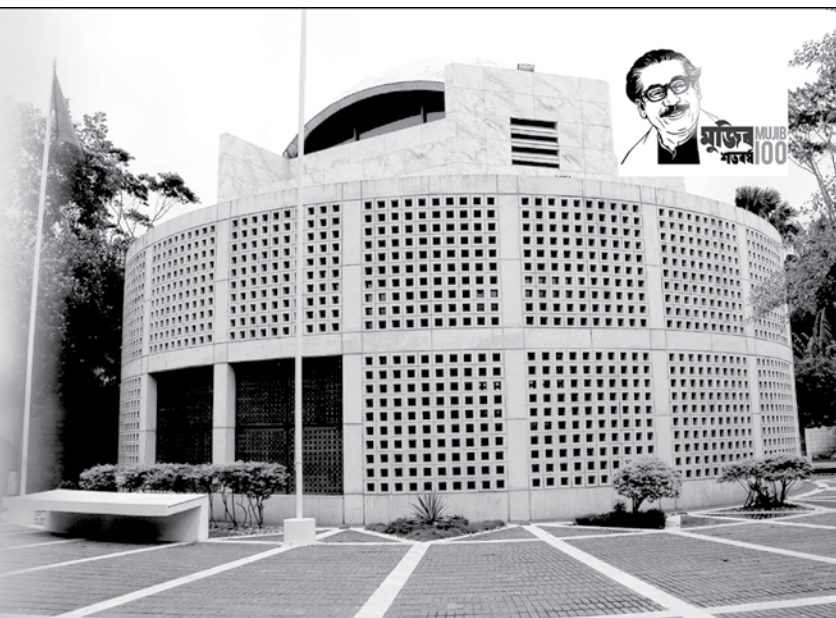


15 August

The National Mourning Day



Special Supplement

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**PRESIDENT
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH**

Message

Today is the National Mourning Day and the 45th martyrdom anniversary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

August 15, 1975 is regarded as a scandalous chapter in the history of the Bangali nation. On this fateful night, the undisputed leader and Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was brutally assassinated at his Dhamondi residence by a group of killers with the direct and indirect connivance of anti-liberation forces. His wife Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib, sons namely Sheikh Kamal, Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russel, and some near and dear ones were also killed along with Bangabandhu. Such a barbarous incident was rare not only in the history of Bangladesh but also in the history of the world. With heavy heart, I pay my deep homage to them and pray to the Almighty Allah for the eternal peace of the departed souls on this Mourning Day.

Bangabandhu was a visionary leader and the architect of independence. He led the nation at every struggle and democratic movements including the 'All-party State Language Action Committee' formed to press home the right to mother-tongue in 1948, historic Language Movement in 1952, Juktafront Election in 1954, movement against Martial Law in 1958, Six-Point Movement in 1966, Mass Uprising in 1969 and the General Elections in 1970 which all were directed towards realizing Bangal's emancipation and their rights. For this, he had to embrace jail for several times.

Bangabandhu was uncompromising on the question of the rights of our people. He, even on the gallows, upheld the interest of Bengal and Bangali. After a long ups and downs, this great leader, ignoring the blood-shot eyes of the then Pakistani rulers, delivered historic address on 07 March in 1971 before a mammoth gathering at the then Race Course Maidan, and thunderously uttered, "The struggle this time is a struggle for emancipation, the struggle this time is a struggle for independence" which was, in fact, basically call for our independence. In line with this historic speech, he finally declared country's independence on March 26, 1971 and subsequently we achieved victory through a nine-month-long armed war of liberation under his leadership. Bangabandhu and Bangladesh thus emerged as a unique entity to the people of Bangladesh. Though the assassins killed Father of the Nation, they could not wipe out the principle and ideal of this great man. As long as Bangladesh exists, the name and fame of Father of the Nation will remain ever shining in the mind of millions of Bangalis of our country.

Bangabandhu, throughout his life, struggled for independence along with attaining people's economic emancipation. His dream was to build "Sonar Bangla" (Golden Bangla) to be freed from hunger and poverty. Therefore, our responsibility would be to make our country a happy and prosperous one by enriching ourselves with knowledge and completing the unfinished task of Bangabandhu. Only then we will be able to pay our due respect to the immortal soul of this great leader.

