



BANGABANDHU THE PEOPLE'S HERO





BANGABANDHU THE PEOPLE'S HERO

BANGABANDHU THE PEOPLE'S HERO

Published by

External Publicity Wing

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

www.mofa.gov.bd

Published in

2020

All rights reserved. This book contains material protected under copyright and publishing law of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Any unauthorized reprint or use of this material is prohibited. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electrical or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system without express written permission from the copyright owner, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

Contents

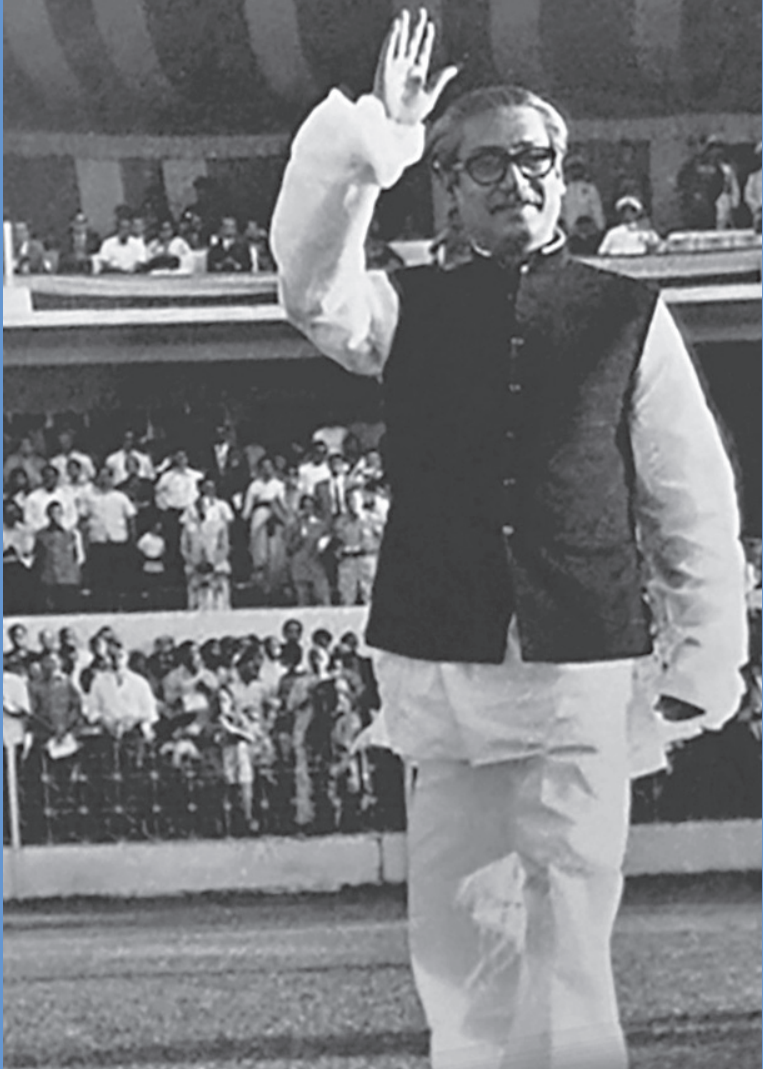
Message from the Foreign Minister Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh	8
Message from the State Minister Ministry of Foreign Affairs Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh	12
Message from the Foreign Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh	16
The Advent and Exit of a People's Hero Dr. Anisuzzaman	19
Homecoming of Bangabandhu and the Genesis of Our Foreign Policy Mohiuddin Ahmed	29
Bangabandhu's Development Philosophy: Reconstruction and Growth with Equity Dr. Syed Anwar Hussain	43
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman: A Profile in Courage Syed Manzoorul Islam	57
Bangabandhu's Foreign Policy and the World Dr. A. K. M. Atiqur Rahman	65



Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation & Our Aspiration Dr. Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury	75
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Initiative on Humanitarian Service in International Arena leading to Future Journey of Bangladesh in this Field Lt. Col. (Retd.) Quazi Sajjad Ali Zahir Bir Protik	83
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with Foreign Leaders and in Events at Home and Abroad	91
Brief Life Sketch of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman	121
Quotes on Bangabandhu by World Leaders	157
Selected Quotes by Bangabandhu	161
Bangladesh- The Present and Future: Remarks by Important World Personalities	165



BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO





‘Tall for a Bengali (he stands 5 feet 11 inches), with a touch of graying hair, a bushy moustache and altar black eyes, Mujib can attract a crowd of a million people to his rallies and hold them spellbound with great rolling waves of emotional rhetoric. He is a poet of politics. So his style may be just what was needed to unite the classes and ideologies of the region.’

Newsweek, 5 April 1971





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



FOREIGN MINISTER
Government of the
People's Republic of Bangladesh

MESSAGE

On this auspicious occasion, I recall with profound reverence the greatest Bengali of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Under his dynamic, courageous and charismatic leadership, the Bangali Nation that had no experience of fighting got organized and voluntarily fought for their independence breaking the shackles of subjugation of thousands of years. Bangladesh is now well poised to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of glorious independence and Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, which are historic occasions in our history. Celebrating year-long programs marking Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman would provide us the opportunities to understand his ideology, his principles, values, his sacrifice and his love for his people. His





love for his people, his indomitable spirit and commitment to establish rights of people and justice led him to sufferings and imprisonment. He spent almost half of political life in prison yet he never gave up. He is a model of courage and determination. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Bangladesh Missions abroad have been working together to mark the occasion with all international organizations, including the UNESCO and the United Nations.

The seeds of development were sown, when Bangabandhu took over a war ravaged country and under his dynamic leadership Bangladesh started to achieve its goal of a self-dependent economy as a path to achieve his dream the 'Sonar Bangla', a prosperous, stable and self-reliant country. Bangabandhu accomplished the formidable tasks of rehabilitation and rebuilding the nation just in three and a half years. In such a short span of time, he managed to get recognition of 140 countries and memberships to all major international organizations and financial institutions in the world including the World Bank and the United Nations. Within this short time, he adopted a wonderful constitution, was able to sign several agreements with neighbors including the historic water sharing treaty, demarcation of land boundary and peace agreement with India and rebuilt schools and colleges and he was successful to achieve over 7.5% of GDP growth rate in 1974. Conspirators and enemies committed the heinous crime on 15 August 1975 aiming to thwart our advancement and assassinated him and 16 members of his family including his 10 year old son Russel. But they failed. His spirit, his vision and principles are always in the hearts and minds of people of Bangladesh.





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

Under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, his daughter, the government has been working relentlessly to turn Bangladesh into a middle income country by 2021 and a developed country by 2041. The country is now often cited as a 'Role Model for Development', its GDP growth rate is all-time high, 8.2 % which is as per ADB, highest amongst the 45 Asia Pacific countries in 2019. Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's zero tolerance policy towards all forms of terrorism, corruption and violent extremism has received full support and cooperation from all walks of life as well as from the international community. Once Bangladesh was known as a 'bottomless basket', but now Bangladesh is a 'land of opportunities', a model of economic development, a star of women empowerment and a standard bearer of the South and one of the most attractive locations for investment in the world. No wonder, within the last two years, its FDI increased over 181%, highest growth rate in the world. Let me hope that the Bangladeshi expatriates will join in the trajectory of its development path.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs has taken various initiatives to project the life and aspirations of Bangabandhu beyond the national boundary and promote his ideology of international peace, social justice and economic emancipation by publishing books, holding seminars and workshops at various universities around the world marking the birth centenary (17 March 2020–26 March 2021) of the Father of the Nation.

On this day, I congratulate Bangladesh Diaspora in every corner of the world. I also thank all the members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and our Missions abroad





who have been working with utmost dedication and commitment in achieving our foreign policy objectives as laid down by the Father of the Nation, 'Friendship to all, malice to none'. Currently, Bangladesh is hosting 1.1 million persecuted residents of Myanmar known as 'Rohingya'. Myanmar agreed to repatriate them in safety and security but unfortunately, 3 years have elapsed, they are yet to create conducive environment for their voluntary return. We have appealed to global leaders and also to people with rank and file that oppose persecution to put pressure on Myanmar to take back their people as promised.

On this historic moment, we, overwhelmed with the spirit and ideals of the Father of the Nation. Let us make a renewed pledge to devote ourselves to work from our respective positions imbued with the spirit of Liberation War to build 'Sonar Bangla' and also a better world for our future generations.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu

May Bangladesh Live Forever.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen', written in a fluid, cursive style.

Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, MP





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



STATE MINISTER
Government of the
People's Republic of Bangladesh

MESSAGE

It is a noteworthy initiative to publish a book titled 'BANGABANDHU, THE PEOPLE'S HERO' commemorating the auspicious year of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Centenary. The book peeks into Bangabandhu's ideology, courage and love for the people of his nation. Bangladesh stands ready to celebrate the golden jubilee of our Glorious Independence and is celebrating the Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation, which are rare occasions in our history.

With deep reverence, I recall the greatest Bengali of all times, the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who steered our epic struggle for freedom. Bangabandhu is an icon of democracy. The life of the Father of the Nation is an example of supreme





sacrifice and struggle for ensuring rights of Bengali people. His political ideologies reflected his belief in humanity, empowering people, ensuring socio-economic freedom, peace and rights of the oppressed people all across the world. Bangabandhu's extraordinary heroism was a source of inspiration for the people of the world.

The architect of independent Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman never compromised on the question of the rights of our people. The title 'Bangabandhu' what our common people conferred on him has become a synonym for the word 'Bangladesh'. The world reputed Newsweek Magazine of its 5 April, 1971 issue termed Bangabandhu as a 'Poet of Politics' which marked the firm conviction and deep reverence by the world community to the leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. We have to uphold the ideology and achievements of the Father of the Nation in a much wider range in the international arena.

Bangabandhu set up the foundations of the new Republic by putting into numerous measures, including withdrawal of all allied forces within 3 months of victory, formation of a constitution for the new state within 10 months, recognition of Bangladesh by more than a hundred countries, Bangladesh's membership of important international bodies including the United Nations, Commonwealth of Nations, NAM and OIC.

Father of the Nation took over the leadership of a war-ravaged and economically backward country. Immediately after the independence, free ration was distributed for months





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

to save the two crore displaced people from death. They had to be provided with shelter, clothing, medicine and other necessities for their survival. Bangabandhu accomplished the challenging tasks of rehabilitation and rebuilding the nation within short time and that time conspirators committed the heinous crime with utmost brutality with him and his family members on 15 August 1975. The death of Bangabandhu does not mean the extinction of the values, principles and ideas; rather these are ingrained in the depth of the heart of the Bengali Nation.

Bangabandhu is the name of a legend who dreamt of a hunger and poverty-free, secular and prosperous country. Bangladesh is making Bangabandhu's dreams a reality under the visionary leadership of his capable daughter Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The government has been working relentlessly to transform Bangladesh into a developed country by 2041. Along with economic growth, Bangladesh has become a role model in poverty alleviation, women empowerment, coping with climate change and curbing child mortality rate. Today the country is often cited by the international community as a 'Role Model for Development.' All these achievements have been made possible with the policy guidelines promulgated by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman within the fastest period of time and through successful implementation of those laws and policy framework under the dynamic leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during the last decade.





This book will inspire the new generation of our country to learn human values and love for own nation, the significance and spirit of the War of Liberation from the life and struggle of Bangabandhu. This will also encourage them to work for the welfare of the nation and the country from their early age.

I pray to the Almighty for the salvation of the departed soul of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh live forever.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Md. Shahriar Alam'.

Md. Shahriar Alam, MP





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



FOREIGN SECRETARY
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Government of the
People's Republic of Bangladesh

MESSAGE

‘When I decide on doing something I go ahead and do it. If I find out I was wrong, I try to correct myself. This is because I know that only doers are capable of making errors; people who never do anything make no mistakes,’ Quote from The Unfinished Memoirs by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Ever since I read this quote, I contemplate these lines whenever I am faced with challenges and decision making in new undertakings. This is the power of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The greatest leader of all time has the power to inspire people through his words and actions. It is indeed a great honour and privilege to serve the country that came into existence





under the dynamic leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The only way we can pay homage to this great leader is by supporting his capable daughter, Hon'ble Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina's continued hard work and achievements in realising his dreams of turning the country into a Golden Bengal.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank and appreciate the External Publicity Wing, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Bangladesh Missions abroad for their year long initiatives to mark Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Birth Centenary. This book titled 'BANGABANDHU, THE PEOPLE'S HERO', is a collection of articles by renowned personalities who had the privilege to have known him. It is supplemented with some photographs and images of the Father of the Nation that depicts his life.

We wish the readers a lasting impression of the life and work of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu

May Bangladesh live forever.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Masud Bin Momen'.

Masud Bin Momen





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO





THE ADVENT AND EXIT OF A PEOPLE'S HERO

Arrangement has been made this year for observing the birth centenary of the country's founder Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman throughout Bangladesh.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was born in Tungipara village under Faridpur district (now Gopalganj district). Mujib was attracted to the Swadeshi (homeland) movement upon hearing about the self-sacrifices made by armed revolutionaries and the radical activities of Madaripur's Purna Chandra Das (a colleague of Bagha Jatin, a revolutionary freedom fighter of Bengal) near his home.

It appears that two events pushed him towards the politics of Muslim individualism at that crucial time. One day his classmate and close neighbour Nanigopal Das took him to his uncle's residence and seated Mujib in the drawing-room. Later Nanigopal requested Mujib in a piteous tone not to go to their house again, because his aunt (though she had much affection for Mujib) had rebuked him for seating Mujib inside the house; she had washed the room herself and forced Nanigopal to do the same. Mujib later wrote, 'This incident left a deep imprint in my mind; I have not forgotten it even today.'

The second incident occurred in 1938. A public meeting cum exhibition was arranged on the occasion of the Gopalganj





visit of Bengal's Chief Minister A K Fazlul Haque and the Labour Minister Shaheed Suhrawardy. A school-student then, Mujib was the leader of a group of volunteers. But the higher caste Hindu youths opted out from this programme at the last moment due to the instructions of the local Congress leaders (the boys belonging to the scheduled castes however remained, because the Minister Mukundubihari Mullick was also coming with the Chief Minister). Mujib later wrote, 'I was surprised at hearing this news, because to me there was nothing called Hindus or Muslims at that juncture. I had friendship with the Hindu boys. We used to sing, play music, play games and go out for excursions.' Luckily, the whole programme passed off peacefully despite the apprehension of communal riot centering on this meeting. Later on, Mujib lamented the Hindu-Muslim divisions many times. He felt that nobody could grasp the inherent causes of Hindu-Muslim friction like Rabindranath Tagore, Chittaranjan Das and Subhash Chandra Basu.

As a follow-up to his nominal acquaintance with Suhrawardy at Gopalganj, Sheikh Mujib went to Kolkata and met him in 1939. On returning home, he founded the Muslim Chhatra (students) League and the Muslim League at Gopalganj. He himself became the Secretary of Chhatra League, and although someone else was made the Muslim League Secretary, it was Mujib who had to perform the main tasks.

After passing the matriculation examination in 1941, Sheikh Mujib got admitted to Islamia College of Kolkata.





He stayed at the Baker Hostel and remained busy round-the-clock with political activities. By then, the Lahore Resolution of Muslim League was adopted. Consequently, establishment of Pakistan became his obsession. By Pakistan, he understood two states – one in the east and the other in the west. There were then two factions in the Bengal Provincial Muslim League: one was led by Mohammad Akram Khan and Khawaja Nazimuddin; the other was spearheaded by Suhrawardy and Abul Hashim. The latter group was deemed to be progressive, because this faction sought to transform Muslim League into a people's institution by freeing it from the influences of 'Zamindars, Jotdars and Khan Bahadur Nawabs'. They also wanted to uproot the Zamindari system. Mujib joined the latter group, and inspired by Abul Hashim became a full-time worker of the Muslim League.

Sheikh Mujib used to work round the clock in gruel-kitchens during the famine of 1943, occasionally returning to the hostel at night, and sometimes sleeping on the table of Muslim League office. He became an admirer of Subhash Chandra Basu at that time, but he could not be free of doubt whether the Japanese would grant independence if they conquered the Indian subcontinent. Mujib also performed various kinds of tasks like rescuing the Muslim girls, making arrangements for the treatment of the injured, guarding areas during the communal riot of Kolkata in 1946. Just as he rescued the Muslims, similarly he sent Hindus to safe areas after rescuing them. The then teacher of Islamia College and economist Bhabatosh Datta later wrote in his memoir that some students led by Sheikh





Mujib had escorted him through hazardous areas up to the boundaries of safe territories during the period.

