

PRESIDENT
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
DHAKA

Message

August 15 is a scandalous chapter in the history of the Bengali nation. On this fateful night of 1975, the undisputed leader and the greatest Bangalee of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was brutally assassinated at his Dhammondi residence by a group of killers with the direct and indirect connivance of anti-liberation forces. His wife Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatun Nessa Mujib, sons Sheikh Kamal, Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russel, and many of his near and dear ones were also killed along with Bangabandhu. On the 47th martyrdom anniversary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and National Mourning Day, I pay my deep homage to them and pray to the Almighty Allah for the eternal peace of the departed souls.

Bangabandhu was a visionary leader of the Bengali Nation and the architect of our Independence. He led the nation at every democratic and freedom movements including the 'All-party State language Action Committee' formed to ensure the right to mother-tongue in 1948, the historic Language Movement in 1952, Juktafront Election in 1954, the movement against Martial Law in 1958, the movement against anti-people Education Commission in 1962, Six-Point Movement in 1966, Mass Uprising in 1969 and the General Elections in 1970, all of which were directed towards realizing Bangalees' emancipation and their rights. For this, he had to embrace jail several times. Bangabandhu was uncompromising in establishing fundamental human rights and independence. He, even on the gallows, upheld the interest of Bangla and Bangalees. Ignoring the blood-curdling eyes of the then Pakistani rulers, Bangabandhu delivered a historic speech on '07 March in 1971 before a mammoth gathering at the then Race Course Maidan. With unique eloquence and political wisdom, Bangabandhu, combining the emotions, dreams and aspirations of Bangalees in a single thread, thunderously uttered, "The struggle this time is the struggle for emancipation, the struggle this time is the struggle for Independence" which was, in fact, the call for Independence. In line with this historic speech, he finally declared the 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. Bangabandhu has made an outstanding contribution in establishing world peace along with equality, friendship and democracy throughout his life. He was a symbol of independence and ambassador of freedom for oppressed and exploited people in the world.

Addressing the Non-Aligned Conference in Algiers on September 9, 1973, he said, "The world today is divided into two-- the exploiters and the exploited: I am on the side of the exploited". Bangabandhu is no longer with us, but his principles and ideals will always inspire the freedom-seeking people to attain their rights and the mass awakening against exploitation and oppression around the world. The assassins killed the Father of the Nation but could not erase his principles and ideals. Bangabandhu will remain an eternal source of inspiration not only for millions of Bangalees in this country, but also for freedom-seeking people of the world.

Bangabandhu has struggled throughout his life with the aim of achieving political freedom as well as economic emancipation of the people. His dream was to establish a 'Golden Bangla' free from hunger and poverty. For this purpose, a people-oriented constitution was formulated within one year of Independence. Bangabandhu did not just give us a country; He also formulated a contemporary outline of what the economic, social, political and cultural structure of a newly independent state would look like.

Bangabandhu always had trust and faith in his people. He used to give most importance to the united and joint efforts of the people to achieve development and self-reliance. Bangladesh is moving forward with the aim of building a self-reliant country on the path shown by Bangabandhu, under the able leadership of his worthy daughter Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. She announced 'Vision 2041' to turn Bangladesh into a developed and prosperous country. Padma Bridge, a unique milestone in the development of Bangladesh, has already been opened for traffic. Metro rail, Karnaphuli Tunnel and other mega projects will be completed very soon and a new chapter in the development history of Bangladesh will be introduced. Our responsibility will be to make Bangladesh a happy and prosperous country by completing Bangabandhu's incomplete task by being enriched with knowledge and dignity. Only then will proper respect be shown to this great leader. On the National Mourning Day, let us transform our grief into strength and devote ourselves to build the 'Sonar Bangla' as dreamt by the Father of the Nation.

Joi Bangla.
Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.
Md. Abdul HamidHistory could have been different if I could leave Dhaka
Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Bir Bikram

Today is 15 August, a scandalous day for the nation. On this day in 1975, we lost our greatest leader, the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. He was scheduled to attend the convocation ceremony of Dhaka University in the morning. There were therefore sounds of preparation in schools, colleges and universities all over the country – let us all go to Dhaka University, make Bangabandhu's meeting successful. But ultimately he could not come to the university. Bangabandhu was killed on that dark night along with his family members. The soul of Bangladesh was thus extinguished.

The then president of Dhaka city Awami League Gazi Golam Mostafa, general secretary Mozaffar Hossain Paltu and I Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya were assigned responsibilities for making the 15 August program orderly and successful. We held threadbare discussions at the office of Dhaka City Awami League at Purana Paltan on the previous 14 August night on how to make the program successful. At the same time, we were waiting for the instructions of Gazi Bhai. He later talked to us towards 11 pm at night about our responsibilities. The next moment, Gazi Bhai ordered me and Pahari to accompany him. We did not know where we were heading to. He told us to climb the car. We got inside the vehicle of the chairman of Red Crescent Society. The vehicle went to Bangabandhu's Dhammondi road-32 residence and stopped in front of it. We then went inside Bangabandhu's house. Gazi Bhai told us to sit in the ground floor and take tea while he went upstairs to meet Bangabandhu. We remained seated in the ground floor as per his instruction. After some time, Gazi Bhai came down speedily and told us, 'Let's go'.

