

A defining moment in history

On December 6, 1971, Indian PM India Gandhi announced in parliament her decision to recognise Bangladesh as a sovereign, independent state



FIFTY years ago, on this very day, India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi announced her government's decision to formally accord recognition to Bangladesh as a sovereign and an independent state. She did this while

addressing the Indian Parliament. The prime minister's announcement was greeted with thunderous applause by all the members of the Lok Sabha. The very same day, Mrs Gandhi addressed a letter to then Bangladesh prime minister, Tajuddin Ahmed, conveying this momentous decision. The historic letter is as follows:

New Delhi, December 6, 1971
Dear Prime Minister,
My colleagues in the Government of India and I were deeply touched by the message which His Excellency the Acting President Syed Nazrul Islam and you sent to me on December 4. On its receipt, (the) Government of India once again considered your request to accord recognition to the People's Republic of Bangladesh, which you lead with such dedication. I am glad to inform you that in the light of the circumstances which prevail at present, (the) Government of India have decided to grant the recognition. This morning I made a statement on the subject in our Parliament. I enclose a copy.
The people of Bangladesh have gone through much suffering. Your young men are engaged in a self-sacrificing struggle for freedom and democracy. The people of India are also fighting in defence of the same values. I have no doubt that this companionship in endeavour and sacrifice will strengthen our dedication to great causes and the friendship between our two peoples. However long the road and however exacting the sacrifice that our two peoples may be called upon to make in the future, I am certain that we shall emerge triumphant. I take this opportunity to convey to you personally, to your colleagues and to the heroic people of Bangladesh my greetings and best wishes. I should also like to take this opportunity to convey through you to His Excellency Syed Nazrul Islam, Acting President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the assurances of my

highest esteem. Yours sincerely, (Sd.) Indira Gandhi His Excellency Mr Tajuddin Ahmed, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Mujib Nagar.

The historic significance of this letter lies in the fact that this was the first exchange of official written communication between the heads of governments of Bangladesh and India.

India's formal recognition of Bangladesh followed a similar decision by Bhutan, our friendly neighbour to the north, two days earlier.

In her speech at parliament, which lasted about 20 minutes, Mrs Gandhi explained at length the rationale behind her government's decision to wait until then before according a formal and official recognition to a country that had been fighting for its liberation for almost nine months against the occupying Pakistan Army—a war in which India and its people had played a helping, if not a decisive, role. The timing of the formal recognition by India was held back till December in spite of repeated appeals by the leadership of the then Bangladesh government based in India, especially Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmed and acting President Syed Nazrul Islam.

In her speech, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi indicated that any precipitous move by India to accord a *de jure* recognition to Bangladesh earlier would have been construed by the international community as India interfering in the internal affairs of a neighbour and supporting a “secessionist” movement, as some chose to see it. This, she believed, would have not only subjected India to criticism by key players in the global arena, but also weakened the rationale of Bangladesh's Liberation War. It is hard to argue with her line of logic on both counts. This was all the more valid when seen in the context that both the Nixon administration in Washington, DC and the Chinese government were making no secret of their support to protect Pakistan's territorial integrity that would ensure that “East Pakistan” remained a part of that entity.

It was, therefore, imperative for her to garner international public opinion before

India accorded recognition to Bangladesh. Highlighting the acts of genocide in India's immediate neighbourhood, and the flight of 10 million resulting refugees seeking shelter in India, had to form part of the narrative. During her trips to a number of key Western countries, including the Soviet Union and the United States, between September and November in 1971, Mrs Gandhi explained to the heads of states and governments of those countries that the raging war in

negotiation. Except for the policymakers in Washington, Mrs Gandhi's potent arguments did make a dent everywhere else. It was a classic case of deft diplomatic handling of an extremely complex international issue with far-reaching ramifications, especially with the possibility of a war looming large in the background. In normal circumstances, the formal recognition of Bangladesh by India—or for that matter, by any other country—would have followed



Lt Gen AAK Niazi, commander of the Pakistan occupational forces in East Pakistan, signs the Instrument of Surrender at the Race Course Ground in Dhaka on December 16, 1971.