Jinnah called the central and provincial leaders of Muslim League to a conference in Delhi in April 1947. At that time, some apparently small but fundamental amendments were made to the Lahore Resolution in accordance with his directive. Whereas the previous wording was 'states', and was replaced by 'state'; and the proposal was put forward by Suhrawardy. A few others including Abul Hashim opposed this amendment, but it was ultimately adopted. Mujib was very disappointed at this development, but it could not be known whether he talked to Suhrawardy on the subject. Soon afterwards, Lord Mountbatten announced that alongside India, the provinces of Punjab and Bengal would also be partitioned. Suhrawardy and Abul Hashim of Muslim League, as well as, Saratchandra Basu and Kiranshankar Ray tried to form an undivided and sovereign Bangla, but that initiative was aborted. Mujib was disappointed once again.

Despite all this, he kept faith on the Muslim League government of East Bengal for some time. But getting disenchanted soon, he founded the East Pakistan Muslim Chhatra League in January 1948 along with some like-minded student leaders and activists, as opposed to the All East Pakistan Muslim Chhatra League patronised by the government. A movement ensued for the first time in Dhaka then in support of the demand for making Bangla the state language on 11 March, and Mujib was promptly arrested. He was released four days later, but was rearrested in 1949 and kept in jail for six months.



While he was in jail, a new political party called East Pakistan Awami Muslim League was launched with Moulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani as its President. Mujib was elected a Joint-Secretary of the party. He was released in the month of July, but was arrested again in December. In this way, his imprisonment continued for two and a half years. When the language movement of 1952 gained momentum, he was undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital as a prisoner. He gave important advice to the leaders of the movement from there. Subsequently, when the health condition of Mujib who was on hunger strike deteriorated, he was released from jail. It is difficult to estimate how many more times he was arrested and put behind bars in this way.

Sheikh Mujib was elected as the General Secretary of Awami Muslim League in 1953. This organization soon became popular among the general masses because of his organizational acumen. Mujib also rose to the stature of a leader from that of an activist. A united front (Jukto-Front) of the opposition parties was formed before the general election of East Bengal province in 1954, although Mujib was not in its favour. The Front won a huge majority in the election. Although Mujib was included in the cabinet led by A K Fazlul Haque, the central government soon dissolved it. Sheikh Mujib was then elected a member of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly in 1955. When this assembly framed the first constitution of Pakistan, he presented strong arguments in favour renaming the province as 'East Bengal' and incorporating the provision for provincial autonomy. He also spoke against tagging the





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

words 'Islamic Republic' to the country's name. At that juncture, the word 'Muslim' was deleted from the name of 'Awami Muslim League'. He also played an active role in adoption of the proposal for joint electoral system in the East Pakistan Assembly. He once again appointed a Minister of East Pakistan government in 1956, but he soon resigned from the ministerial portfolio in order to concentrate more on party activities.

Realization of provincial autonomy became the paramount objective of Sheikh Mujib's political career. But when Moulana Bashani left Awami League and formed the National Awami Party in 1957 because of disagreements with Suhrawardy, Mujib stayed back in the Awami League. Martial Law was promulgated in Pakistan in 1958. Although it was lifted in 1962, the authoritarian rule of Ayub Khan continued. Mujib had to remain in prison or under house arrest for a few years. After the death of Suhrawardy in 1963, he reinvigorated the Awami League. He also played a key role in resisting the communal riots in East Bengal in 1964. Mujib submitted the 6-point demands at a conference of opposition parties in Lahore in 1966. Autonomy for the provinces was its essence. He said that the demands were based on the Lahore Resolution; the government countered: it was an effort to destroy the unity of Pakistan. Mujib was able to create public opinion in favour of the six-points by holding public meetings all over East Bengal. In response, the government arrested him repeatedly.

By then, he became the President of Awami League. While he was in prison, a sedition case was lodged against





him in 1968 on allegations of conspiring to separate East Bengal from Pakistan. He was the principal accused in the case, and the defendants also included 34 military and civil officials. But public reaction to this development was exactly the opposite of what the government wanted. The government was ultimately forced to release Mujib in the backdrop of a mass upsurge in East Bengal in 1969. The people conferred Mujib the title of 'Bangabandhu' (Friend of Bengal) and the Pakistani President Ayub had to resign.

The new President Yahya Khan imposed martial law once again. Later, he organized the first general election in Pakistan towards the end of 1970 based on universal adult franchise. Before that, it was stated for the first time in the Awami League's manifesto that the party's ultimate aim was to establish a socialist social system. But Sheikh Mujib had termed this election as a referendum for the six-points which he declared in 1966 for East Bengal autonomy. The Awami League won absolute majority in the polls and expressed its firm resolve to frame a constitution based on the six-points programme.

When it became clear that the ruling coterie was unwilling to hand over power to the elected public representatives, Mujib called for a non-cooperation movement. The success of that movement amazed the world. Majority of the countrymen, especially the younger generation wanted Mujib to declare independence unilaterally. In this backdrop, he delivered his historic address at a mammoth public meeting on 7 March 1971, which has now become part of the UNESCO's Memory of the World Register.





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

In fact, this speech was the best in Bangabandhu's life. He might not have pronounced the formal declaration of independence during the address, he had spelled out clearly towards the end of the speech, 'The struggle this time is for freedom, the struggle this time is for independence.' The ruling coterie resorted to dilly-dallying tactics in the name of dialogue. Then they launched the cruelest genocide in world history at midnight on 25 March. Bangabandhu was arrested, but two English versions of his declaration of independence received wide coverage.

Bangabandhu was in Pakistani prison during the Liberation War of Bangladesh. But the war was waged in his name. He was tried in Pakistan on charge of treason, and finally sentenced to death. Even his grave was dug in his full view while he was in Mianwali jail of Pakistan. He made only one request to the prison authorities that his dead-body should be buried in Bangladesh after his death.

After getting released from the Pakistani jail, Sheikh Mujib returned to his motherland on 10 January 1972. Two days later, he assumed the responsibility of Prime Minister. He then took up the responsibility of reconstructing the war-ravaged Bangladesh and rehabilitating the uprooted and helpless masses. The nation was gifted with a democratic constitution within 1972, and the general election was held towards the beginning of the following year. But the times were not like earlier days. The Liberation War had lifted the hopes and aspirations of the people. People's attributes had also undergone changes because of the proliferation of weapons. Due to an adverse weather as well as decision





of diverting PL-480 by USA, a famine-like situation prevailed in the country in 1974.

On 15 August 1975, the Father of the nation was killed along with his family members by the bullets of the assassins. This heinous act shook the fundamental principles of the state, and gave rise to military dictatorial rule in the country. Consistent attempts were made over many years to erase Bangabandhu's name from history. But he could never be removed from the hearts of the people of Bangladesh.

Dr. Anisuzzaman

National Professor of Bangladesh

Professor Emeritus, University of Dhaka

Former President, Bangla Academy, Dhaka

(Translation: Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed)





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO





HOMECOMING OF BANGABANDHU AND THE GENESIS OF OUR FOREIGN POLICY

I had been waiting for that moment for so many years. Bangladesh had achieved independence three weeks earlier. But where was that great epic poet? The festivities and euphoria were not coming to life in the absence of the great hero. The expression of joy and pain at the moment of victory appeared to remain incomplete in his absence. Citizens wanted Bangabandhu to take charge of the war-battered nation after returning home. Many statesmen of the world, as well as, the ordinary people felt that the leadership of Bangabandhu had become urgent for the reconstruction of war-ravaged Bangladesh.

Some of us had a hunch that Bangabandhu would come to London— Zulfikar Ali Bhutto would not send Bangabandhu to Bangladesh or India. And Bangabandhu would not want to travel to any place in the Arab world. We felt that if he was asked to give his opinion in favour of some other country outside India and Bangladesh, he would choose UK. Bangabandhu had earlier visited London a number of times. He had many friends and acquaintances there and was also familiar with the place.

It should be mentioned here that we had set up the Bangladesh Mission in a few rooms on the ground floor of the house at No. 24 Notting Hill Gate of London on 26 August 1971 under





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

the stewardship of Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdury. The British Government had not accorded recognition to our mission, however they did not also oppose it. The then Pakistani High Commissioner in the United Kingdom Salman Ali had lodged a formal protest to the British Deputy Foreign Secretary Joseph Godber about the establishment of our mission in this manner. But Joseph Godber told the Pakistani High Commissioner that we would not be obstructed as long as we did not break the British law.

Many among the Bangalee officials serving in different countries of Europe joined us in London in accordance with the instruction issued by the Mujibnagar Government. Outside Kolkata, London was then the second largest centre for carrying out activities in favour of the Liberation War. Therefore, the Mujibnagar Government had instructed these Bangalee diplomats and staffs to report to Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury in London.