I and Pahari went to the TSC towards 12.30 midnight to observe the preparations for the gathering. On seeing me, many students rose and told me after coming near, Sheikh Kamal Bhai had arrived in TSC. We became cheerful on hearing this and went inside. We saw Sheikh Kamal Bhai holding a preparatory meeting at TSC with hundreds of students. He rose on seeing me and then embraced me. Both I and Kamal learned playing Sitar from the same teacher. We used to play Sitar together. We also indulged in gossiping sessions at the Spandan group of artists established by him. There existed close friendship between us. On seeing us, Sheikh Kamal wanted to know what tasks we were assigned exactly. I replied, the City Awami League had been instructed to remain present from PG Hospital (currently Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University) up to the varsity campus. We took tea and snacks together. While departing, I asked him, 'Won't you go now?' Kamal replied, 'No, I won't go. I shall stay at TSC with the students'. I later came to know that Bangabandhu had asked him to return home on that night. If Kamal had stayed back at TSC on that night, then history might have been different today.

I reached home from TSC towards 2 am. I asked my wife Reena and grandma to wake me up towards the time of Fajr prayer. I had to go to Bangabandhu's gathering. After that, I went to sleep. But after some time, my grandma came inside flabbergasted and told me, 'Get up, some people are saying over radio that they have killed Bangabandhu'. On hearing this, I rose from my bed by jumping up and opened the radio quickly. I then heard the voice of the murderer Major Dalim, 'We have killed Bangabandhu. Now Mostaq is the president'. I shivered on hearing this, and sat down in silence. No words were coming out from my throat. It seemed as if someone was choking my throat. But I could not believe at all that Bangabandhu had been killed. Becoming very anxious to know the truth, I went out on to the road riding my 50 cc Honda. When I was going towards Bangabandhu's residence from the side of the university after emerging from the capital's Chankarpool area, I saw that people were assembled at different spots and whispering among themselves. And people were also listening to the radio if there was one in any tea-shop.

The city of Dhaka had gone silent. On moving farther, I saw uniformed army-men standing with tanks with their faces turned towards Gulistan. Some of the people recognized me. They said, 'Maya Bhai, please don't go farther. The army-people have surrounded the place, they are saying on television that Bangabandhu has been killed'. Army-men were saying, 'Go away, move', they were chasing away people in this manner. When people advanced a bit, the army-men chased them again. On seeing this, I turned back and moved away from the place. I decided instantaneously, let me first communicate with other top leaders of the party. At that time, Mahbub Bhai was the SP of Dhaka. Paltu Bhai and Mahbub Bhai used to live in the same house. I was the general secretary of Wari Union Awami League, and executive committee member of the City Awami League at that juncture. Sardar Enayet was the president. As the sun was rising, I entered Purana Paltan and saw people assembled there. When I knocked on the doors of Paltu Bhai's house, the guard said, 'Maya Bhai, where are you going?' I said, 'I will meet Paltu Bhai'. He told me that Paltu Bhai and Mahbub Bhai had gone out at dawn. I then thought of going to the house of Gazi Bhai at Paltan. On exiting the gate, I met Paltu Bhai's friend Osman. He asked, 'Where are you going?' I replied, 'Gazi Bhai's house'. He said, 'Don't go there. Army-people have surrounded the house; I heard he went out of the house in the morning; there is nobody in the house'.

I therefore returned to my residence from there. On coming back, I found that the same words were being repeated on television: 'Bangabandhu has been killed,

15 August
The National Mourning Day
2022

Khondaker Mostaq is the president'. And the officials were issuing one statement after another declaring their allegiance to him. My mind could not rest at home. There was a strange feeling. Much of it was restlessness. I again went out. While debating inside my mind where I should go, I went to the house of Jagannath College teacher Amjad sir. I did not return home at night, I stayed back there. I went out the next day on 16 August morning. At that time, the national leader A H M Qamaruzzaman Hena Bhai was the president of Bangladesh Awami League. M A Aziz was the last president of Muktiyoddha Sangsad, and I was the general secretary. The murderers had linkages beforehand with some pseudo freedom fighters around that time. In



that situation, Naeem and Mahfuz left the committee of Muktiyoddha Sangsad and issued injunctions against us. We later gave reply to that. I suddenly remembered about M A Aziz Bhai. We then met and went together to Matin Bhai's house. But we learnt on reaching there that he had gone to his village-home in Manikganj out of fear.

