1971, Bangladesh emerged as an independent and sovereign country in the world map through the surrender of Pakistani occupation forces. Bir Bangali made an episode of glorious tale of victory. On the eve of the victory day, I extend my sincere felicitations and warm greetings to my fellow countrymen living at home and abroad. Independence is the greatest achievement of the Bangali nation. Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the undisputed leader, declared the historic independence on March 26, 1971 after overcoming various ups and downs and staging long movement and agitation against Pakistani rulers. The ultimate victory was achieved through a nine-month long war of liberation under his uncompromising leadership and guidance. Today, I recall with profound respect the greatest Bangali of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I pay my deep bow 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 organisers and supporters, foreign friends and the people from all strata who directly and indirectly made meaningful contributions to our war of liberation.

Bangabandhu dreamt of building a happy and prosperous Bangladesh. He started the journey by rebuilding the economy and infrastructure of the war-ravaged country. But the country's democracy and development progress came to a halt after the assassination of Father of the Nation and his near and dear ones on August 15, 1975. The emergence of autocracy and undemocratic government came into being. Democracy has now been restored in the country through a long movement and various activity and declivity. With the formulation of appropriate planning and making its best implementation, Bangladesh has attained the status of low-middle-income country and graduated from least developed country (LDC) to a developing country. The Padma Bridge, which is being constructed by our own resources, is now a reality. Mega projects like Metro Rail, Elevated Expressway are being implemented. Bangladesh is now a proud member of the elite satellite club through launching of Bangabandhu-1 Satellite into the space. With successive economic growth, Bangladesh is marching forward in every socio-economic indicator including education, health, women empowerment, per capita income etc. I am confident that Bangladesh will turn into a prosperous country by 2041, InshaAllah through the continuation of the ongoing development.

The eleventh parliamentary election is being held in December, the month of our victory. In democratic system, people exercise their power and choose their desired candidate through the election. I hope that people will elect honest, capable and patriotic candidates in the upcoming election and continue the development and advancement of the country. Let the glory of democracy be strengthened through the festive mood of election-it is my expectation.

Our foreign policy is being exercised in accordance with the principle "Friendship to all, malice towards none" as adopted by Father of the Nation. Bangladesh has set a unique example of humanity in international arena by providing shelter to millions of forcefully displaced and tortured Rohingyas fled from Myanmar. Bangladesh believes in a peaceful solution to the problem. I urge the UN and the international community including Myanmar, to take immediate effective measures for the permanent settlement of this problem.

Collective efforts, irrespective of party affiliation, are imperative to reach the benefits of freedom, attained through the sacrifice of millions of martyrs, at people's doorstep. On the eve of the victory day, I urge the countrymen to make more contributions from their respective positions in implementing the spirit of the war of liberation and take the nation towards a prosperous future. On the occasion of great victory day, I hope that our coordinated efforts will turn Bangladesh into 'Sonar Bangla' (Golden Bengal) as dreamt of by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.

*Md. Abdul Hamid*

Md. Abdul Hamid

## The Glorious Tale of Winning Victory

Selina Hossain

The 16 of December in 1971 was the new sun of freedom to the Bangalis. On this day at the Race-course maidan the defeated Pakistani army surrendered to the allied forces. The heroic Bangalis had taken up arms uttering the brave words "The struggle this time is the struggle for freedom". After a battle of long nine months 16 December was the last day of the Bangalis' war of independence. The free and sovereign state of Bangladesh emerged in the world map on that day. The national anthem of Bangladesh "My Golden Bengal, I love you" was then sung. The flag of the independent Bangladesh was hoisted in recognition of sovereignty. This day has been flying for the last 47 years declaring the existence of an independent country.

