

# Bengal's revolutionary journey through SLOGANS

**Political activism and slogans are inherently intertwined, as external forces — ranging from British rulers to Pakistani oppressors — have perpetually threatened Bangali nationalism. The people of Bengal have consistently fought for their land and national identity, fostering profound cultural resilience.**

DOWEL BISWAS

A closer examination of Bangalis' political resistance reveals that movements have historically centered around rice grains and land ownership. Whenever oppressive forces sought to seize their land or crops, Bangalis mounted fierce resistance, compelling even the most formidable adversaries to retreat. Throughout this revolutionary journey, Bangalis have adopted political catchphrases or slogans capable of mobilising thousands in times of national crisis.

From *Joy Bangla* to *Hok Kolorob*, slogans have emerged spontaneously or been meticulously crafted to address national emergencies. These rallying cries, voiced in public assemblies, reverberate through history, immortalising the voices of unsung heroes for generations to come.

Arguably, the most significant slogan in the subcontinent's history, marking the inception of cross-cultural nationalism, was *Bharat* (India), introduced through Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's *Vande Mataram* from the novel *Anandamath* (1882).

This revolutionary song, presented at the 12th annual congress session of the INC in Calcutta in 1896, ignited Bangalis' pursuit of freedom and their unique path of asserting national needs

unite people leading up to the Partition of Bengal in 1947.

Mahatma Gandhi's *Bharat Chhoro Andolan* (Quit India Movement) in 1942, followed by Subhas Chandra Bose's proclamation of *Give Me Blood, and I Promise You Freedom* in 1944, exemplified the power of resistance and shaped Bengal's national identity.

Slogans such as *Keu Khabe Keu Khabe na, Ta Hobe Na, Ta Hobe Na* (1956) and *Ye Azadi Jhoota Hai* (1948) contributed to Bangalis' journey towards eventual independence, culminating in the Language Movement of 1952. This movement, marked by the mass killing of students on February 21, led to the recognition of Bangla as a state language, fueling nationwide resistance against Pakistani oppression.

In subsequent years, slogans like *Nurul Islamer Kolla Chai* (1953) and *Khete Dao Noile Godi Chhere Dao* (1956) voiced the unified aspiration for an independent Bangladesh, while the 1962 East Pakistan Education Movement introduced enduringly resonant slogans like *Jwalo Re Jwalo, Agun Jwalo*.

In 1966, while presenting his historical Six Point Movement, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman historically said to one of the Pakistani

through slogans.

In 1937, following provincial autonomy, *Sher-e-Bangla* AK Fazlul Huq, through his *Krishak Praja Party*, popularised slogans like *Langol Jar Jomi Tar* and *Gham Jar Daam Tar*, aiming to

officials, "Actually, we only want one thing (sovereign, independent state), I just broken it down to six points for your (Pakistan) betterment." At that time, slogans such as *Bangalir Dabi Chhoi-Dofa*, and *Bachar Dabi Chhoi-Dofa*, presented the Bangali people with a unique sense of self and nationalism, where their leader Sheikh Mujib, could present and negotiate the terms for his countrymen.

The latter history is marked by the incessant imprisonment of national leaders and the people's consistent resistance to free their countrymen and their country from Pakistani oppressors. During that period (1968-1971), slogans such as *Jago Jago Bangali Jago, Jail Er Tala Bhangbo*, *Sheikh Mujib Ke Anbo*, *Mittha Mamma Tule Nao*, *Greftar Dharpakor Chobena*, *Songbadpotrer Shadhinota Chai*, *Rajbondider Mukti Chai*, *Pradeshik Shwayottoshashon Dite Hobe*, and *Tumi Ke Ami Ke, Bangali, Bangali* were the motto of the masses and political activists.

The evolution of slogans somewhat transcended into brutal ones with belligerent catchphrases like *Krishak Sramik Astra Dhoro*, *Jonogonotantra Kayem Koro* and *Ayub Monayem Dui Bhai, Ek Dorite Fasi Chai*. The popularisation of *Joy Bangla* in 1971 by Bangabandhu symbolised the nation's unity in the quest for independence from Pakistan.

During the 1970-71 period, slogans derived from Bangabandhu's addresses, such as *Ghore Ghore Durgo Gore Tolo* and *Mukti Bahini Gother Koro*, became the central anthem of Bangali people leading up to the War of Liberation of 1971.

When analysing slogans in relation to politics and Bangladesh's journey towards independence, it is evident how they are intricately connected to our national journey as a nation. Slogans were never merely catchphrases to prove a political point; in the case of our independence, they emerged spontaneously as an immediate necessity.