We then went to Hena Bhai's house. He was the works minister. On reaching there, we found him sitting there silently. We thought he was feeling some pressure inside. He had no communications with anybody else during the previous one and a half day. And Bhabi was also not present in the house; she had gone to her father's village home with children. On seeing us, Hena Bhai embraced us and started to cry loudly. We also cried. Hena Bhai said, 'You please take me to the other bank'. Aziz Bhai was then sent to the Lalkuthi of Sadarghat. No boat could be arranged on that day. We went there again and rented a boat for going to Eliotganj of Cumilla at a fare of Taka 800. Later, when we went to Hena Bhai's house, he said, 'How can I go now,

PRIME MINISTER
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH

Message

The 15 August is our National Mourning Day. On this day in 1975, the Greatest Bangalee of all time, Father of the Nation, President 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 Fazilatun Nessa Mujib, three sons – valiant Freedom Fighter Captain Sheikh Kamal, valiant Freedom Fighter Lieutenant Sheikh Jamal and 10-year old Sheikh Russel, two daughters-in-law Sultana Kamal and Rosy Jamal, brother valiant Freedom Fighter Sheikh Abu Naser, youth leader valiant Freedom Fighter Sheikh Fazlul Haq Moni and his pregnant wife Arzu Moni, peasant leader valiant Freedom Fighter Abdul Rab Serniabat, his daughter Baby Serniabat, son Arif Serniabat, nephew journalist Shaheed Serniabat, grandson Sukanta Babu, and Abdul Naycem Khan Rintu among others, were assassinated by the heinous killers on that fateful night. President's Military Secretary Brigadier General Jamil, and on duty ASI of Special Branch of Police Siddiqui Rahman were also murdered. Several members of a family died in the capital's Moham-madpur area by artillery shells fired by the killers on the day. On this National Mourning Day, I humbly 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 subjugation and snatched away our great Independence. The anti-liberation clique killed Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib at a time when he was engaged in the struggle of building a Golden Bangladesh by reconstructing the war-ravaged country. Through the murder of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib, the defeated forces of the Liberation War made ill-attempts to ruin the tradition, culture and advancement of the Bangalee Nation. The aim of the killers was to break the state structure of a 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 Sheikh Mujib murder by promulgating Indemnity Ordinance. Ziaur Rahman illegally took over the state power; promulgated Martial Law; suspended democracy; tailored the Constitution; rewarded the killers and gave them jobs in the Bangladesh missions abroad. He gave nationality to the anti-liberation war criminals; made them partners in the state power and rehabilitated them politically and socially. The subsequent illegal military government and the BNP-Jamaat alliance government followed the same path.

Bangladesh Awami League assumed the state power after 21 years, winning the general elections on 12 June 1996. We initiated the trial of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib murder. But the BNP-Jamaat alliance government stopped this trial after assuming to power in 2001 through conspiracy. The countrymen elected Awami League to power again with a huge majority in the 9th parliamentary elections on 29 December 2008. Overcoming the stalemates left by the previous BNP-Jamaat government and global economic recession, we put the country on a firm economic footing. During the past thirteen and a half years, we have achieved desired advancement in every sector. During this period, Bangladesh has attained the status of a developing nation. Bangladesh has become a role model of socio-economic development in the world. Our government has relentlessly been working to turn Bangladesh into a developed country by 2041.

Thwarting all kinds of conspiracies, we have completed execution of the verdict of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman murder case. The nation got rid of the stigma through the execution of the verdict. Hopefully, names of those who were behind the conspiracy to assassinate the Father of the Nation will also come out one day. The trial of the killers of four national leaders has also been completed. The verdicts of the cases against the 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 illegally and unconstitutionally has been stopped through the 15th amendment to the Constitution.

Though the killers were able to murder Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib, they could not kill his dreams and ideals. But the anti-liberation communal groups and the anti-democracy forces have still been hatching conspiracies by different means. I urge all to resist any conspiracy and ill-attempt by the evil forces to protect the continuation of democracy and development of the country.

Let's turn our grief of losing Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib into our strength. Let's build a non-communal, hunger-poverty-free prosperous Golden Bangladesh as dreamt by the Father of the Nation through reflecting the glory and ideals of his long struggling life in our actions; this should be our firm pledge on this National Mourning Day.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.
Sheikh Hasina

they took those and said, 'Come with us, the SP has summoned you at Suhrawardy Udyan'. I climbed on the police vehicle.