Like Mohiuddin Ahmad Jaigirdar, three other Bangalee diplomats had also joined us in London. Fazlul Karim was an officer of the 1965 batch of Pakistan Foreign Service. He came from the Pakistan Embassy in Cairo. The Late Syed Amirul Islam came from Tunisia and Anwar Hashim from Bonn.

Mr. Jaigirdar was seated beside me. I was seating with the steering wheel in hand. The vehicle would travel to the Heathrow Airport in North London from South London after crossing Central London. Our destination was the Alcock & Brown VIP Suite. I was a bit worried. If we were late in reaching the place, how could we know where Mr. Rezaul Karim would take Bangabandhu? Besides, why should we be deprived of such an historic opportunity to receive Bangabandhu at the airport?





The vehicle was running at a stretch. Neither Mr. Jaigirdar nor I were saying anything. But a storm was brewing in my mind. I was certain that the same was happening to Mr. Jaigirdar. So many tears, so much blood, so many sacrifices, so much waiting! The Muslims had fasted and prayed for this man. And many Hindus had worshipped him by deeming him to be divine. I have witnessed such scenes on the London's television over the previous nine months. We rushed to the VIP lounge after parking the vehicle at the designated spot. Then we saw before us that extraordinary scene. Bangabandhu was talking to Mr. Rezaul Karim. After we entered the room, Mr. Karim introduced us to Bangabandhu in a few sentences: This is our Mohiuddin, the second secretary in our Bangladesh Mission, joined us after coming from Nigeria.

I was stepping sideways after saluting Bangabandhu. But Bangabandhu extended his hand and embraced me unexpectedly by taking me to his chest. Tears started to roll down from my eyes for about one minute. Seeing this, Bangabandhu said: No more fear, I have come. It seemed that his voice also choked on seeing me cry.

I had seen Bangabandhu twice before. The first time was as a student. He had addressed a public meeting in Dhaka's Paltan Maidan in early 1960s. I clearly remember, the general secretary of DUCSU (Dhaka University Central Students Union) was arrested following that meeting at Purana Paltan. But even after the conclusion of that meeting, Bangabandhu was demanding his release while holding the microphone in his hand. I saw Bangabandhu for the second time in March 1969, when he went to the round-table conference convened by Field Marshall Ayub Khan in Rawalpindi.





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

It was 7.30 pm when we reached the Claridge's Hotel. Not many formalities were in store for us. After reaching the place, whatever was to be done was looked after by Sutherland. We should keep in mind that the British Government had not recognized Bangladesh till then. But the sympathy of the British Government and the active support of its people in favour of Bangladesh's independence existed throughout the nine months of the Liberation War. The president of that vaunted Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had arrived in London without going anywhere else. It was a matter of pride and joy for the British Government as well.

Let me now write about David Frost. He came in that very morning of that day. He had only one request – an interview with Bangabandhu. To mention here, Bangabandhu had not given any interview till then. Consequently, whoever succeeded in taking his first interview would be presented with a scoop. We felt proud at seeing David Frost. The most famous television personality of the world had arrived to take the interview of Bangladesh's leader.

Bangabandhu welcomed Frost very warmly, and talked with him like an intimate person. We could understand the reason later on, after reading a news item in the London Times a few days later. Bangabandhu was a regular viewer of the programme titled 'Frost Report' which was shown on Dhaka Television during the 1960s; and Bangabandhu himself had since become a fan of Frost.

Frost's programme was not aired by British TV channels for a few months then. But Frost disclosed he was planning to start a new series of interviews with world-famous personalities starting with Bangabandhu. Bangabandhu was very happy





on hearing that proposal. He said, 'Your one-hour interview could not be taken here, as there are so many people. Besides, I won't be able to give you so much time now. OK, you visit Bangladesh as my guest; you would be able to spend as much time as you wish with me; you can then also move around for as long as you want.' Frost's question after that was: When could I come? You can come whenever you want, was Bangabandhu's instant reply. Frost arrived in Bangladesh along with his crew-members a few days later. It was through that interview of Bangabandhu that billions of TV viewers all over the world could get a direct picture about Bangabandhu and Bangladesh.

We made a request later on to BBC for giving us a copy of that interview tape. Weighing a few kilograms, that tape was ultimately brought all the way to Dhaka by the second secretary of our mission Fazlul Karim. Fazlul Karim was then transferred to Dhaka, and the tape was subsequently shown on our television.

Appa B. Pant was the Indian High Commissioner to the UK at that time. He was accompanied by the political counsellor Inder Pal Khosla (later Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh). There was also another official with the family name of Banerjee, with whom we maintained direct contacts at the time. We gave him the name 'Doctor Hossain'.

Appa Pant was passing on message one after another, most probably from the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and the Indian President V. V. Giri, to Bangabandhu. Mrs. Gandhi was probably not in Delhi on that day. She was on a visit to a province outside of Delhi. But the moment she heard about Bangabandhu's arrival in London, she tried to establish contact with him by telephone, Appa Pant informed us. Later, they





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

talked over phone on that very day. Bangabandhu expressed his sincere thanks and gratitude to Mrs. Gandhi for the help, cooperation and support extended by her, the Indian government and the Indian people towards the Liberation War of Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, Mr. Rezaul Karim had linked up Begum Mujib with Bangabandhu over telephone. At that time, none of us were in his bedroom. Then while talking to Tajuddin Ahmad, we heard Bangabandhu saying: Taj please don't cry, I have come. We shall meet very soon by the grace of Allah.

Peter Shore, a member of the House of Commons from the Labour Party was a great lover of the Bangalees. He played an important huge role in supporting our Liberation War from Britain and visited us in the morning. He again came in the afternoon, this time accompanied by the leader of the British Labour Party Harold Wilson. I then heard the word 'excellency' from the mouth of a foreigner for the first time. He was telling Bangabandhu, 'It is great to see you, Your Excellency'. One foreigner also addressed Bangabandhu for the first time as 'Mr. President'.

The Commonwealth Secretary General, Arnold Cantwell Smith also came. He was a Canadian who had tremendous love for the Bangalees. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had already taken Pakistan out of the Commonwealth in protest against the British support for Bangladesh's liberation struggle. Prior to that, Arnold Smith had tried to convince Bhutto by touring Pakistan. Now Arnold Smith wanted Bangladesh to become a member of the Commonwealth. Bangabandhu readily assented and Arnold Smith became a fan of Bangabandhu based on only a few minutes of discussion. Bangabandhu told Arnold





Smith: 'You can take steps for Bangladesh's Commonwealth membership as soon as possible.'

Mohiuddin Chowdhury was responsible for looking after the temporary office set up for the Bangladesh President. At one juncture, he informed me that the hotel's telephone operator told him that eleven or twelve telephone calls from different places of the world were waiting in a queue for talking to Bangabandhu. He wanted my advice on what the operator should do now. I told him that it was he who had to solve this kind of problem. He should be praised, as he told the operator not to give connections to many famous people from Dhaka on that day. He had to undergo a huge pressure at that juncture.

Bangabandhu used to become restless when he saw the outpouring of love for him from the people. The same thing happened here as well. If he could, then he would have even delivered a speech from the balcony there. But that was not possible for two reasons. Firstly, an important thoroughfare passed beside the hotel below. People were standing on the footpath on the other side of the road. The movement of vehicles was already disrupted because of the attending people and the policemen mounted on horses. Consequently it was not possible to deliver any speech.

And secondly, which was even more important, was the security of Bangabandhu. He had already rushed to the balcony two or three times, and responded to the people's felicitations by waving his hand. He even raised the slogan 'Joy Bangla' from the same balcony. Thousands of people below him then raised the sky-rending slogan 'Joy Bangla' in a chorus with him. The British people in the neighbourhood were watching, but could not understand the proceedings. At one stage, people from the





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

Scotland Yard told us that Bangabandhu's rushing to the balcony without informing them was a serious threat to his safety. The convener of Bangladesh Students' Action Committee in the UK and student leader Mohammad Hossain Monju, as well as, Mohiuddin Jaigirdar were trying to function as security guards by standing on two sides of Bangabandhu. But according to the Scotland Yard, that had nothing to do with security. This Monju was another great example of courage and patriotism in supporting the Liberation War from the UK in 1971.

The press conference took place towards 1 pm noon on that day. But we did not count how many journalists or cameramen were present. May be they numbered three or four hundred, but the room was full. Many were standing while covering the press conference. Again, many were trying to take notes even from outside the room.