PHOTOS: COLLECTED



## NEWS

### World leaders send greetings

FROM PAGE 12  
and prosperous Indo-Pacific region and they look forward to enhancing the relationship and the people-to-people ties between the two countries in the years ahead.

Indian President Droupadi Murmu in a letter to President Mohammed Shahabuddin conveyed her warmest greetings to the people of Bangladesh. She highlighted the qualitative transformation in the India-Bangladesh relations over the last decade with remarkable growth in diverse areas. She also expressed confidence that the leadership of the two countries will continue towards further strengthening of people-to-people links between the two countries.

Chinese President Xi Jinping in a letter to President Mohammed Shahabuddin noted that over the past 53 years, Bangladesh has steadfastly upheld its independence, strived to develop its economy and improve people's livelihood, and made remarkable achievements, laying a solid foundation for realising the dream of a "Shonar Bangla".

Xi pointed out that the traditional friendship between China and Bangladesh has grown from strength to strength and in recent years have enjoyed solid and profound political trust, and fruitful practical cooperation in various fields, bringing tangible benefits to the two peoples.

He added that he stands ready to work with his Bangladeshi counterpart to further advance the high-quality Belt and Road Cooperation and deepen China-Bangladesh Strategic Partnership of Cooperation.

Chinese Premier of the State Council Li Qiang and Foreign Minister Wang Yi also sent separate congratulatory messages to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud.

In telegram messages to President Shahabuddin and PM Hasina, Russian President Vladimir Putin said Russian-Bangladeshi relations have been traditionally developing in the spirit of friendship.

"I am convinced that through mutual efforts we will contribute to

their further development for the benefit of our peoples and in the interests of stronger regional security and stability."

Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin also sent a congratulatory telegram to Hasina, wishing her sound health, well-being and new achievements; and to friendly Bangladeshi people, happiness and prosperity.

The Australian High Commission in Bangladesh on its X handle said they look forward to continue to work together closely to help shape a region that is open, stable, and prosperous.

UK High Commissioner Sarah Cooke said it is a very special day for Bangladesh and "an opportunity to reflect and remember."

Canadian High Commissioner Lilly Nicholls in her X handle said, "May the diversity and love for freedom of the Bangladeshi people endure."

French Ambassador Marie Masdupuy said France stands for furthering Bangladesh's strategic autonomy.

"As you celebrate the remarkable journey towards freedom and unity, know that France stands alongside you in solidarity and friendship. Here's to a future filled with enhanced cooperation, progress, and prosperity between our two nations."

Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari in a message to President Shahabuddin said Pakistan deeply values its brotherly ties with Bangladesh, which is rooted in shared history, common faith and a convergent interest in promoting durable peace and prosperity in the region and beyond.

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in a message to PM Hasina conveyed his sincere felicitations to the government and people of Bangladesh on the auspicious occasion.

He said that by working together, the two countries can contribute to regional peace and stability. He conveyed his best wishes for Sheikh Hasina's health and continued progress and prosperity of the brotherly people of Bangladesh.

### Archer K blood

FROM PAGE 12  
Ziaur Rahman, at the directive of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, hereby declare that the independent People's Republic of Bangladesh has been established... In the name of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, I call upon all Bangalees to rise against the attack by the West Pakistan army. We shall fight to the last to free our motherland. By the grace of Allah, victory would be ours. *Joy Bangla*."

INDIRA GANDHI DEPLORES 'SUPPRESSION'  
Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on this day described the military imposition of martial law in East Pakistan as "not merely suppression of a movement, but meeting unarmed people with tanks".

"An opportunity has been lost in East Pakistan for Pakistan to strengthen herself," she told the cheering members of the Indian Parliament.

"The opportunity has been lost in a manner, which is tragic and agonizing, about which we could not find strong enough words."

### Anticipatory bail

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report in a vandalism case filed with Ramna Police Station on October 29, their lawyer Md Sagir Hossain Leon told The Daily Star yesterday.

In the full text of the order, the apex court modified the HC order saying that the two accused will be on anticipatory bail for eight weeks.

"Considering the above, we are inclined to modify the order dated November 8 last year passed by the High Court Division. The respondents [Zainul and Khokon] shall remain on bail for a period of eight weeks from date; and, thereafter, they shall surrender before the court of chief metropolitan magistrate, Dhaka and in case of surrender the court below shall consider the prayer for bail, if any, considering that they did not misuse the privilege of bail," the SC judges said in the full text of the order.

### No let-up

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fighters there and arrested hundreds of others.

Twelve people have drowned and six been killed in stampedes trying to recover aid airdropped into Gaza, Hamas said yesterday. The health ministry in the Hamas-run Gaza Strip yesterday put the Palestinian death toll at 32,414, most of them women and children.

