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## INDEPENDENCE DAY TODAY



A mother and her daughter light candles at a memorial at Dhaka University's Jagannath Hall, commemorating the Genocide Day yesterday. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

### 50 YEARS OF BANGLADESH

## From empty coffers to hope, cheers

REJAU KARIM BYRON and MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

The state coffer was empty after Bangladesh's nine-month-long Liberation War. Poverty, hunger, natural disasters, famine, crumbling infrastructure, political turmoil, and coups in the first decade of Bangladesh's inception did not paint a picture that would radiate hope.

Today, as the nation celebrates Golden Jubilee of Independence, Bangladesh has not only stood on its own feet, but has also become a role model for development.

In the beginning, Bangladesh was branded as a basket case. The naysayers believed that country would have to be fed by the international community as it was staring at failure with no mineral resources, high population growth, food shortage, and negligible exports.

The situation was so bad that in 1976, Just Faaland, resident representative of

the World Bank in Bangladesh (1972-1974), and Prof Jack R Parkinson, senior economist to the World Bank Mission, summed up Bangladesh's trauma in the phrase "test case for development".

They argued, "If development could be made successful in Bangladesh, there can be little doubt that it could be made to succeed anywhere else."

Bangladesh turned around.

It has brought down the population growth rate from over 3 percent to a little over 1 percent. The poverty rate had fallen to less than 20 percent before the pandemic from as high as 82 percent in the 1970s.

The country struggled to feed its 7.5 crore people five decades ago. Now, it is self-sufficient in food production even though the population has more than doubled.

Food price has remained manageable too.

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## Forget all divisions to build Sonar Bangla

PM urges people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon people to take a vow on the auspicious moment of the Golden Jubilee of Independence that no one could play with their fate.

She also urged them to take an oath that no one can hamper the progress of the country's democracy and development.

"Let's forget all divisions and get inspired by the spirit of the Liberation War to build Bangladesh as a developed and secular Sonar Bangla as envisioned by the Father of the Nation," she said in her address to the nation marking the Golden Jubilee of Independence.

Hasina, also the Awami League president, said anti-liberation forces had carried out ill-intended activities at home and abroad to hinder the country's progress.

"That process [activities] is still underway. So we all have to resist all kinds of anti-state activities by taking up the role of vigilant watchmen."

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## Modi arrives today

To join celebrations marking Mujib Borsho, golden jubilee of Bangladesh's independence

PORIMOL PALMA

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrives today to join the celebrations of Mujib Borsho and golden jubilee of Bangladesh's independence.

This, Modi's first foreign visit since the outbreak of the coronavirus, comes at a time when the two countries celebrate 50 years of diplomatic relationship, the foundation of which was laid in 1971 when India supported Bangladesh's struggle for

liberation.

The Indian government led by then prime minister Indira Gandhi had declared support for Bangladesh's independence, sheltered millions of refugees, trained freedom fighters and finally joined the war on December 3, 1971. Led by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, a new nation -- Bangladesh -- was born after nine months of war following the declaration of independence on March 26, 1971.

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Special op-ed by  
Indian Prime  
Minister  
**NARENDRA  
MODI**

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