Bangabandhu arrived and sat on his chair a few minutes later. A few of us including Mohammad Hossain Monju, the president of Bangladesh Medical Association in the UK, Dr Abdul Hakim, the convener of the steering committee of Bangladesh Liberation Movement Azizul Haque Bhuiyan, Shamsul Alam and an insurance company official named Golam Mowla were standing behind him with a grave face. In a way, it was for the first time that we were in charge of security in any function by forming a security cordon. At first, Bangabandhu read out a written statement, which was mainly drafted by Rezaul Karim. He mentioned in the statement about the support extended by the governments and people of different countries of the world. He narrated the widespread damages caused to lives and properties in Bangladesh by the Pakistani military and their local collaborators, and sought help from the global community.





Before finalising the statement, Mr. Rezaul Karim had shown it once to Bangabandhu. Bangabandhu had only one comment on the statement. He said, 'Rezaul Karim (Bangabandhu used to address Rezaul Karim as Rezaul Karim), you are saying that the USA did not support our Liberation War, but the people of the country were in our favour. So, why not add the support of the American people to the statement.' Rezaul Karim did that exactly. I am quoting below that press statement by Bangabandhu:

'Today, I am free to share the unbounded joy of freedom with my fellow countrymen, who have won their freedom in an epic liberation struggle. The ultimate achievement of this struggle is the creation of the independent, sovereign People's Republic of Bangladesh, of which my people declared me as the President while I was a prisoner in the condemned cell awaiting the execution of a sentence of hanging.'

'No people have had to pay as high a price in human life and suffering for their freedom as have been exacted from the people of Bangladesh. I cannot wait a single moment to return to my people. I congratulate our heroic people both at home and abroad and in particular, all sections of the Mukti Bahini, who have led the people to their cherished goal of freedom. I also mourn today the sacred memory of the millions of martyrs who lost their lives in the struggle for liberation and pray to Almighty for their departed souls. The independent sovereign People's Republic of Bangladesh, which has come into existence as a result of struggle is now an unchallengeable reality. I would like to thank all those freedom-loving States who have supported our national liberation struggle, in particular India, the Soviet Union, Poland and other East European countries, the United Kingdom and also those freedom-loving people





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

of the United States of America. I now appeal to all States to extend recognition to the People's Republic of Bangladesh, to enter into diplomatic relations with her and to support her immediate admission to the United Nations.'

'As regards the reported talks with Mr. Bhutto— the new President of Pakistan, those consisted of an appeal by Mr. Bhutto to me and to the people of Bangladesh through me to consider finding some possible link between them and the people of Bangladesh. I told him that I could not say anything about this matter until I return to my people. I reiterate that the existence of the People's Republic of Bangladesh is an unchallengeable reality and that her future relations with any other State must be based on this fundamental reality.'

After the statement, the question-answer session commenced. But none of us were prepared for the question that came first. A journalist whose head was only visible like that of Mohiuddin Chowdhury sitting beside Bangabandhu asked: You are asking help from all countries of the world for the rehabilitation of Bangladesh. Will you accept help from any country that comes forward? When Bangabandhu gave his reply in the affirmative, a supplementary question was asked: Will you accept such assistance if Israel comes forward with help? We were silent for a few moments, as we were not prepared for such a question. But that great man then said: No, if Israel comes forward with assistance, then we shall have to think over that. In effect, Bangabandhu declined to receive Israeli help by using a soft diplomatic language.

Bangabandhu had declared our foreign policy towards the Arab countries on that very day. He had announced the basic pillar of his foreign policy on the very first day of discharging





responsibility as the president of Bangladesh, which was to protest the unjust and repressive behaviour of Israel in the Middle-East, occupation of Arab lands following the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and refugee status of the Palestinians in their own land. Our solidarity and empathy with the Arab world as declared by Bangabandhu on that occasion continues even today in the same manner.

The British Government had been putting pressure on the Pakistani rulers, first General Yahya Khan and then Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, to release Bangabandhu from Pakistani captivity. After being freed, Bangabandhu went to London first. The British Government deserved thanks for the affection, care and honour shown to him there. Besides, till then the British Government had not accorded formal recognition to Bangladesh. Harold Wilson was the leader of the Labour Party, as well as, the Leader of the Opposition in British Parliament. The respect he showed for Bangabandhu by visiting him was undoubtedly an extraordinary gesture of goodwill demonstrated by the British people. It was true that the importance of Britain had diminished following the Second World War. But despite that, its importance and prestige was in the top row of nations of the world along with a few others.

Bangabandhu went to No. 10 Downing Street to meet the British Prime Minister Edward Heath in the afternoon of that day. The British Prime Minister had gone to Chequers, the previous day on 7 January to spend the weekend. But on hearing about Bangabandhu's arrival in London, the following day (8 January), he returned to London and welcomed Bangabandhu at his official residence. Many pictures were published in British newspapers the following day (Sunday) on Bangabandhu's programmes in London. One of those was





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

the farewell accorded to Bangabandhu by the Premier Edward Heath in front of his official residence at No. 10 Downing Street.

It seems that the cordiality shown by the British Prime Minister Edward Heath had a tremendous impact on Bangabandhu later on. The British Prime Minister had certainly gone to the Claridge's Hotel once to see Bangabandhu, but that was eight months later. Bangabandhu was a guest of the British Government at that juncture as well. He had gone to London then for the purpose of operating his gallbladder stone. That was the second time the two leaders met.

I also have a picture of Bangabandhu with Harold Wilson. The two were lighting pipes; it was 8 January 1972 at Bangabandhu's hotel room. The picture was published in the Daily Mail on the following day. The caption below was 'Lighting up time'. After getting the photograph, Anwar Hashim sent it to the British House of Commons office, for an autograph of Wilson on the picture. Wilson signed it with a small sentence. When the picture was returned to our mission, we were both euphoric and sad. Wilson had written: For Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, in friendship and admiration. After signing it, Harold Wilson mentioned the year as 1972 underneath.

Harold Wilson had expressed his friendship and admiration for Bangabandhu. We were overwhelmed by the goodwill and good wishes expressed by him for a new state. In fact, we did not request him to write anything, we only sought an autograph. We thought of sending the photo along with the autograph to Bangabandhu, but were saddened because the picture was crumpled while it was sent back to us from Wilson's office.





(When Harold Wilson autographed the photo, Bangabandhu had already assumed the office of Prime Ministership; that was the reason for addressing him as Prime Minister).

This photograph was also destroyed following the 15 August 1975 episode. But that crumpled picture still remains with me. Harold Wilson has also died. But those handwritten words of friendship and admiration for Bangabandhu still remains with me. This picture is more important for me compared to many other highly valuable items.

I still recollect a day in the month of September 1971. Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury was travelling to the Cuban Ambassador's office in London for meeting him. He also took me with him. While walking together, when the subject of Bangabandhu came up in our discussion, Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury said: Only three Bangalees could occupy places of honour on the global podium by presenting to the outside world the prestige and dignity of the Bangalees. They were: Rabindranath Tagore, Subhas Chandra Bose and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. It was under the charismatic leadership of Bangabandhu that Bangladesh could ultimately achieve independence, in exchange for the blood of three million martyrs after undergoing sufferings, tortures and repression over many years.

(Abridged version)

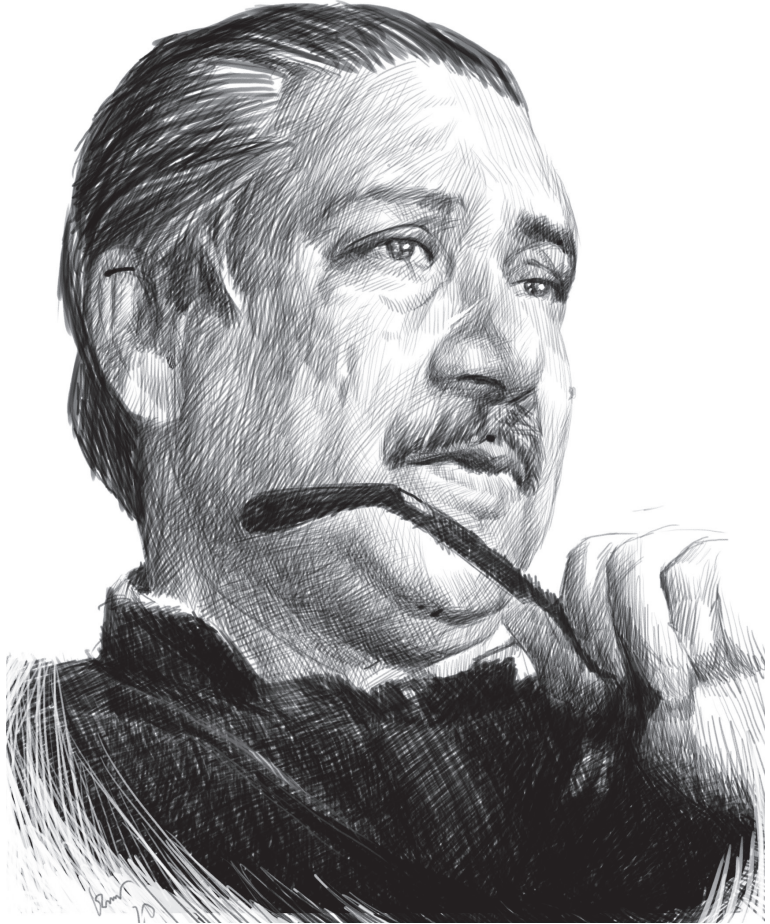
Mohiuddin Ahmed

*Former Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
(Translation: Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed)*