Mediator Qatar said yesterday that talks between Hamas and Israel on a Gaza truce and hostage exchange are continuing, despite the warring parties trading blame over the lack of headway.

### For 2yrs, suspect protected, victim tormented

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complaint against one of her classmates, that the accused teacher was suspended.

"I have been deprived of justice. Suspension is hardly a punishment. I want the expulsion of the accused teachers," the victim told The Daily Star recently.

She said she started getting calls from various quarters to withdraw the complaint after she filed it with then vice-chancellor Prof Imdadul Hoque on December 26, 2021.

Eight days later, Prof Junaid called in the student and tried to coax her into withdrawing the complaint in the presence of Emon.

On January 6, 2022, the victim and her mother complained to then VC detailing how she was being persuaded to withdraw her complaint.

Prof Junaid and Emon visited the student's home in Rajbari and met her father twice on January 8 and 9, 2022, to make her withdraw the complaint, she said.

Prof Junaid again called her to his office at the faculty on January 9 and tried to force her to withdraw the complaint.

### 70pc households change food habits

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price of essential commodities as a major shock during the 2022-September 2023 period.

Subsequently, 70 percent of the households reported that their expenses had increased.

In addition to the price hike, the incomes of a large proportion of households remained unchanged or fell between April and October 2023.

As such, most households' real income fell sharply during the period, SANEM said in the report.

In response to the price hike, the study found that 70 percent of the households changed their food habits, 35 percent cut back on non-food expenditure, 28 percent resorted to borrowing and 17 percent depleted savings, amongst others.

Rural households also sold their animal stock (11 percent) or changed cropping practices (7 percent).

Using the upper poverty line, poverty was estimated to be 20.7 percent at the national level, 21.6

A day later, the victim filed another complaint with then VC seeking remedy.

Prof Junaid then kept calling her father and putting pressure on her, she alleged.

As the victim and other students started protesting, the university launched an investigation via the Anti-Sexual Harassment Cell on March 22, 2022, almost three months after her first written complaint.

The probe committee during its investigation received calls from unknown dialers. "The callers hurled abuse. They asked us why we are investigating the matter, what is the purpose etc..." said Prof Hosne Ara Begum, a member of the cell.

The probe body submitted its report on November 24, 2022. Eight months later on August 1, 2023, the university for the first time acted, sending a letter to Emon accusing him of sexual harassment.

A syndicate meeting then recommended that the film and television department take action against Emon, but Prof Junaid, being the chair of the department, did not take any such steps.

JNU VC Prof Sadeka Halim, who

was then a member of the cell, said, "Even the dean of the faculty concerned asked Prof Junaid several times [to take action against Emon] but that too fell on deaf ears."

The victim, meanwhile, continued to face the wrath of Prof Junaid. She claimed that her assignments were not received deliberately, which caused her to fail semester finals.

In November last year, the victim wrote to the UGC seeking redress.

Emon refuted the allegations after The Daily Star approached him.

Prof Junaid also rejected the allegations against him. "The university authorities asked me to resolve the matter since it happened at my department," he said.

He admitted that he went to Rajbari along with Emon to request her father to withdraw the complaint.

About not receiving assignments, Prof Junaid said the student tried to submit assignments after the deadline. "Why would I accept it?"

JNU VC Prof Sadeka Halim said another committee is probing the allegations against Emon and the final decision would be made after receiving the report.

percent in rural areas and 18.7 percent in urban areas at the end of 2023.

Using the lower poverty line, the incidence of extreme poverty is estimated at 7.9 percent at the national level, 8.9 percent in rural areas and 5.4 percent in urban areas.

At the divisional level, the highest poverty rate was estimated in Rangpur and Barisal: 42.9 percent and 32.5 percent respectively, the study found.

While rural poverty has decreased from 24.5 percent in 2018 to 21.6 percent in 2023, the urban poverty rate has increased from 16.3 percent to 18.7 percent.

The reasons behind the rise in urban poverty are twofold.

Urban areas constitute a large proportion of the vulnerable poor who migrated to the cities out of poverty or due to climate shock, etc.

"Significant shocks, such as the recent price hike, would make these vulnerable people fall below the poverty line," SANEM said.

Besides, the existing social security programmes do not cover urban areas extensively, making many urban households more vulnerable to shocks.

Subsequently, the SANEM study recommended the government undertake alternative and complementary policies to reduce household inflationary pressures.

This should include increased monitoring of the market and liberalising the import tariff on many of the staple foods in Bangladesh.

"An increased supply of essential foods such as dairy, meat, fruits and so on would help Bangladesh to tame down the price level. This should be complemented with supporting fiscal and monetary policies."

The government needs to roll out social security programmes across the nation as stipulated in the National Social Security Strategy. Particular attention must be given to the urban poor and new poor households.