

Special Supplement

Uprising Day

Tuesday, 5 August 2025

Historic August 5: Triumph and Pledge

Historically, the memorable revolutions or mass-upsurges were usually organized by political parties or leaders. Examples include the Russian revolution, the French revolution, Islamic revolution of Iran, the anti-Ayub mass upsurge of 1969 and the anti-Ershad uprising of 1990 in our own



country. However, the recent anti-discrimination movement was an exception in many respects. The non-political young pupils were at the helm of the July Revolution of students and masses. A brilliant generation of youths had initiated this July Uprising. The movement proved that our youth community are very conscious and united on the question of social justice. It was the young students who announced the programmes, and the opposition political parties participated in those after expressing their solidarity.



This movement was not confined to the mere demand for reforming the quota system in government jobs. Rather, it was an ethical protest on the question of equality. People from all strata of the country's population participated in this movement phase by phase. The participation of people belonging to all religions, races, colours, professions and gender made this revolution historically significant. The movement could spread from the towns to the villages all over the country within a short time. Therefore,

this mass-upsurge once again proved that the country had to be prioritised above everything else. While touching on the far-reaching impact of the July Upsurge during his address before the General Assembly of the United Nations on 27 September 2024, the honourable Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus rightly said: 'The anti-discrimination movement of Bangladesh will continue to inspire people at various corners of the globe in the coming days to stand up for freedom and justice.'



This new Bangladesh has been achieved in exchange for the blood of numerous known and unknown heroes like Abu Sayed, Shanto, Mugdho, and Farhan Faiyaz. The six-year-old Ria Gope was shot dead while in the lap of her father on the rooftop of their house; the auto-rickshaw driver Rony, the milk-seller teenage boy Mobarak were also killed. The nation does not want the reemergence of another autocrat in the new Bangladesh that was achieved in exchange for their self-sacrifices. We all shall have to make sure that the blood of the valiant martyrs and the tears of their mothers do not go in vain. Let us make a pledge on the occasion of the first anniversary of July Mass-Upsurge to uphold the freedom of speech of all citizens and effectively ensure all fundamental rights of citizens including the security of their lives and properties. □

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Political Legacy of July-Upsurge

1969 against the military rule of Ayub Khan during the Pakistani era. This success belongs to the masses, but the student-leadership must be saluted for acting as the guide of the common people.



This nation and land also deserve a felicitation. About 95 percent of this country's population speak the same language. The religious faith of 90 percent citizens of this country is the same. Even those who are not Muslims despite being Bangalis share almost similar basic philosophy of life, family values, food-habit, and economic processes. That is why the people of flat terrains and coastal belts of Bangladesh embrace death together and fight collectively. For us, this is a huge cultural capital. Its humane expression as observed during the July Uprising amazed the bearers of fascism and its allies to their own peril. That is why, they are unable to understand the new Bangladesh. For this reason, they will commit further mistakes and remain vulnerable to more attrition.



The martyrs of the language movement can be counted with two fingers. The number of deaths during the last three months of the urban-centred mass-upsurge of 1990 did not cross the figure of 50. No notable martyrdoms had taken place then with the exception of Dr. Milton and Jihad during the previous week prior to Ershad's fall. But the number of deaths during the last 14 days of July and the first 5 days of August 2024 crossed 15 hundred; and the number of wounded was over 20 thousand. It showed the degree of valour and self-sacrificing attitude that our children displayed while combating a monster! During all previous movements of political parties, the agitators at least took up some improvised rifles and cocktails for confronting the police. But this time, unarmed protesters like Abu Sayed, gentle souls like Mugdho, innocents like Ria Gope, sentimental boys like Wasim, marginalised ones like Torua, and beloved children like Farhan had to embrace martyrdom. This kind of epic-like supreme sacrifices by rickshaw-peddlers and workers alike are not witnessed except during war situations. One picture showed three teenagers advancing cautiously in an alleyway. The police and



gun-wielding activists of Chhatra League were at the alley's end. But those freedom fighters did not turn back. They did not surrender their lane or campus to those monsters. They perished, but did not give up even an inch of their soil.

We shall have to keep on telling these stories after wiping our tears. The 180 million people of Bangladesh have 180 stories regarding this monsoon revolution. The authorities must listen to all these stories. The martyrs must not be allowed to be forgotten. A revolutionary decision has been taken for converting the Ganobhaban into a museum of monsoon revolution. But this museum should not exhibit mere memories, or showcase only pictures and bullet-cartridges. It should depict a history that was alive; it should become an investigative researcher of the genocide that was committed; it should play the part of an ever-vigilant sentinel of the martyrs, and the guardsman of history.

We knew that the government, the students and masses, and the struggling political parties would be made to remain busy in many ways. Ditches of distrust would be dug around all the parties and groups. Many smokescreens would be created for diverting attention from the main issue – the restructuring of the state and the uprooting of fascism. So be it. But



whenever the fear of losing our way emerges, whenever our feet get entangled in the trap of divisiveness, whenever our progress becomes stuck in the quicksand of greed, we should remember the boy who lost his feet, that brother who lost his eye, or those martyrs who now sleep in graves like the paddy-seeds of revolution. There is no room for making any mistake, and there is absolutely no scope for forgetting!

The present youth populace of Bangladesh outnumbers the nation's 1971 population. A majority of these youths belong to the rising middle-class households. These highly educated first-generation youths carry our hope. The conflict is now between the rising middle-class and the established middle-class who were allies of fascism and autocracy. This conflict is between a pro-Bangladesh collective identity encompassing the liberal and non-communal segments versus the looters-mafias-murderers who espouse subcontinental fascism. This conflict is between the old and the new. Bangladesh has become more mature now compared to last July after emerging from the labour of a second birth. The struggle of Bangladesh is



for justice and honour, freedom of life and speech. The meaning of sovereignty cannot be comprehended without the existence of a democratic and just society.

Therefore, there cannot be any compromise or reconciliation between the state-ambition of July and that of fascism. We should not become oblivious of our surroundings while keeping our attention fixed on the red eyes of the bull. We should not turn our friends into enemies. At the same time, the friction that is being generated due to political imbalances should be resolved properly. Usually, the victors in any mass movement or uprising rule the country. However, it is quite true that the July leadership was not the main political powerhouse then, nor is it even now. But if the major parties do not carry forward the true legacy of July, then serious problems would crop up in our political trajectory. July would then face the risk of becoming another revolution that was snatched away.

Bangladesh has caused a geo-political earthquake in South Asia. Unrealistic efforts may now be made to trigger a counter-tsunami. But the currents of blood do not flow backward. The path of democracy is what remains before Bangladesh. Bangladesh will advance on that path even if there are traps. But we must not downplay our national interest anymore while catering to partisan interests. We should not sell our homes and doors to quench the greed for a window of power. July must not be made an unclaimed phenomenon. That would be a betrayal with the supreme sacrifices made by thousands of martyrs. History has never pardoned any traitor at any juncture of time. □

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