



# Breaking the shackles of post-colonial order

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

The nation got prepared and when the Pak Army resorted to brutal force, Bangabandhu declared independence and the nation jumped into the war of resistance with whatever weapon they had.

In 1972, immediately after independence, a delegation of the International Commission of Jurists visited Bangladesh to make a legal study of the emergence of the country and recommend ways to establish justice for international crimes. They observed, "In our view, it was not in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations for a self-appointed and illegal military regime to arrogate to itself the right to impose a different form of constitution upon the country, which was contrary to the expressed will of the majority. As the army had resorted to force to impose their will, the leaders of the majority party were entitled to call for armed resistance to defeat this action by an illegal regime."

National poet Kazi Nazrul Islam represented both the rebel and the lover. Likewise, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib became the supreme leader of the democratic struggle as well as the armed resistance based on the internationally recognised principles. "A democrat and a revolutionary mingled into one" was the

unique characteristic of Bangabandhu, a flute in one hand and a bugle on the other. Hiren Mukherjee, the leftist historian and essayist of West Bengal, in an essay on the emergence of Bangladesh eulogised Sheikh Mujib quoting a line from Rabindranath Tagore, "Dekhi Nai Kovu Dekhi Nai Emon Tarani Baoa" (I have never seen a boatman plying with such beauty).

But the ultimate tribute to the significance of the emergence of Bangladesh came from the co-authors of the study of decolonisation, Jan C. Jansen and Jurgen Osterhammel, who wrote, "Except for a very few cases (Bangladesh and recently South Sudan), attempts at secession from post-colonial states have failed—not least due to the lack of international recognition."

The leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in making the Bangladesh struggle successful requires deeper study to understand its national, regional and global significance; the same is true for the nation-state he established. The two forthcoming anniversaries have thus a great significance, at home and abroad, in the backdrop of colonial legacy and the successful case of confronting the distortion and division it created.

**Mofidul Hoque** is a war crimes researcher and trustee of the Liberation War Museum.



PHOTO: GOLAM MOWLA/DRINK

Freedom Fighters celebrating their victory.



Press conference in London, after Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's return from Pakistani prison.

PHOTO: LIBERATION WAR MUSEUM