Bangabandhu's return to his own country from the Pakistani prison on 10 January, 1972 was another dimension of attaining freedom. After his return he took the responsibility of the country. In his speech at Rajshahi Madrasa Maidan on 9 May 1972, Bangabandhu said, "My brothers and sisters, we have got independence today but at the cost of a big sacrifice. No country or nation has ever shed so much blood as the people of my country have. People today are suffering from starvation in their house in every village. The oppressors are totally damaged our roads and streets. They destroyed the store-houses of rice. My government employees have been shot dead. The members of my police, BDR and military forces have been shot dead. They have also killed my students, my youths, my peasants, my intellectuals and my journalists. ... What do I want? I want my people to eat their fill. What

## Victory Day: The Day that Ended Deprivation, Exploitation and Discrimination

A. K. M. Mozammel Huq

Today is 16 December, the great Victory Day. It is the most glorious day in the annals of the Bangali Nation. This victory day has been the greatest achievement realized through our great liberation war. The honour of the Bangali nation was established through this victory. The people of the world could observe the heroism of this country's citizens. The country was recognised on the world map as an independent and sovereign land. This victory was the ultimate expression of the endless love, sacrifices, courage and self-confidence of our populace for their beloved motherland. This day is an occasion for infinite joy. It is a day that fulfilled our dream of independence, achieved through supreme sacrifices.

It brought to an end the injustices, deprivations, exploitations and discriminations of twenty-three years. A single day's movement or struggle did not eradicate these long-standing injustices, deprivations, exploitations and discriminations. The history behind this great Victory Day was quite long. The greatest Bangali of a thousand years, the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman could realize immediately after getting independence from British rule that the discriminations that were started then must be brought to an end for good.



Those who are now Pakistanis, most of them voted for the Congress in 1946; that is, they opposed the creation of Pakistan. On the other hand, the Bangalis helped create Pakistan by voting for the Muslim League. This farsighted leader understood and decided in 1948 that the Bangalis must be freed from exploitation at any cost and an independent sovereign state should be created for the Bangalis. Based on that ideal, he established the Chhatra League on 4 January 1948. He was arrested from the street on 11 March 1948 while taking part in the state language movement and then put behind bars. While in jail, he was made the assistant general secretary of the central committee of Awami League during its formation on 23 June 1949. After coming out of jail, Bangabandhu became acting general secretary of the Awami League and made Awami League a powerful organization. In the 1954 election, the Jukto-front (united front) achieved unprecedented success under the leadership of Haque-Bhashani-Suhrawardy and the young leader Sheikh Mujib. But within a few months, a riot erupted between the Bangalis and Biharis at Adamjee Jute Mills of Narayanganj due to the instigations by Pakistani intelligence agents. Section 92 (a) was imposed as a result. Sher-e-Bangla A. K. Fazlul Haque was removed from the position of chief minister. Bangabandhu was arrested from his ministerial residence and sent to jail. In his speeches delivered at the National Assembly of Pakistan during 1956-58, Bangabandhu repeatedly warned the Pakistanis while protesting in a firm voice the tortures, exploitations and discriminations practiced against the Bangalis. His voice also mentioned in the Pakistani legislature that if these exploitations and discriminations were not halted, then the Bangalis would be compelled to consider and decide on a separate course.

Sensing the defeat of the Muslim League and the victory of Awami League in 1958, the vested quarters of Pakistan imposed martial law. They made arrangements for silencing the voice of Bangalis forever, and therefore imprisoned many political leaders including Bangabandhu after arresting them.

After coming out of jail in 1962, Bangabandhu started to reorganize the banned Awami League. By forming a nucleus for independence through the Chhatra League, he started implementation of a plan to liberate Bangladesh through an armed war. With the same objective, he motivated the Bangalis for independence by putting forward the 6-point demand for their survival. Around three years after his arrest in 1966, the Pakistanis made

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do I want? My unemployed people of Bengal should have employment. What do I want? I want my people to be happy. What do I want? The people of my Bengal should have a pleasant time. What do I want? I want that the people of my golden Bengal should again wear a hearty smile on their faces. But it is a matter of great regret that the oppressors have left nothing for us. They have even burnt all our paper money. They have destroyed all foreign currencies. Believe me, when I came and formed government I did not find even a single farthing of foreign currency".