The birth centenary of Bangabandhu is being observed this year and the Golden Jubilee celebration of our independence will be celebrated in 2021. These two national events are a unique milestone in the history of the Bangali nation. I believe, by celebrating these two events with solemnity and dignity, our new generation will be able to know about Bangabandhu and the factual history of our independence. And thus they, being imbued with patriotism, will be able to devote themselves for the development of the country and the nation.

The whole world, including Bangladesh, is now fighting against COVID-19 pandemic. The entire globe has become standstill at present due to the adverse impact of coronavirus. The economy, including livelihood, employment, trade and commerce, transcontinental communication etc. are at a stake. The government of Bangladesh has taken all-out measures to address the corona situation. People of the country should extend the hand of cooperation with government efforts to face the challenges. Maintaining guidelines of hygiene in every aspect of life as well as keeping ourselves cautious, we have to be dealt with the pandemic by holding the principle of "Carefulness, not fear".

The Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has set Vision 2021, Vision 2041 and Delta Plan 2100 to transform Bangladesh into a middle-income country by 2021 and a developed-prosperous one by 2041. I call upon all, irrespective of party affiliation and opinion, to materialize these programmes unitedly.

On the National Mourning Day, let us translate our grief into strength, and devote ourselves to build "Sonar Bangla" as dreamt of by Father of the Nation.

Joi Bangla.

Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Md. Abdul Hamid

Bangali's Dream of Freedom and Immortal Bangabandhu

Anupam Sen

The most glorious days in the thousand year-old annals of Bengali-speaking people have been 26 March, 16 December and 21 February. These three days will keep the Bangalis forever illumined with ultimate glory. And 15 August will be remembered as the ineffaceable day of disgrace in the history of the Bangali nation. On this day, some treasonous, tyrannical, cruel men, who were worse than beasts, not only killed the Father of the Nation for covering up the shame of their political defeat, their conscience did not quiver as they did not even hesitate to kill a small child and the newly-wed brides.

The world knows, the Bangalis know, the great hero behind the creation of the above-mentioned dates was the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. It was Bangabandhu who had founded a homeland for the Bangalis. It was he who declared for the first time in the country's constitution that the people were the owners of that state. That is to say, the people were the sources of all power, and their vernacular language Bangla was the state language. It was Bangabandhu who had given shape to the first nation-state in the history of the Bangalis. Bangabandhu was also the first to deliver the first constitution for the Bangalis on 4 November 1972. The main language of this constitution is also Bangla. Prior to 26 March and 16 December 1971, the Bangalis had to undergo two colonial rules. The first one was the 190 year-long rule under the British, and the second one was the 23 year-long rule under the civil-military bureaucracy of the Punjabis and Urdu-speakers. These two colonial rules had reduced the most affluent nation in the world (according to the descriptions of travellers like Bernier, Tavernier, etc.) to among the poorest in the globe.

Bangabandhu had spent 13 years of the 23 year-long Pakistani colonial rule behind bars for freeing the Bangalis from subjugation and poverty, and bestowing them with an affluent



existence or life, a life bereft of hunger and rich in education and culture. This sincere wish and craving has been depicted in pages after pages of his 'Unfinished Memoirs'. He had written in 1953: 'On the one hand, a group of so-called central leaders of the west and top government employees were secretly working on how to develop West Pakistan swiftly by seizing the assets of East Bengal.... Then the Awami League proved through calculations that East Bengal was being exploited, they became desperate and started to mete out severe punishments to the Awami League and its leaders' (Unfinished Memoirs).

He further wrote: 'On the other hand, they were helping to build up industries and factories in West Pakistan through programs backed by foreign currencies earned from East Bengal. As a result, a band of industrialists were groomed, who could extract as much unrestrained profit as they liked from the masses. They became millionaires overnight. Many became industrialists by earning money through selling licences in the name of import-export business while sitting in Karachi. That was a misdeed of the Muslim League government.... The so-called leaders of the Bangalis failed to please Golam Mohammad and Chowdhury Mohammad Ali despite handing over to their Punjabi brethren the central capital, military headquarters, all the top government positions, trade and commerce. In the constituent assembly, the Bangalis were the majority despite giving away six seats to their West Pakistani brothers. They could have upheld the interests of the people of East Bengal. But without doing that, they threw down everything to their feet for clinging on to power. In spite of that, they could not hold on to their seats of authority' (Unfinished Memoirs).