As the vehicle entered Suhrawardy Udyan with me inside, the sound of the call to Fajr prayers could be heard. On reaching, I saw some people sitting there including Pahari, Anwar Jung MP, and the country's first finance minister Khondaker Asaduzzaman. Asaduzzaman was shouting in abusive language, 'Why have you brought me here? Do you know me? I shall show you ...' etc. After that, the MP of Manikganj Delwar, and Qamaruzzaman Bhai were brought. The number of detained people continued to rise. Lastly, Mansur Ali, Tajuddin Ahmad and Syed

The Martyrs of 15 August



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman



Sheikh Kamal



Sheikh Jamal



Sheikh Russel



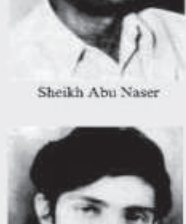
Sultana Kamal



Parvin Jamal Rosy



Begum Fazilatunessa



Sheikh Abu Naser



Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni



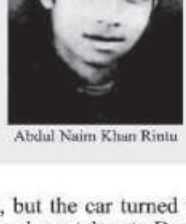
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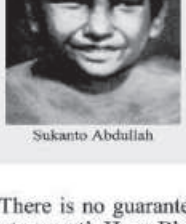
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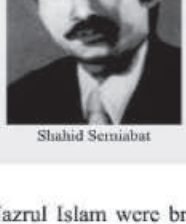
Baby Serniabat



Abdul Naim Khan Rintu



Sukanto Abdullah



Shahid Serniabat



Arif Serniabat



Col. Jamiluddin Ahmed

your bhabi was coming with two daughters, but the car turned turtle. There is no guarantee whether they will survive. All the injured have been taken to Bogura cantonment'. Hena Bhai added, 'You please wait. We all shall go after they recover'. We therefore could not go after facing this debacle. When we next went to Hena Bhai's house for the third day, we could not enter. The army-men had taken possession of the house, and Hena Bhai was not there. Later, the guard of that house took us secretly to a double-storied house opposite the Dhammondi Lake. On seeing us there, Hena Bhai again cried. He said, 'Please wait for your bhabi and children for two more days. We shall go by taking them along'. We consented and then came back. When we again went to that house on the night of 20 August to meet Hena Bhai, the guard informed, 'Sir has been taken to his previous home by army people, and he is now under house arrest'.

We saw on 22 August night that Mansur Ali Bhai was giving an interview on television. He had been arrested. I was reading a book on learning how to offer Namaz after going to Amjad sir's house on the night of Shabe Barat on 23 August. While I was reading that book, I saw on one page that it was good to offer prayers together with the family on that night. I then went home to offer prayers there. After taking bath, I went to the High Court Mazar to visit and pray at my mother's grave. But finding a crowd, I did not go to the grave and instead returned to my Narinda residence towards 3.30 am late at night. As the women of the house were offering prayers then, I did not go inside the house. I sat outside on a stool. After the prayers were over, I lied down on my bed. But before Fajr, my grandma came and said the police have surrounded the house. I saw that they were roaming around in lines. There were army jeeps in front, and policemen on the rear-gate. Consequently, there was no scope for fleeing. They then knocked on the door and asked grandma, 'Where is Mr. Maya?' She replied, 'Inside'. Then I asked who they were. They said, 'Are you Maya?' I replied, 'Yes'. They then said, 'We shall come inside'. They then entered and looked at everything by going round. They later asked, 'Don't you have any arms?' I replied, 'Yes'. They then asked, 'Do you have licence?' I replied, 'Yes'. After that,

Nazrul Islam were brought in. In this way, 21 people were taken there on 23 August. We were all sitting; meanwhile we saw that Major Dalim was coming. Immediately after entering, he said, 'Stand up'. We all stood up. Only Mr. Tajuddin was sitting. He wanted to know our names. Everybody uttered their names out of fear. After some time, we saw a carpenter getting inside. A police acquaintance whispered in the ears of Nazrul Bhai, 'A court will be set up here. You will be tried and sentenced here'. We were all praying to Allah. Meanwhile, a wooden court-room was set up. The day seemed to be very long. In the meantime, an Additional SP entered and said, 'You will all be sent to jail'. Two micro-buses then came to take us to prison. While climbing the micro-bus, I saw that a brother-in-law of Bangabandhu was also brought. He was tortured after detention. We entered the jail towards 2.45 pm on 23 August. I was arrested on 23 August 1975, and came out of jail on 23 November 1977 after filing a writ petition in the High Court. Of course it is true that I got release from the jail. But once I was set free, I found that the power of my beloved country was in the hands of a new autocrat. A new struggle-days of sorrow and pain began. After so much struggle, the freedom of the people finally came in 1996 by the hand of the incumbent Prime Minister, the heir to the blood of Father of the Nation. Father, till today I survive as a humble worker of your ideals. I would like to stay as a worker forever. On this day, I pray for salvation of the departed souls of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and other martyrs who had embraced martyrdom on 15 August. ■

(The writer is a presidium member of Bangladesh Awami League, and former minister for disaster management and relief.)

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