Such was the situation after the achievement of freedom. Bangladesh's victory in such a situation has spread glory all over the world. The 48th victory day is a day of achieving worldwide glory for Bangladesh. The Bangalis have not confined their victory day to one day only. In the multidimensional spheres of victory, Bangladesh's various achievements are manifest in today's world.

In 1913 the Bangla poet Rabindranath Tagore won the Nobel Prize for his poem "Gitanjali" (Song Offerings). Bangla as a language then achieved the international prestige. Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman made his speech in Bangla on 25 September 1974 at the General Assembly of the United Nations. On that day he raised Bangla to a prestigious position before the whole world. In the post-independence period this glorious achievement was a cultural victory for the Bangalis. Side by side, in the existence of the national spirit this victory was the dream for touching the horizon. Whenever Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina attended any session of the United Nations she delivered her speech in Bangla. Bangla has not yet been an official language of the United Nations. Keeping that in mind the Prime Minister has upheld the prestige of Bangla. This is the brave determination of leadership. This is the promise for not restricting the victory day to one day. In this way, our achievement of victory is spreading worldwide.

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প্রজাতন্ত্রের  
প্রিমিয়ার  
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S  
REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

## Message

Today is the 16 December, the Great Victory Day. This is a unique day of pride for the Bangali nation. Responding to the clarion call of the greatest Bangali of all time, the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Bangali nation earned the ultimate victory on this day in 1971 after 23 years of 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 Victory Day. On this glorious day, I pay my deep homage to 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 were dishonoured by occupation forces.

The Bangali nation got prepared for independence waging the Language Movement of 1948, the Education Movement of 1962, the 6-point Demand of 1966, 11-point Movement and the Mass Uprising of 1969 under the undaunted and firm leadership of the Father of the Nation. The Awami League earned an overwhelming majority in the general elections of 1970 through which the Bangali nation's aspiration for independence got legal basis. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib realized that the oppression, persecution and deprivation meted out to the Bangali nation would not be ended without achieving the independence. Ultimately, on the historic 7<sup>th</sup> March of 1971, he 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 chapter had been started for achieving an independent Bangladesh. The country-wide non-cooperation movement had begun at the directive of Bangabandhu as part of the final preparations of the Liberation War.

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

On the 10 April of 1971, the proclamation of independence was declared 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 President, Syed Nazrul Islam as Vice-President and Tajuddin Ahmad as Prime Minister. This government was sworn-in on the 17 April of 1971 at the historic Mujibnagar in Meherpur and led the war of independence. Under the leadership of this government, the liberation war had gained momentum. The heroic freedom fighters with the help of the allied forces earned the victory on the 16 December of 1971 by defeating Pakistani occupation forces and their local collaborators- Rajakars, AI-Badr and AI-Shams. The nation ultimately earned an independent country, own national flag and national anthem. The heroism and patriotism of the Bangali nation created a new history in the world.

As Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib 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 the most of his family members. Through the heinous killings of the 15 August 1975, they initiated the politics of killings, coup and conspiracy and obstructed the process to try the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman through promulgating Indemnity Ordinance. They ruined the democracy by declaring Martial Law and formed an illegal government. They distorted the glorious history of our independence. They defaced the constitution and gagged the press freedom. The BNP-Jamiat alliance government had followed the paths of their predecessors.

The Bangali nation reestablished the democracy in 1996 through a long struggle and sacrifice. Our government from 1996-2001 tenure will also be marked as a glorious period in our nation's history. The Bangali nation reestablished democracy and rights of the people in 2008 through a long struggle. The nation overwhelmingly voted in favour of the Awami League, the party that led the War of Liberation, in the most-awaited parliamentary elections. The Awami League-led Grand Alliance Government ensured the franchise of the people by bringing the 15th amendment to the constitution which prohibited usurpation of the state power.