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO





BANGABANDHU'S DEVELOPMENT PHILOSOPHY: RECONSTRUCTION AND GROWTH WITH EQUITY

The central theme of Bangabandhu's idea about development was the overall development of the people of Bangladesh; in retrospect, it appears to be an inclusive development philosophy as well. He was a realist and visionary in that he had a dream for turning his land into a Golden Bengal (Sonar Bangla). Development is a vision added with planning and supportive action. Bangabandhu applied all these elements in his development philosophy.

As we seek to delineate the contours of Bangabandhu's development philosophy we stumble on the dearth of relevant source – materials. Bangabandhu, throughout his life spoke, roused and organised his people; had no time at all to concentrate on the attention – consuming delicate task of writing for laying bare his mind. He, however, had the necessary respite for doing some writing during his 3,053 days of incarceration; and the three outputs of which are *Ausamapta Atmajiboni* (The Unfinished Memoirs), *Karagarer Rojnamcha* (Prison Diary) and *Amar Dekha Nayachin* (New China as I Saw). These three books do prove the author's expertise as a reader-attracting writer; these are also the books which provide a window to look into his thoughts and ideologies. Nevertheless, his innumerable speeches/statements portray him as a leader who visioned and sought to rebuild Bangladesh. To delve deep into his development philosophy, we need to rummage through these speeches. Thus, not without reason, the eminent





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

American biographer Bill Adler said, “Nothing describes a person better than his words.”

In this essay, we specially pick up four speeches to explicate our purpose: 10 January 1972, 14 March 1972, 26 March 1975, and 19 June 1975. The first two speeches relate to the years between 1972 and 1975; while the latter two to the experiment of Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (BKSAL). Immediately after release from Pakistani incarceration Bangabandhu journeyed to London; where, at the press conference he faced the question from a journalist: ‘What would you do going back to Bangladesh which is totally devastated?’ Bangabandhu’s prompt reply was full of self-confidence of a visionary leader: ‘We will rise again if I have my land and people.’ He indeed envisaged a phoenix like rise of his dear and beleaguered country. He was a man of words and actions; during the 1,314 days he had as the leader of the independent country, Bangladesh did raise its proud head as the phoenix reborn.

It may be mentioned that the historic 7 March (1971) speech foreshadowed future independence through an armed struggle. On the other hand, 10 January (1972) speech was, in a nutshell, full of directives on how to rebuild the newly achieved country. Both the speeches were time-serving and pertinent to the circumstances. The 10 January speech, for example, contained at least fifteen directives on the ways and means for rebuilding the country. To begin with, there was one directive for our purpose in that speech where Bangabandhu said, for example, ‘my life-long toil has been for the purpose that the people would live in a free environment, and they would live happily well-fed and well-clad.’ We have to understand that he was, in fact,





envisaging socio- economic emancipation through building an exploitation-free Bangladesh. Mentionable as it is, the 7 March speech had a staccato sentence wherein emancipation was prioritized before independence. Moreover, this speech mentioned emancipation thrice; and independence only for once. And, after independence, the 10 January speech elaborated the meaning of emancipation in the above quote. Political independence loses meaning if not backed by economic emancipation; and this is the meaning in the context of what Bangabandhu said, ‘This independence would fail or remain incomplete if the people do not get food and unemployed youths do not get jobs.’ These statements clearly laid the foundation of the development strategies that would be undertaken in the days ahead.

Alongside these developmental directives, there was also a clear indication as to the political and/or ideological basis of the state of Bangladesh. He categorically stated, ‘Bangladesh will be an ideal state; the basis of which will not be any religion. The basis of the state will be democracy, socialism and secularism (the fourth principle of nationalism was later added at the time of writing the constitution).’ The idea of an ideal state defies any definitive meaning; but is clear that Bangabandhu envisaged an egalitarian state wherein the strategy of inclusive development would be pursued. At the same time, the enunciated fundamental principles of the state presaged a non-communal progressive polity. So, in socio-economic-political terms, Bangladesh would be a state where people would eke out a satisfactory living.

On 14 March 1972, at the gathering of Awami League volunteers Bangabandhu coined the slogan: ‘the struggle this time is for building the country.’ Comparable with this





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

slogan is the one that had been uttered in the 7 March (1971) speech: 'the struggle this time is for our emancipation. The struggle this time is for independence.' Contextually, the two slogans are worth noting; the first slogan was in keeping with the context of the circumstances, while later was in keeping with the then context. The slogans differed as the contexts changed; but both supplemented each other.

But in contents and significance, the speech on 26 March 1975 was more important for understanding Bangabandhu's development psyche. It may be mentioned that this speech followed the introduction of the revolutionary step called BKSAL (25 January 1975). At the time of passing the 4th Amendment to the constitution whereby the new system was constitutionally validated, Bangabandhu, in his statement got across the background quite succinctly: 'The amendment of today has been done not without a good deal of sorrow. We have struggled all our life. If someone is of the opinion that we have taken away people's voting right, I would say this is not the case. Under the newly instituted system the members of parliament would be elected by people's vote.' He further said, 'the new system under the amended constitution is also a democracy— democracy of the exploited. We want to build democracy here; we want here democracy of the exploited.'

To return to the 26 March speech, the new system appeared to be a turn- around for Bangladesh; and the purport and import of which were explained in this speech. The major political direction was given in such words as: 'Political independence will fail if not complemented by economic freedom. There cannot be any peace in life where the people do not have two square meals a day, clothes to wear, and





unemployment problem not solved.' He further exhorted his people that, 'as a nation, we have to be on a strong footing by becoming self-sufficient.'

Bangabandhu did not forget that to achieve such a set-goal there was to be a major social change. So, he had to blurt out: 'We want to hit the society hard the way we hit the Pakistanis. We want to hit this crumbling society hard.' Not only the society, but administration was also to be hit. So Bangabandhu gave the clarion call: 'this moth-eaten English and Pakistan period administration would not do. We have to overhaul this administration; and this would bring some good to the country, otherwise not. I have tried three years; and I have reached the ineluctable conclusion. The people have to understand the basics of administration.'

While speaking, Bangabandhu was aware of the want of the masses. Always a people-centric leader, he appeared to make a common cause with people's want as he bemoaned the fact that they had a sorrowful life, they had to go bare-bodied, and they did not get education properly. He also made a specific point that food was very important in the life of a human being.

In this speech, Bangabandhu identified corruption as the lead crisis in the society and administration. So, to deal with corruption the people were directed: 'Unite. Build fortresses in every house. If you can build such fortresses, 25 to 30 percent of the woes of the poor and hapless people of Bangladesh would go away. We have so many thieves in our midst! I do not know how these thieves are born. Pakistan has taken away everything of us, but we would have been better off had they taken away these thieves.' But Bangabandhu also indicated the ways to curb corruption.





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

He shared his views as: 'without people's backing corruption cannot be curbed by making government laws. Today I will exhort the people of Bengal to wipe corrupt people out of the soil as their number one job.'