Bangabandhu was arrested along with seventy of his associates while observing a strike on 11 March 1948 after calling the first strike in the history of East Bengal as the leader of 'East

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**PRIME MINISTER
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH**

Message



The 15 August is the National Mourning Day. On this day in 1975, the Greatest Bangali of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman along with most of his family members was brutally assassinated.

Eighteen members of the Father of the Nation's family including Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib, three sons-Captain Sheikh Kamal, Lieutenant Sheikh Jamal and 10-year old Sheikh Russel, two daughters-in-law Sultana Kamal and Rosy Jamal, brother Sheikh Abu Naser, peasant leader Abdur Rab Seraniat, youth leader Sheikh Fazlul Haq Moni and his pregnant wife Arzu Moni, Baby Seraniat, Sukanta Babu, Arif and Abdul Nayeem Khan Rintu, among others, were also killed by the heinous killers on that fateful night. Bangabandhu's Military Secretary Brigadier General Jamil was also murdered. Several members of a family died in the capital's Mohammadpur area by artillery shells fired by the killers on the same day.

On this National Mourning Day, I respectfully remember all the martyrs of the 15 August and pray to the Almighty Allah for the salvation of their departed souls.

Under the visionary and strong leadership of the Father of the Nation, the Bangalee Nation broke the shackles of subordination and snatched away our great Independence. The anti-liberation clique killed Bangabandhu at a time when he had engaged in the struggle to building a Golden Bangladesh along with the whole nation by reconstructing the war-ravaged country. Through the killing of Bangabandhu, the defeated forces of the Liberation War made abortive attempts to ruin the tradition, culture and advancement of the Bangali Nation. The aim of the killers was to break the state structure of secular democratic Bangladesh and foil our hard-earned Independence. The anti liberation forces involved in the carnage initiated the politics of killing, coup and conspiracy in the country right after the 15 August 1975. They also impeded the trial of Bangabandhu murder by promulgating Indemnity Ordinance.

Ziaur Rahman illegally took over the state power and promulgated Martial Law by desecrating the democracy and suspending the Constitution. He rewarded the killers of the Father of the Nation and gave them jobs at the Bangladesh missions abroad. He gave the anti-liberation war criminals nationality, made them partners in the state power and rehabilitated them politically and socially. The subsequent governments of BNP-Jamaat alliance followed the same path.

Winning the General Elections on 12 June 1996, Bangladesh Awami League assumed state power after 21 years. A new horizon of socio-economic development in the country was started in this 5-year (1996-2001) overcoming the obstacles of the past. We initiated the trial of the Father of the Nation murder case. But after coming to power in 2001, BNP-Jamaat alliance government stopped this trial.

The countrymen again voted Awami League to power in the 9th Parliamentary Elections on 29 December 2008. Overcoming the stalemate left by the previous BNP-Jamaat government, and global economic recession, we have put the country on firm economic footing. During the past eleven and a half years, we have achieved desired advancement in every sector. Bangladesh is now a 'role model' of socio-economic development in the world. Bangladesh has attained the status of a developing nation.

Amidst present deadly Corona virus pandemic, our government has relentlessly been working to turn Bangladesh into a middle-income country by 2021 and a developed one by 2041.

We have already executed the verdict of the Bangabandhu murder case. The trial of the killers of Four National Leaders has been completed. The verdicts of the cases against war criminals of 1971 are being executed. Our government has been following 'zero tolerance' policy to uproot militancy terrorism. The path of grabbing state power unconstitutionally has been stopped through the 15th amendment to the Constitution.

Unitedly, we have to remain prepared to resist any evil-attempt by the anti-liberation communal group, and anti-development and anti-democracy forces. The killers were able to assassinate Bangabandhu but they could not kill his dreams and ideals. Let the glory and ideals of the Father of the Nation's sacrifice be reflected through our actions in the Mujib Year.

Let's turn the grief of the loss of Bangabandhu into strength and build a non-communal, hunger-poverty free prosperous Golden Bangladesh as dreamt by the Father of the Nation. This should be our solemn pledge on this National Mourning Day.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Sheikh Hasina

Where the Head is Held High

A A M S Arefin Siddique

Today is the 15th of August. The Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated along with his family 45 years ago at dawn of 15 August 1975. We remember the Father of the Nation with deep reverence on the occasion of this National Mourning Day and pray for the salvation of his departed soul. We also extend our deepest respect to all those including the family-members of Bangabandhu, who were martyred on that accursed day.