The people of Bangladesh again made the Awami League victorious in the 5 January elections in 2014 and thereby preserved the continuation of the constitutional process. Our government has relentlessly been working for the development of the country and its people as per its election pledges.

Bangladesh has become the "Role Model" in development of the world. Our government has been taking forward the country with immense development in all sectors including economy, agriculture, education, health, transport and communication, ICT, infrastructure, power generation, rural economy and diplomatic relation and cooperation with the rest of the world. We have also joined the elite club of the satellite technology as the 5<sup>th</sup> nation through the launching of Bangabandhu Satellite-1. Our GDP growth rate is now 7.86 percent, the highest in our history. The poverty rate in the country has now declined to 21.8 percent and the national poverty rate stands at 11.3 percent. Our per capita income is US Dollar 1751. Our students are getting textbooks at free of cost. The literacy rate is now 73 percent. Ninety percent people are under electricity coverage. We hope, the rate would rise to 100 percent very soon. Healthcare facilities have reached the doorsteps of the common people. The average life expectancy of the people has jumped to 72 years. Digital Bangladesh is now a reality. Lots of projects have been implementing for the development of road, rail, highways, bridges, flyover, elevated express-ways, under-pass, waterways and overall communication infrastructure across the country. We have been constructing the Padma bridge with our own fund. The construction of metro rail has been going on fast. Our government is working with Zero Tolerance policy to eliminate militancy, terrorism and drug-menace. For the first time in the world, we have formulated a hundred year plan named 'Delta Plan 2100'. Bangladesh is one of the five top countries in the world in economic development. Ninety percent of development work is done by self finance. We have executed the verdict of the trial of the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman establishing the rule of law. The verdicts of the trials of the war criminals are also being executed. The trials of war criminals will be continued as per our pledges to the nation. Due to the continuation of Awami League government for 10 years, grassroots people are now getting the dividend of the development. Bangladesh is moving forward and it will continue. The next generation will get a prosperous Bangladesh.

The historic 7<sup>th</sup> March Speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has been included in the international memory of the world register of World Documentary Heritage by UNESCO. This recognition of the 7<sup>th</sup> March Speech has made the whole nation proud once again. We have peacefully resolved the land boundary problem with India. Disputes with India and Myanmar on maritime boundary have also been resolved. Bangladesh's contribution to the various international forums for establishing global peace has been lauded. The world is now acclaiming Bangladesh for attaining remarkable progress in socio-economic fronts. All these were possible through continuation of the constitutional and democratic process. We shall make Bangladesh a hunger-poverty-free middle income country by 2021 and a developed-prosperous one by 2041, InshaAllah.

Let us come and uphold the development and democratic space being imbued with the spirit of the freedom struggle. Let us engage ourselves for the welfare of the country and nation. Let us be our own vow on the Victory Day of 2018.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu  
May Bangladesh Live Forever.

*Sheikh Hasina*

Sheikh Hasina

## Special Supplement

## Victory Day...

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all arrangements for hanging Bangabandhu in the gallows by filing the so-called 'Agartala Conspiracy Case'. But after his freedom from jail in 1969, over one million people accorded him a reception at Suhrawardy Udyan, where the then student leader Tofail Ahmed decorated him with the title 'Bangabandhu' on behalf of the students' action council as well as a grateful nation. After the ouster of the so-called iron-man Ayub Khan of Pakistan through the back-door, the Pakistani army chief General Yahya Khan imposed martial law after seizing power. Yahya announced the national election of Pakistan in 1970 on condition that the Legal Framework Order (LFO) would have to be obeyed. Bangabandhu gave his consent for going to election.