Bangladesh and the resultant refugee crisis in India were threatening India's own security. This, she underlined, could trigger a war with disastrous consequences that may not remain confined to the subcontinent. In such a fast emerging situation, restraint on India's part may not remain an option for long, she said. She also made it known that there was no India-Pakistan dispute involved; it was a matter for Pakistan to negotiate with the duly elected political leadership of the Awami League, with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman being the key element in any such negotiations. Pakistan's military leadership, with the connivance of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, was, of course, in no mood for any meaningful

Dhaka coming under the complete control of the Bangladesh government. This actually happened on December 16, when the Pakistan military ignominiously surrendered to the joint forces of the Indian Army and the Bangladesh *Mukti Bahini* on the soil of a free and liberated country. The Indian move was, therefore, a rare exception and was justified by subsequent events.

India according formal recognition to Bangladesh 10 days before the liberation of Dhaka was prompted by a desperate and short-sighted move by Pakistan, who went into a full-scale military action against India in the western sector on December 3, when the Pakistan Air Force fighter jets

carried out a series of bombing raids on a number of Indian cities. Pakistan had, thus, effectively declared a full-scale war on India. The only option left for India under such circumstances was to retaliate, which the Indian military did—and did so with effect—both on the western and the eastern sectors. It was against this backdrop that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's government made the timely and judicious move to accord a formal recognition to Bangladesh on December 6 effectively put all such efforts to rest, and paved the way for the liberation of Bangladesh 10 days later.

In her historic speech on the floor of the Indian Parliament on this day half a century ago, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi heaped praise on the *Mukti Bahini*, the brave sons and daughters of Bangladesh who had made the supreme sacrifice for the liberation of their motherland. She also warmly lauded the political leadership of Bangladesh at the time for the manner in which they managed the state of affairs under such demanding circumstances. Indeed, she was most gracious in her recognition of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, for his indomitable courage and his lifelong dedication and struggle for justice and for the rights of the Bengali people. Mrs Gandhi also believed that the values of democracy, pluralism and human liberty had bonded our two nations together, a bonding that was further reinforced through the shedding of blood on the battlefield for a shared cause.

On the 50th anniversary of this historic event, we recall with profound gratitude the supreme sacrifices of our brave freedom fighters. We also commemorate the sacrifices of the members of the Indian Armed Forces and the leadership, and the people of India for all that they did for 75 million people in a most defining moment in history—a moment whose impact was felt all across the globe.

Shamsheer M Chowdhury, Bir Bikram, is a former foreign secretary of Bangladesh.

A bond that was forged by war



“THIS is my last message. From today, Bangladesh is a sovereign and independent country....,” these words of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman demolished the Pakistan that was created on August 14,

1947 by the British rulers. A new country, Bangladesh, was born out of the remains of East Pakistan at zero hour on March 26, 1971—immediately after the launch of “Operation Searchlight” by the Pakistan Army. However, it took 266 days to liberate Bangladesh from Pakistani occupational forces, who committed unprecedented genocide, killing three million innocent Bangladeshis, while forcing 10 million more to take refuge in India, and raping several

support of the people of India.”

Tajuddin Ahmed, Number Two after Bangabandhu in the Awami League, was flown to Delhi after he crossed over to India. He had meetings with the Indian prime minister on April 4 and 5, 1971 and put forth his plan to form a government, and requested her to accord recognition to sovereign independent Bangladesh. Indira Gandhi's instinctive reaction was giving immediate recognition to independent sovereign Bangladesh, and back its liberation struggle with full military support. However, the then Indian Foreign Minister Sardar Swaran Singh cautioned her that while it was ultimately what India would have to do, it must also ensure that its credibility and political correctness were not questioned. He felt that India could face collective international opposition from greater powers and the United Nations Organisation (UNO) as it could be accused of interfering in the neighbouring country's affairs and fragmenting it. The PM's

Glhosh, welcomed the Mujibnagar government, including members of the national and provincial assemblies, to his big house. This building at Circular Road (now Moulai Road) has become part of the history of the Liberation War. The Mujibnagar government guided the glorious Liberation War with deft skills. AK Roy, a former Indian counsellor in Dhaka who knew all of the senior Awami League leaders, including Bangabandhu and Tajuddin Ahmed, was detailed to liaison with the government. He was assisted by Arundhati Roy, a young Indian Foreign Services officer. There was a complete synchronisation between Bangladesh and Indian governments. Although Bangladesh was not officially recognised yet, all protocols and courtesy were extended to its functionaries by the Indian government.