We are observing the National Mourning Day this year amid a calamitous time owing to the deadly outbreak of a disease spread by novel coronavirus. Just as we are observing the birth centenary of Mujib by shelving all formalities, similarly we shall recall the Father of the Nation gently after adhering to all health-related regulations. Because of his farsighted leadership, we are today proud citizens of an independent country.

The lines of the poem 'Where the Mind is without Fear' composed by the Nobel Laureate Poet Rabindranath Tagore about 120 years ago appeared to be a reflection of Bangabandhu's life. He could embrace death with fearless and silent sophistication even during the accursed dawn of 15 August 1975; while staying at his own residence on Dhamondi's road-32 during the terrifying night of 25 March 1971, he could declare the independence of Bangladesh resolutely without any fear in the first hours of 26 March, "This may be my last message,



Bangabandhu at a Press Conference in London after being released from jail : 8 January 1972

Bangladesh is independent from today"; he could proclaim in a thunderous voice at Dhaka's then Racecourse Maidan (now Suhrawardy Udyan) in the afternoon of 7 March 1971, while helicopters of the Pakistani forces hovered above, "The struggle this time is a struggle for our freedom, the struggle this time is for our independence"; he could start a hunger strike while in jail on 16 February 1952 with the demand for making Bangla the principal state language of Pakistan.

Therefore, no Bangalis need to repeat what Rabindranath had hinted by saying "The great man is coming", as that was fully synonymous with the brief but colourful life and mesmerising personality of Bangabandhu, which was full of struggles, suspense, and empathy for the liberation of humans. Bangabandhu is today recognized globally as the greatest Bangali of a thousand years due to his founding of an independent nation-state for the Bangalis and endowing them with a cohesive national identity.

The renowned British journalist David Frost had taken a long interview of Bangabandhu after coming to Dhaka in January 1972. At one stage, he asked the question, "[In the first hours of 26 March 1971] As you left your home at 32, Dhamondi, did you think you would ever see it again?" In reply, Bangabandhu had said, "I didn't, I thought this was the last, but if I die as a leader with my head up, at least they will not be ashamed; but if I surrender to them, my nation, the people of my country could not show their face to the world. It is better that I die keeping the prestige of my people".

In reply to another question of David Frost, Bangabandhu had said, "A man who is ready to die, nobody can kill him. You can kill a man physically, but can you kill a man's soul? You can't. It's my faith".

Bangabandhu was similarly calm, tranquil, bereft of worries and fear before the killers of 15 August 1975. He embraced death by holding his head high. Bangabandhu's memoirs written in jail have now been published. His books 'Unfinished Memoirs', 'Prison Diaries' and 'The New China as I Saw' should be essential reads for the children of our new generation. I discern many unknown facts of history from these valuable books. We are forever grateful for the tireless effort and inspiration extended by Bangabandhu's wife Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib for her supportive role in the writing of these books as well as her important contributions toward our national life. Begum Mujib has indebted the whole nation forever through her timely and sagacious advices to Mujib during various critical junctures of the nation.

The book 'Unfinished Memoirs' was written by Bangabandhu while in jail. Its preface was written by his daughter Sheikh Hasina on the 7th day of the grief-stricken month of August 2007, while sitting in the dark room of a sub-jail set up in Dhaka. His daughter Sheikh Hasina has been providing leadership to this country's 160 million people by upholding the ideals of his father. In the preface to the book 'Unfinished Memoirs', Sheikh Hasina has written, "My father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's most precious times were spent as a prisoner. Those intolerable and secluded prison-days came up when he waged movements for realizing the rights of the masses. But he never compromised. Neither did he fear the gallows. The people were the inner driving-force of his life. The joys and sorrows of the masses made him cry. His lone vow in life was to bring smiles to the sad faces of Bangla's inhabitants by building a Golden Bangla. For that reason, he had continued his lifelong struggles as an idealistic and self-sacrificing leader in order to realize people's rights by shunning all happiness, comforts and luxuries in his own life, ultimately bestowing the Bangali nation with independence".

Bangabandhu was always in favour of justice, truth and the fundamental rights of the common people throughout his life. What can be more powerful than the strengths of truth and justice?

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