When we, a majority among the central leadership of Chhatra League, raised vigorous objection to participation in election under LFO, Bangabandhu said after summoning us, "This election is not for going to power. You do your job by considering this election as a referendum in favour of independence. You shall say clearly in public meetings, the 1-point movement (i.e. for independence) will commence if the 6-points are not accepted. The election has to be used as the best opportunity for building public opinion. Who would be the leader of the Bangalis will also be decided through this election. If the Bangalis pronounce the verdict in my favour, then I know how to throw away the LFO into the river Sind after crossing the river Buriganga. My ultimate aim is independence. Continue your work by keeping faith on me. I do not want to die like a boyaner - I want to uphold the honour of the Bangalis by liberating the country while keeping my head high" (in toto, as said by Bangabandhu).

The main gist of the LFO was that, regionalism and discriminations could not be dwelt on during election campaigns and the constitution of Pakistan would have to be formulated within 180 days of parliament. If that was not done, then the parliament would get dissolved automatically. That is, the Pakistani military had the notion that no party would be able to get absolute majority, and the parties would not be able to frame the constitution within 180 days. Then the military would be able to make the martial law permanent by putting the blame on the shoulders of political leaders.

But things went wrong for the Pakistanis. By proving all their notions and secret reports incorrect, the Bangali nation gifted Bangabandhu 167 out of 169 seats in parliament in the 1970's election. He was thereby made the sole leader of the Bangali nation by virtue of his winning a majority of seats in Pakistan parliament. This historic and unforgettable verdict of the people was the main basis for declaring the great liberation war.

When power was not handed over to Bangabandhu in December 1970, or even in January, February and March 1971, it became very clear that the Pakistanis would not do so. Therefore, the whole nation started to prepare for a guerrilla war being imbued with the 7<sup>th</sup> March speech of Bangabandhu.

In fact, the declaration of independence was prepared in the light of the 7<sup>th</sup> March speech delivered by Bangabandhu. The Mujibnagar Government

was constituted through mutual discussions among the people's representatives who formed the constituent assembly based on the mandate that the sovereign people of Bangladesh had given to the elected representatives through the election of 1970 by declaring Bangladesh as a sovereign people's republic in order to establish equality, human dignity and social justice.

Many people thought that Bangabandhu would make a declaration of independence on 7<sup>th</sup> March. But for endangering Bangabandhu, Yahya Khan called for a round-table meeting on 25 March and announced that the problems would be resolved only through discussions. In fact, Bangabandhu's speech was an indirect declaration of independence as well as a guideline for waging war. He did not declare independence directly on 7<sup>th</sup> March, so that Pakistan could not engage in propaganda by referring to the freedom struggle of Bangladesh as a separatist movement. In my opinion, it was the greatest diplomatically far-sighted speech in world history.

At the very outset of his greatest diplomatic and farsighted speech, Bangabandhu recalled the history of exploitations in Pakistan for 23 years. He mentioned about the failure to hold on to power despite winning the election of 1954, the language movement, the 6-points movement, the Agartala Conspiracy Case etc. He reviewed the overall situation, explained his own role and status. He shed light on the role of the West Pakistani politicians. He called for the withdrawal of martial law. He gave instructions for tackling the repression and military aggression. He put forward different issues including the declaration to continue the comprehensive strike in East Pakistan until the demands were met. He made the declaration of independence in such a manner that the world community could not call him a separatist. He provided complete guidelines for a guerrilla war.

In fact, it was a people's explosion against 23-year long exploitations. Although East Pakistan had the majority population in the country, the state power was held by the West Pakistanis. The West Pakistanis had exploited the Bangalis of this land for around 24 years through repressions and discriminations. Although a lion's share of the foreign exchange earned by Pakistan came from East Pakistan, most of it was spent in West Pakistan; East Pakistan used to get a meagre amount. The people of this land had waged a struggle for 23 years under the leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman against the West Pakistanis. Bangabandhu had anticipated his war-time directives to his closest colleagues including the four national leaders. The national leaders formed and ran the first government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh in accordance with Bangabandhu's instructions.