The system of BKSAL was indeed a master-stroke to change the society and administration by wiping out bribery and corruption. Contrary to common misperception, the BKSAL was not a party; it did not fit into the definitional category of a party. It was, in reality, a national common platform created after three years of trials and tribulations, which, in Bangabandhu's own perception, were an exercise in futility. The BKSAL was thus a product of the exigencies of circumstances; and the progenitor, a realist and far-sighted leader to feel the need of the time. Crafted on the advice of Comrade Moni Singh and Professor Muzaffar Ahmed (pro-Moscow NAP), the system was a stop-gap and temporary measure to tide over the problems of enormous dimension. That the system was one of temporary duration was indicated by Bangabandhu himself. On having been quizzed, Bangabandhu disclosed the temporary nature of the system to his wife Bangamata Fazilatunnisa Mujib, Sheikh Hasina (who, in fact, conveyed Dr Wazed's concern) and Dr A.R. Mallick (eminent historian and the then Finance Minister), and Justice Sayem. But Bangabandhu's confession to Professor Kabir Chowdhury was more succinct as to the nature and future of the BKSAL. He said,

...what an unkind twist of fate! I have struggled all my life for democracy, spent so much time in jail, and now I am going to launch a one-party. I have never wanted this. I am compelled to do it. The pro-Pakistani Islamic parties, armed JSD [Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal] and the Sarbahara





Party are all upto destroying administrative and political stability. Many of my people have been killed unlawfully. Under such circumstances, finding no other alternative, I have floated the BKSAL as a common platform comprising the pro-liberation people. I will not accommodate in BKSAL any anti-socialist, anti-secularist, and above all, any anti-Liberation War party or element. One more point: not for consolidating my power, but I have taken this step for saving the country. This one-party system of mine will be of temporary nature. I will again get back to democracy after saving the country from the threat of the counter-revolutionaries. I will get back to multi-party democracy. But I will try not to make my democracy one of the exploiters. I want my hapless people to taste democracy.

But Bangabandhu was not given the time to see through to the end of the temporary period; he fell victim to the assassin's bullets on 15 August 1975. Under the circumstances, therefore, any negative opinion vis-a-vis the BKSAL system would be logically premature. Contrary evidence to the negative role of BKSAL galores. BKSAL had a tenure of 233 days only; and during which, all the indicators of Bangladesh showed upward trend besides return of normalcy to the overall situation which had been rendered into shambles during the years between 1972 and 1975 by the over-zealous government detractors. The economy now showed stability. The price of rice per seer came down to Tk. 5.00 from tk. 8.00; the price of one seer of potato was now Tk. one and a half; previously it had been Tk. 5.00. The middle-class expenditure index of the city of Dhaka was slashed from 458.5 (January) to 416.9 (April); and food index went down from 546.3 to 451.0. In August, there was bumper crop in a favorable weather.





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

The core of the BKSAL was a thorough administrative overhauling with emphasis on grassroots development as foreshadowed by the division of the country into 60 districts under district governors and village cooperatives. The envisaged end-result of the system was a people-centric, transparent and accountable delivery-effective public administration. On the other hand, the village cooperatives were slated to revolutionize the entire production system with a strategy of inclusive development. In retrospect, while sharing Bangabandhu's vision vis-à-vis BKSAL, five specific objectives could be identified, and these were: 1. elimination of corruption; 2. increase of production; 3. stop the profession of begging; 4. control population growth; and 5. overhaul the administration of colonial origin. In a nutshell, these objectives were enough to take Bangladesh on to a revolutionary path by making a clear break with the past. But comparatively speaking, the BKSAL put more emphasis on the development of peasants and agriculture. It may be mentioned that village, agriculture and peasants had been on Bangabandhu's mind ever since he had been in the saddle. As early as 11 February 1972, the media reported that the government was to introduce the Panchayat system as an interim arrangement with immediate effect at the union level, dissolving the then existing local councils under the Bangladesh Local Councils and Municipal Committees (Dissolution and Administration) Orders. Another innovation was a programme of the Gram Karmi Bahini (Village Workers Force), consisting of 40,000 young men drawn largely from among the Freedom Fighters with minimum ten members from each union. The programme was also supposed to include unemployed youths. Incidentally speaking, as we flip through the pages of his posthumous latest book, a travelogue, *Amar Dekha Nayachin*, it dawns





upon us that in doing these uplift works for the toiling masses he was possibly influenced by the experience of his tours of China in 1952 and 1957. Moreover, he had his own life-time experience of the exploited peasantry as once he confessed: 'I know what exploitation is by having been with the peasants.'

Bangabandhu undertook a number of specific steps to alleviate woes of the peasants and reorganize the land-holding system. First, tax remission for the ceiling of 25 bighas of land; this was a step that directly benefited the peasants. Second, to ensure equity, land-holding ceiling was fixed at 100 bighas. The surplus land was given to landless peasants. This was a direct affront to the capitalist system of land-holding. Third, poor peasants were allowed interest-free credit. Fourth, more than two million poor families were rehabilitated immediately after independence. Fifth, to help peasants, the price of insecticide and fertilizer was kept low through government subsidy. Moreover, to oversee agricultural production, agricultural workers were appointed in each union. Sixth, the price of such agricultural products as paddy, jute, tobacco and sugarcane was fixed so that peasants would get a fair price for their products. All these steps were meant to be consolidated through the BKSAL system.

What was the BKSAL all about? Without going for an analysis ourselves, let us hear from Bangabandhu himself to answer this rather loaded question. On 19 June 1975, while speaking before the BKSAL Central Committee, he highlighted everything about the new system, and the relevant part of this long speech was:

I am not an angel. I am not also a Satan. I am a human being; I will certainly err. If I err, I have to bear in mind





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

that I can rectify myself. . . . I am not angel that I can do everything good. If the newly introduced system fails to perform, alright, we will rectify it. I have to save my people at any cost. There has to be built an exploitation-free society in Bangladesh. . . .

Fundamentally, we want to build an exploitation-free society, we want to build a socialist economy. . . . We do not like to import it [socialism] from anywhere in the world. This is like me, like my land.

This quote reveals at least five aspects of Bangabandhu's vision vis-à-vis rebuilding Bangladesh. First, he admitted his failure during the trials and tribulations of 1972-1975. Second, the BKSAL was an inevitable circumstantial outgrowth – an experimental bid to rectify past mistakes. Third, Bangabandhu did not vouch for the flawlessness of the new system. Indeed, as he admitted, the new system would again be rectified, if on application, it failed to perform and deliver properly. Fourth, the BKSAL would be of a temporary nature. Fifth, and finally, the socialism envisaged was to be a home-grown one – Bangladeshi socialism, like the African socialism of the 1960s.

Much criticism has been labelled against the system by many, among whom many were Bangabandhu's close ones. True, one substantive and logical criticism was that it was anti-democratic and pro-authoritarian; a criticism which Bangabandhu was at pains to admit. In retrospect, it appears that the critiques and detractors were not as realist and far-sighted as Bangabandhu was; and one historical analogy would substantiate such an observation. Immediately after the Bolshevik Revolution took place (1917), Russia





was launched on the path of 'war communism' – that is, communism on a war footing. But by 1921, it dawned upon the communism gurus that a wrong path had been trodden, as the country had been in shambles. Under the circumstances, therefore, at the 10th party congress, Lenin himself piloted the adoption of the New Economic Policy (NEP) – a retreat from socialism, and to a mixed economy of socialism and capitalism. It was dubbed a strategic retreat to save the country and its people. It was, like BKSAL, an experiment which lasted upto 1928, although Lenin, the architect had died in 1924. By that time, Russia had been prepared to take off to a socialist path. History records that Lenin's experiment was a success, and Bangabandhu's was not – he was assassinated and his system terminated within 233 days of its introduction. If Lenin remains unassailed for his experiment, why is Bangabandhu? Perhaps history preserves the answer in reserve.

Whatever the philosophy that Bangabandhu had vis-à-vis development of Bangladesh was clearly enshrined in the relevant articles of the constitution. Article 10 envisaged a socialist economy for 'ensuring the attainment of a just and egalitarian society, free from the exploitation of man by man.' Article 13 vested ownership of everything relating to production on the people. Article 14 made it a fundamental duty of the state 'to emancipate the toiling masses .. and backward sections of the people from all forms of exploitation.' Article 15 made it a fundamental responsibility of the state to attain planned economic growth. By Article 16 the state was called upon to adopt effective measures to bring about a radical transformation in the rural areas.





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

This resume of Bangabandhu's development philosophy lays bare his two visions – growth with equity and inclusive development. He was certainly aware that mere growth sans equity is not development; development is growth with equity. In his 10 January 1972, homecoming speech, he set the goal for Bangladesh as an ideal state; and wherein the people would live in peace. This discussion makes it abundantly clear that he wanted to translate this vision into a reality by transforming Bangladesh into an abode of peace where people's welfare and wellbeing would be ensured. This was his message of peace to his people, as well as, to the world. Of the many descriptions of peace, the one that mattered to him was that development is peace. In Peter F. Drucker's perception 'leadership is doing right things.' If so, Bangabandhu did things right in his 1,314 days of stewardship.