With the Indian Army's help, more than 100 officers and 96,000 *Mukti Bahini* and *Mujib Bahini* cadres were trained, and three brigade-sized forces—Z, S, and K Forces—three artillery batteries, an air force unit and a naval unit were made ready for war. Under Operation Jackpot, the Indian Army set up seven training-slash-operational sectors, commanded by a brigadier, alphabetically numbered from A to E. In Sector A, located at Murti near Darjeeling, an Officers' Training Wing (OTW) was established, where officers of First and Second War Courses were trained. Among them, Shaheed Captain Sheikh Kamal, son of Bangabandhu and brother of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, was also a cadet.

The *Mujib Bahini* was trained by an establishment that functioned directly under the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW)—where Bangabandhu's second son Shaheed Lieutenant Sheikh Jamal was also trained. Bangladesh was divided into eleven operational sectors, of which 10 were deployed on the ground under the command of senior Bangladeshi majors and lieutenant colonels. And one sector operated directly under the command of Bangladesh C-in-C Col MAG Osmani.

On November 30, 1971, the joint command of Bangladesh and Indian forces was formed under Lt Gen JS Aurora. There was complete cohesion between the Indian Army and *Mukti Bahini*. As the final battle for Bangladesh's liberation was going on from December 3, a fierce diplomatic war was taking place in the UNO and Washington, DC. Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury represented the Bangladesh government in New York. Speaking in parliament on December 6, Indira Gandhi gave a brief background of Bangladesh's struggle, starting from the creation of Pakistan in 1947, and then proclaimed, “I am glad to inform the House that in the light of the existing situation and in response to the repeated requests of the Government of Bangladesh, the Government of India have, after most careful consideration, decided to grant recognition to the *Gana Prajatantrik* Bangladesh (People's Republic of Bangladesh). It is our hope that with the passage of time, more nations will grant recognition and that *Gana Prajatantrik* Bangladesh will soon form the part of the family of nations. Our thoughts at this moment are with the father of this new state—Sheikh Mujibur Rehman. I am sure this House would wish me to convey to their excellences the acting president and the prime minister and to their colleagues our greetings and

facilitations.” The announcement was greeted by unprecedented applause by the then members of the Indian Parliament. On December 16, 1971, at 1701 hours in Bangladesh standard time, Dhaka became the free capital of a free country. The Bangladesh government moved to Dhaka on December 22, 1971. It was one of the most momentous events in the nine-month saga of a struggle for freedom, all of which had been spent in ensuring that liberty came to define the global position of the Bengali nation through a spirited Liberation War. The triumphant return of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

to a sovereign Bangladesh on January 10, 1972 was yet another landmark in history.

Today, as both countries celebrate the 50th anniversary of establishing diplomatic ties, their relationship is at its zenith. However, some irritants like river water-sharing, etc still linger, which must be resolved as a priority, because the destinies of the two countries are intertwined due to geographical, historical and cultural compulsions.

RP Singh, VSM, is a retired brigadier of the Indian Army, and a veteran of the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War, in which he was involved in different capacities from day one till the surrender of the Pakistan Army on December 16, 1971.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi played a key role in gathering support for the people of Bangladesh in the international community during the Liberation War in 1971.

hundred thousands of Bangladeshi women, alongside running a campaign of arson, looting and destruction of infrastructures. On March 31, 1971, the Indian Parliament passed a historic resolution moved by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, pledging whole-hearted support to the people of Bangladesh in their struggle for independence. The resolution concluded, “... This House records its profound conviction that the historic upsurge of the 75 million people of East Bengal will triumph. The House wishes to assure them that their struggle and sacrifices will receive the whole-hearted sympathy and

Secretary PN Haksar supported Swaran Singh. Mrs Gandhi did not commit about recognition, but she assured Tajuddin Ahmed that India would allow the Bangladesh government to function on the Indian soil and would provide the wherewithal for its functioning.