With the objective of taking full preparations for the war, he had elicited the consent of the great

## The Glorious...

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The Prime Minister said in her speech, "We have taken the initiative of recognizing the Bangla Language of the 250 millions of people of the world as one of the official languages of the United Nations. We have placed the demand at the UN General Assembly. Today the 'International Mother Language Day' is the source of inspiration for establishing the right to truth and justice for all the citizens of the whole world". In this way the multifarious dimension of the victory will one day reach the height of the Himalayan Peak. The coming generations will learn that in the question of the country's prestige there should not be any compromise. The country and the national spirit are the fundamental truths of our survival.

In his speech at the United Nations Bangabandhu further said, "Millions of our people have made supreme sacrifices for the great ideal which has been preserved in the UN charter. The Bangalis are fully pledge-bound for the establishment of a world in which all people's hopes and aspirations can be fulfilled for ensuring peace and justice". In the Rohingya Refugee issue, today's Bangladesh is a country that can establish peace and justice in the spirit of humanity. This is also a big achievement of victory.

Another achievement of victory was attained in 1999 when UNESCO announced on 21 February as the "International Mother Language Day". The glory that the Bangalis achieved by sacrificing their lives for the sake of their mother tongue reached all the people of the world through this declaration of the UNESCO. The achievement of this victory started on 9 January 1998. On that day the heroic freedom fighter Rafiqul Islam who was living in Vancouver, Canada as an immigrant wrote a letter to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan requesting him to announce the Bangalis' martyrdom day as the international Mother-Language Day. The United Nations informed that the matter was under the jurisdiction of the UNESCO. The appeal should be made there. Following the rules and procedures Rafiqul Islam sent the letter of application there. UNESCO suggested that the proposal should come from the government of Bangladesh. In the mean time quite a long time had elapsed. Bangladesh government had only two days' time to send the proposal. Under this circumstance Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina achieved a far-fetched victory by taking a far-sighted decision. She asked the concerned officials of the secretariat to send the necessary documents quickly to the UNESCO. She would complete the file formalities later.

It was an extraordinary decision in the achievement of glory. The proposal for the 'International Mother Language Day' would not have been raised later if it had not been placed at that meeting of the UNESCO general conference. This proposal for the Mother Language Day was passed in the presence of the delegates from 188 countries on 17 November 1999. This message of the glory of the mother tongue reached the people all over the world. Bangladesh has been proud of the glory. The 1971 victory day has still been achieving the glory of victory. In this respect, another day is also very remarkable. Different cities in Canada like Toronto in Ontario, Surrey in British Columbia, Vancouver, Richmond and many others have been publicly observing the International Mother Language Day since 2007. The federal Parliament of Australia accepted the proposal of celebrating the day publicly. Bangladesh is a life-sacrificing country for the sake of mother tongue. Many mother languages of ethnic communities are becoming extinct in the world. Our red and green flag is now flying with a light of hope before all countries of the world.

Bangabandhu's 7<sup>th</sup> March speech is another important dimension of the glorious achievement of

## THE GLORIOUS VICTORY DAY

Sunday 16 December 2018

Indian Prime Minister Srmatl Indira Gandhi in advance for standing beside Bangladesh if it faced disaster, and for providing shelter, training and arms to the freedom fighters when the war started. For turning the war efforts and eliciting external support in Bangladesh's absence, the Mujibnagar Government ran all activities of an independent government including the direction of war efforts, maintenance of communication, and collection of money, arms and ammunition.

The valiant freedom fighters under the Mujibnagar Government liberated Bangladesh by heroically defeating the Pakistani forces. The Pakistani barbaric forces carried out indiscriminate genocides and tortures during this 9-month long war. As a result, 3 million Bangalis were martyred and 2 lakh mothers and sisters lost their honour. Although the 9-month long war came to a successful conclusion through the surrender of the Pakistani invaders to the freedom fighters and allied forces on 16 December 1971 at Suhrawardy Udyan, the Bangalis could not yet taste the full flavour of victory. This independence assumed complete shape with the return of Bangabandhu to independent Bangladesh on 10 January 1972.

