



**"This is outrageous and makes it intentional to obstruct lifesaving assistance during a man made famine."**  
UNRWA head Philippe Lazzarini slams Israel's decision to bar aid convoys to north Gaza

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## Plotters are still out to undermine sovereignty

Says Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the conspiracy to undermine the independence and sovereignty of the country and to thwart the desire for economic emancipation has not stopped even today.

The unpleasant truth is that "the conspirators are still lurking to figure out how to stop the ongoing progress of Bangladesh", she said during her televised address to the nation on the eve of Independence Day.

She said the forces defeated in 1971 and the perpetrators of the 1975 massacre and their collaborators are hell-bent on revenge. The conspirators will strike whenever they get a chance.

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People hold a candle-light vigil at Jagannath Hall around midnight to commemorate the dark night of March 25, 1971, when the Pakistani forces swooped on unarmed Bangalees in a brutal attempt to crush their struggle for freedom.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## 'Joy Bangla': The making of a people's slogan

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

"Joy Bangla" was never just a political slogan.

The two words, which translate to "Victory to Bangla", were the symbol of spirit, unity, patriotism and aspiration in shaping the destiny of the Bangalees.

The iconic slogan played an integral role in the freedom-loving Bangalees' fight against the blatant exploitation, injustice and discrimination of the West Pakistan rulers.

### INDEPENDENCE DAY TODAY

It consequently helped accelerate the birth of Bangladesh, which proudly observes its 54th Independence Day today.

Although "Joy Bangla" became the slogan of the masses in the late 1960s and was the battle cry during the 1971 Liberation War, its etymology goes back over a century, according to historical documents.

In 1922, when the nationalist movement against the colonial British rulers was raging in India, Rebel Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam coined the words in a poem named "Purna Abhinandan".

Nazrul, who was later named Bangladesh's national poet, wrote it when he was in jail in Baharampur, now

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### INDOMITABLE MARCH

## Bangabandhu declares independence

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

March 26, 1971

Just before his arrest, Bangabandhu sent a message declaring the independence of Bangladesh. This message was broadcast from Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro on March 26, 1971 and was widely reported in newspapers around the world.

"This may be my last message, from today Bangladesh is independent. I call upon the people of Bangladesh wherever you might be and with whatever you have, to resist the army of occupation to the last. Your fight must go on until the last soldier of the Pakistan occupation army is expelled from the soil of Bangladesh and final victory is achieved."

Meanwhile, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who was arrested, was taken to an unknown place in the evening.

#### YAHYA'S BROADCAST

In a radio broadcast at 7:00pm today, Pakistan president Yahya Khan addressed the nation

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Bangladesh's birth was a long and bloody affair. Although an independent Bangladesh was born through the declaration of independence by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the early hours of March 26, 1971, the first seeds of independence were sown decades earlier. Today we run the **second installment of a three-part special series** that looks back at some of the events in the 1960s that laid the groundwork before the final push for liberation.

## CHRONICLING BANGLADESH'S BIRTH Tumultuous 1960s

AHMAD ISTIAK

In the early 1960s, another covert group codenamed "Nucleus" emerged in the scene to further the cause of an independent Bangladesh alongside the Inner Group, East Bengal Liberation Front, and Apurba Sangsad.

The Nucleus, whose full name was "Swadhin Bangla Biplobi Parishad", was basically a small group within Chhatra League, Awami League's student front.

This group had three main organisers -- Chhatra League general secretary Serajul Alam Khan, deputy general secretary Abdur Razzaq, and its Dhaka metropolitan unit president Kazi Aref Ahmed, according to Mohiuddin Ahmed's "Pratinayak"

WAPDA MASSACRE: MEMORIES STILL HAUNT SURVIVORS 53 YEARS LATER - PAGE 3

and Morshed S Hasan's "Swadhinatar Potobhumi: 1960 Doshok".

The idea of Nucleus emerged in 1962, but its formal structure wasn't finalised until 1964. Initially, it focused on strengthening the Chhatra League. Kazi Aref Ahmed disseminated the group's ideology within the Chhatra League, Abdur Razzaq handled member recruitment, and Serajul Alam Khan provided training on political theory to its new members.



AL activists rally support for the six-point movement in Dhaka on June 7, 1966.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman sanctioned all Nucleus activities. Upon joining, its members received a leaflet outlining the Nucleus' goals, objectives, and guerilla warfare tactics, according to "Pratinayak".

By 1969, Nucleus committees had already been formed in some 200 police

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## 1971 GENOCIDE 'Take steps to ensure global recognition'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Freedom fighters and families of martyrs yesterday demanded quick and effective government steps to have the 1971 genocide internationally recognised.

They demanded Jamaat-e-Islami, Razakar, and Al-Badr be immediately tried at the International Crimes Tribunal in Bangladesh. They also want Pakistanis involved in war crimes brought to book.

The demands were made during the "Dark Night Rally and Procession of Light" programme at the Central Shaheed Minar. Ekattorer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee organised the programme.

Meanwhile, the Communist Party of Bangladesh demanded that March 25 be recognised as International Genocide Day. The CPB last night held a candle-light vigil and a rally at Shikha Chirantan in Suhrawardy Udyan. It also called for an end to communal politics.

At the Central Shaheed

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## UNSC adopts resolution for Gaza ceasefire

Israel cancels delegation's US visit as US abstains from voting

REUTERS, Cairo

The United Nations Security Council demanded an immediate ceasefire between Israel and the Hamas yesterday as Israeli forces carried out new airstrikes in Gaza and laid siege to two hospitals.

After vetoing three earlier draft council resolutions on the war in the Gaza Strip, Israel's main ally, the United States, abstained in the vote following global pressure for a ceasefire to ease fears of famine after nearly six months of war.

Hamas welcomed the resolution, which also demanded the unconditional release of all hostages seized by the militant group in its Oct 7 raid on southern Israel.

Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said Israel could not stop its war on Hamas while there were still hostages in Gaza.

"We will operate against Hamas everywhere - including in places where we have not yet been," his ministry quoted him as saying ahead of talks in the US "We have no moral right to stop the war while there are still hostages held in Gaza."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whose relationship with Washington has been strained by the ferocity of the offensive, said the US failure to veto the proposal was a "clear retreat" from its previous position.

He said he would not now follow through on plans to send a delegation to Washington to discuss a planned Israeli military operation in the southern Gaza city of Rafah. The White House said Netanyahu's

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Bhutanese King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and Queen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

# মহান স্বাধীনতা দিবস

সংগ্রামের প্রতিটি ধাপ পেরিয়ে, স্বাধীনতা দীপ্ত পায়ে দাঁড়িয়ে

ডাক বিভাগ বাংলাদেশ

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