On April 17, 1971, the first government of sovereign independent Bangladesh was sworn in in a liberated area which was called Mujibnagar. The new Bangladesh government was located at 8 Theatre Road (now Shakespeare Sarani) in Kolkata, although it was claimed that it was functioning from liberated areas. A prominent citizen of Kolkata, Ashutosh

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার	
বাংলাদেশ চলচ্চিত্র ও টেলিভিশন ইনস্টিটিউট	
তথ্য ও সম্প্রচার মন্ত্রণালয়	
অস্থায়ী কার্যালয়ঃ জাতীয় গণমাধ্যম ইনস্টিটিউট ভবন	
১২৫/এ, দারুস সালাম, এ. ডব্লিউ. চৌধুরী রোড, ঢাকা-১২১৬	
ই-মেইলঃ bctibd2013@gmail.com ওয়েবসাইটঃ www.bcti.gov.bd	
নথি নং-বাচটেই-২২৪/অডিট(সিএ)/২০১৪/অংশ-২/১৭৮৬২ তারিখঃ ২৫ নভেম্বর, ২০২১	
অডিট পরিচালনার জন্য অডিট ফর্ম নিয়োগের কোটেশন বিজ্ঞপ্তি	
০১ মন্ত্রণালয়	তথ্য ও সম্প্রচার মন্ত্রণালয়।
০২ দপ্তর/সংস্থা	বাংলাদেশ চলচ্চিত্র ও টেলিভিশন ইনস্টিটিউট (বিসিটিআই)।
০৩ সেবা গ্রহণকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের নাম ও ঠিকানা	প্রধান নির্বাহী বাংলাদেশ চলচ্চিত্র ও টেলিভিশন ইনস্টিটিউট (বিসিটিআই) অস্থায়ী কার্যালয়ঃ জাতীয় গণমাধ্যম ইনস্টিটিউট ১২৫/এ, দারুস সালাম, এ. ডব্লিউ. চৌধুরী রোড, ঢাকা-১২১৬।
০৪ সেবা গ্রহণ পদ্ধতি	Request for Quotation (RFO)
০৫ সেবার সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণ	‘বাংলাদেশ চলচ্চিত্র ও টেলিভিশন ইনস্টিটিউট আইন, ২০১৩’ এর ১৭(৪) ধারা মোতাবেক চার্টার্ড একাউন্টেন্ট কর্তৃক ২০২০-২০২১ অর্থ বছরের যাবতীয় আর্থিক লেনদেনের হিসাব (প্রায় ২.৪৩ কোটি) নিরীক্ষা এবং এ সংক্রান্ত প্রতিবেদন প্রদান।
০৬ বাজেট এবং অর্থের উৎস	রাজস্ব খাত।
০৭ কোটেশন প্রস্তাব দাখিলের স্থান, সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	২২ ডিসেম্বর ২০২১, বুধবার, সময়ঃ বিকাল ০৫:০০ ঘটিকা।
০৮ কোটেশন প্রস্তাব উন্মুক্তকরণের তারিখ ও সময়	২৩ ডিসেম্বর ২০২১, বৃহস্পতিবার, সময়ঃ সকাল ১০:০০ ঘটিকা।
০৯ কোটেশন প্রস্তাব মূল্যায়নের তারিখ ও সময়	২৩ ডিসেম্বর ২০২১, বৃহস্পতিবার, সময়ঃ সকাল ১০:৩০ ঘটিকা।
১০ কোটেশনকারীর যোগ্যতা	Bangladesh Chartered Accounts Order, 1973 (P.O. No. 2 of 1973) Article 2(1)(b) তে সংজ্ঞায়িত চার্টার্ড একাউন্টেন্ট হিসেবে যোগ্যতা।
১১ কোটেশন প্রস্তাবের সাথে যেসব কাগজপত্র জমা দিতে হবে	ক. হালনাগাদকৃত ট্রেড লাইসেন্স এর সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি। খ. কর সনদের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি। গ. ভ্যাট সনদের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি। ঘ. ব্যাংক সলভেন্সি সার্টিফিকেটের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি।
১২ বিশেষ নির্দেশাবলীঃ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন/সকল কোটেশন গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন। কোটেশনের দর অংকে এবং কথায় লিখতে হবে ও মোট টাকা উল্লেখ করতে হবে। বিল হতে সরকারি বিধি মোতাবেক ভ্যাট/টি্য্স কর্তন করা হবে। এই কোটেশনের সকল কার্যক্রম ‘The Public Procurement Act-2006’ ও ‘The Public Procurement Regulation-2008’ মোতাবেক পরিচালিত হবে।	
মোঃ আবুল কালাম আজাদ প্রধান নির্বাহী বাংলাদেশ চলচ্চিত্র ও টেলিভিশন ইনস্টিটিউট জিডি-২২৪৩ টেলিফোনঃ ০২-৫৫০৭৯৪০০	