Immediately after returning to the country, Bangabandhu started to rebuild the war-ravaged Bangladesh. He presented the nation with a constitution within one year of independence. He formulated the First Five Year Plan within a year for fixing the development goals. Realizing the importance of education, he constituted an education commission for formulating a mass-oriented education policy. Massive programs were undertaken in the education sector. Bangladesh could elicit recognition from 142 countries after independence through the initiatives of Bangabandhu. Bangladesh also got membership of the Non-Aligned Movement, the United Nations, Commonwealth and the OIC. Bangabandhu was the first Bangali to have delivered a speech at the United Nations as the head of government of a country. But before the people of this country could comprehend the real meaning and significance of independence, he was brutally killed along with his family members on 15 August 1975.

The people of this country were deprived of real freedom and its benefits because of the assassination of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu. An undemocratic and military rule took our country backwards. The main spirit of the liberation war was repeatedly hit due to the intrusion of the poisonous vapour of communism in all fields including political, cultural and social systems. The economic pursuits of this country were also harmed.

The dream of the greatest Bangali of all times, the great architect of Bangladesh, the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was to build a happy, prosperous Golden Bangla bereft of discriminations and exploitations. But the conspirators and plotters assassinated Bangabandhu within three and a half years of the country's independence. Through this, they also killed the forward march of a newly independent emerging nation. The holders of power changed hands at different junctures, but the standard of living of the common people could not improve.

Bangabandhu's daughter Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has now transformed Bangladesh into a role-model of development in the globe through uplift of various sectors including education, health, and social safety nets. She is materialising the independence dreams of the countrymen through fulfilment of the dream of Father of the Nation.

Whereas the average growth rate of other developing countries of the world is 5.1 percent, the average growth rate of Bangladesh is now 7.86 percent. Our per capita income has risen to US Dollar 1,751 from merely US Dollar 759 in 2009. The size of the budget was Taka 89 thousand crore, which is now Taka 464 thousand crore. Our poverty rate is now only 21.8 percent. Our electricity generation capacity is 20,133 megawatts. Food production has increased manifold in Bangladesh. We have achieved self-reliance in food production. Bangladesh is now a food surplus country. A total of 13,595 community clinics all over the country have brought healthcare services to the doorsteps of the people. Thirty types of medicines are being distributed free of charge from these clinics. We have achieved extraordinary successes in the education sector. A total of 26,193 private primary schools, 317 secondary schools, and 339 colleges have been established. According to recognition to the Qawmi Madrasahs was a historic decision. Our maritime disputes have been resolved through the international arbitration court. As a consequence, the maritime territory of Bangladesh now extends over 118 thousand 813 square kilometres. Bangladesh has successfully sent the Bangabandhu Satellite-1 to space. Mega projects like the Padma Multipurpose Bridge, Padma Railway Bridge, Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, Rampal Coal-fired Power Plant, Matarbari Power Plant, Metro-rail project, Sonadia Deep Seaport, Payra Port, Chattogram-Gundum Railway Line and Construction of LNG Terminal are now under implementation.

This is a new Bangladesh in terms of economic advancements. Discriminations had given us courage for breaking the cycle of subjugation. It showed us the dream of a new sunrise. That courage and new dream had put us on a seat of prestige in the global podium. The forward march of Bangladesh is now a subject of discussion for development economists in all corners of the world. Our future generations shall live in a happy, prosperous and developed Bangladesh by receiving the education and significance of the Victory Day. And they shall remember with pride and reverence all valiant martyrs of our great liberation war including the greatest Bangali of all times, the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. They shall remember innumerable heroic freedom fighters including the four national leaders Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmad, Captain Muhammad Mansur Ali and AHM Qumrazzaman.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu

Translation: Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed

victory. The verses of this speech will be articulated in the question of rights of innumerable people of the world. The UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova declared at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris on 30 October 2017 that Bangabandhu's 7<sup>th</sup> March historic speech had been recognized as "The World's Documentary Heritage" in the "International Memory of the World Register". UNESCO is the United Nations' Organization of Education, Science and Culture. This recognition of UNESCO has created an opportunity of its being spread among the people of the world for a long time. The Bangalis have achieved the documentary world heritage through UNESCO and this heritage inspires the human race to go forward. Inspiration protects human rights through protests. There is no denying that this 7<sup>th</sup> March speech on the multi-dimensional aspect of the Bangalis' victory day is a tale of glory.

Bangabandhu started his speech addressing the people as 'my brethren'. Through this speech recognized by UNESCO, Bangabandhu's loud voice will be reverberated all over the world. He addressed all the people of the world as 'my brethren'. The 15 members of the advisory committee of UNESCO's "Memory of the World" programme deeply observed the historical documents of the various countries of the world for two years and their decision on Bangabandhu's speech opened the door of the Bangalis before the world community. The people of the world will remember Bangabandhu's speech exactly as they remember Abraham Lincoln's words "Of the people, By the people, For the people" in connection with the spirit of democratic values. People's protests become stronger by virtue of the immortal speech of their leader. Bangladesh too has had the same experience.

British historian Jacob F. Field edited a book entitled We Shall Fight on the Beaches- The Speeches that Inspired History. The book was published from London in 2013. Bangabandhu's speech entitled "The Struggle This Time is the Struggle for Independence" was included in this book. The book in English has reached innumerable people of the world. A total of 162 corridors were created in West Bengal of India and the then East Pakistan in 1947 after the partition. Among them there were 111 corridors of India in the region of East Pakistan. The inhabitants of the corridors lived a sort of imprisoned life. As the border was protected by another country, these people had no easy provision for them to go out of their corridors. They have lived a life of deprivation. They were deprived of education, health and other facilities. The corridor people had no franchise either. They spent long years of indescribable sorrows and sufferings. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh and his Indian counterpart Indira Gandhi signed the Tashkent-India agreement in Delhi on 16 May 1974. A long time after the partition, this was a great achievement of victory in favour of humanity.

The victory of the sea is another big achievement for Bangladesh. The long conflict that existed between Bangladesh and Myanmar about the sea boundary was settled on 14 March 2012 at the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS). According to analysts, this is a historic milestone. The people of the world will also witness the example of the glorious achievement of the Bangabandhu Satellite. There are also other achievements recorded in the 47-year history of Bangladesh. We also respect the mother languages of the immigrants of the corridor people who lived a life of deprivation. Let the countrymen triumph. The red and green flag will be flying in the map of Bangladesh. This flag is flown by the Bangladesh cricket team in different countries. It is also flown by the football and cricket playing girls. Let the victory day this year be celebrated with an eye to this bright light. Let our young generation come forward wearing the crown of victory on their heads.

has passed since then. 68 years had passed since 1947. But the corridor people had no experience of their social, cultural and economic emancipation. At long last in 2015 Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina took the initiative for implementing that agreement. She is an enlightened leader of humanitarian spirit representing the common people. She evaluates the easy truth of people's survival. She finds the path to solutions. Consequently, the imprisoned life of the corridor people came to an end after 68 years of the partition. This was a great achievement of victory in favour of humanity.

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Translation: Professor M. Jahurul Islam

## Adjacent Bangladesh

Nirmalendu Goon

When I completed twenty five years,  
You were still in my dreams.  
I opened my heart out to you,  
And said take whatever you may.

When I completed twenty five years,  
You were in the embryo of your mother.  
I kept you hidden in the Arsenal  
Arrows made in quaver.

When I completed twenty five years,  
You were still in hope of birth.  
You were my first priority hence  
No maiden had for me any worth.

When I completed twenty five years,  
I picked up a weapon in hand.  
Went after the high hills and forestlands  
Even against my will to kill.

When I completed twenty five years  
As if boiling red blood was in my torso  
What then other than your freedom from hell  
Was preferable