Dr. Syed Anwar Hussain

Bangabandhu Chair

Professor, Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP)

Former Director General, Bangla Academy, Dhaka





Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman being interviewed by renowned journalist David Frost at his first official residence, Ganobhaban, which has been allocated for the Foreign Service Academy





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO





BANGABANDHU SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN: A PROFILE IN COURAGE

1 On 5 February 1966, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the charismatic leader of the Bangalees, placed the Six-Point charter of demands in a conference of the opposition parties of Pakistan in Lahore, and launched a national campaign to mobilize popular support. The demands, which ranged from our right of self-governance to economic parity to control of our own resources, were seen by the Pakistani military leadership as highly treasonous since in their estimation the prospect of losing control of the politics and economy – including the tax receipts and foreign exchange earnings – of the eastern wing of the country amounted to losing it altogether. Sheikh Mujib travelled to Sylhet soon after and addressed a huge public meeting in the Registry Grounds. I and some of my friends attended the meeting and made our way to the platform from where he would be speaking. It was going to be the first time I would see and listen to him. In an age when print mattered and visuality was very low, the image we carried of him was partly based on grainy and pixelated newspaper photos in black and white and partly from what we had heard from our elders, who were all excited at the prospect of getting back our rights under his leadership (he had by then become the president of Awami League, and galvanized it into action). But we were not prepared for the impact Sheikh Mujib would make on us as we first saw him, because, as he climbed on to the platform he made a huge impression on all of us with his distinctive personality. Tall, good-looking and elegant with a





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

thick crop of hair and a broad smile on his face – probably in response to the size of the crowd that had gathered around him – he exuded confidence which, in course of his speech, energized his entire audience. Before he began his speech, he briefly cast his eyes in our direction and we were struck by the intensity of his look, as if he would begin a vigorous conversation with us. I could see why his opponents felt so unsettled in front of his intense and penetrating look because it revealed a personality that had the right combination of vision and focus, courage and compassion. As we huddled together and listened to his speech, we were fascinated by his strong and resonant voice; by the way he modulated it and made it rise and fall in response to the emotions and hard facts he conveyed. This was magnetic speaking at its best. And later, when we discussed what he had said – the six points clearly and convincingly explained, the need for political action based on them, the imperatives of unity and collective participation and never losing courage in our fight for economic and political emancipation – we realized life for us would not be the same from then onward. The afternoon was momentous. We had witnessed the beginning of a movement that would define us as a nation and the arrival of the leader to take us there. We had, of course, no way of knowing that we would be in a war five years down the line, but the super charged atmosphere of the Registry Grounds that warm afternoon, gave out enough signals about the nature of our struggle: a do or die situation that we would have to face with courage and determination.

Sheikh Mujib was subsequently arrested and put to jail, which was more like a second home to him, having spent more than a decade within its confines as a political





prisoner. As the Pakistanis launched a counter attack, which predictably included rounding up campaigners and firing on protesters, public resentment and anger mounted. The next couple of years were marked by an intensification of the Bangalees' resolve to realize the six-point demands and a hardening of attitude among the Pakistani leadership. Mujib while in jail again charged with a sedition case, the Agartala Conspiracy Case, and put on trial in June 1968. As the trial proceeded it became clear to us that our days with Pakistan would soon be over. The newspapers reported the trial proceedings in detail, and we could see how Mujib was facing his prosecutors with patience and fortitude. It soon became apparent that the trial itself was a conspiracy by the Pakistani leadership to put a stop to our struggle for autonomy and eliminate Mujib from the political scene. We couldn't allow them to get away with their plan, so there was a mass uprising which forced the Pakistanis to withdraw the case and release Mujib. In a large public meeting in Dhaka on 23 February 1969, two days after his release, the student leadership of Dhaka University declared him as 'Bangabandhu', meaning 'Friend of Bengal'. From then on, he began to be called Bangabandhu.

I had taken admission in Dhaka University in 1968 and within a few months found myself in the thick of the political movement centering around the Agartala Conspiracy Case. I kept track of what was happening and joined the crowd celebrating his release. I also attended a couple of meetings he addressed. I could see that his determination to keep fighting for our rights had steeled, and his courage had remained unflinching. I also noted with admiration that he had made all the right decisions in dealing with the Pakistani





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

Generals – who had taken over the country's governance – particularly in regard to the national and provincial assembly elections which were set for 7 and 17 December 1970. And after Awami League won the national and provincial elections and the President (who was also a General) began to drag his feet about when and where to call the session of the new parliament, Bangabandhu maintained the proper combination of courage and character in dealing with him and exposing the second round of Pakistani conspiracy – this time to steal his claim to the office of the Prime Minister of the country. By 1 March 1971, when the scheduled National Assembly session was postponed by the President, we all had realized that our struggle for autonomy had shifted gear: it was now a struggle for independence. Then the moment of reckoning arrived. In the afternoon of 7 March Bangabandhu was expected to deliver a speech, which, by all estimation, would spell out our future course of action. A million strong audience greeted him as he arrived at the Race Course ground. I had found a place, once again, near to the dais – in the enclosure for journalists, to be precise – and was feeling the same excitement I had felt five years ago when I first heard him speak. Earlier on the day, a radio journalist from UK had asked me to be his interpreter and I had gladly agreed, expecting him to give me an account of how the press in UK evaluated Bangabandhu. As an interpreter I was supposed to translate the speech as accurately as I could. I did translate the first few lines, which were a bit subdued. But soon the magnetic speaker in him took over and his booming voice resonated from loudspeakers. The journalist asked me to stop translating so that he could concentrate on the speech. 'Let the man speak,' he said, and asked me to jot down key words instead. For the next twenty minutes





he sat immobile, his eyes fixed on Bangabandhu, wondering how to describe the performance he was witnessing. Later, sitting under the shade of a tree in the sprawling campus of the university, I gave the reporter a summary of the speech. 'I could guess what he said,' he told me, 'he was so articulate!' As for me, the speech was magical, momentous and electrifying. I knew we were on the threshold of a new era.

I asked the reporter what impressed him most about Bangabandhu. 'His courage,' he replied. 'It takes courage to stand up to an army that now runs Pakistan, an army which has gone rogue and ruthless.'

As we parted, he smiled and told me, 'Get your courage up. You'll need every ounce of it now.'

2 It was courage indeed that kept us focused on our mission throughout the difficult times we passed after the Pakistani crackdown on the Bangalees on the midnight of 25 March 1971. While in school we had read some lessons about courage. I still remember our benign English teacher reading out a quote from Aristotle and asking us how it affected our personal lives: 'No one can do anything in this life without courage. It is the greatest quality of the mind next to honour.' In 1971, when it mattered the most, it was courage that roused us to fight for the honour of the country. And courage is something that Bangabandhu exemplified in everything he did. He showed great courage in his long battle against the military rulers of Pakistan, against the communal and divisive forces amongst us that they patronized (in 1971 many of them





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

turned against our people by becoming Rajakars, Al Badrs, Al Shams) and against any form of exploitation, bigotry and parochialism. It was his courage which endeared him to the millions of his compatriots and made him an enemy to those who never accepted the dismemberment of Pakistan. In the three books that he wrote while in prison, and published only recently – *The Unfinished Memoirs*, *Prison Diary* and *New China as I Saw*, as well as, in the five of the fourteen published volumes of compilation of the notes and comments of the Pakistani intelligence on his activities, there are ample evidences of his acts of courage. We know, for example, how, during the Calcutta riots of 1946, Bangabandhu faced the mobs rampaging through Muslim and Hindu neighborhoods, and again in 1964, the mobs that threatened the lives of Hindus in Dhaka during the short lived riot. It was his courage that helped shape our foreign policy away from undue influences by any outside power or face the near starvation situation that prevailed in a part of the country in 1974, triggered partly by the last minute withdrawal of US food supply. It was his courage again, that gave us a constitution that still remains uniquely liberal even after a series of changes and amendments made by narrow minded rulers who took over the reins of the country after the brutal assassination of Bangabandhu on 15 August 1975, or the Education Policy that reflected the progressive and secular spirit of the constitution.

As I reflect on my first encounter with Bangabandhu in 1966 and the last one in that magical afternoon of 7 March 1971, I am reminded of another quote our English teacher had read out to us (for some reason, he had decided that courage was one virtue we needed most in life). This was





from a Chinese philosopher (we never knew his name), who believed that when someone loves you deeply, it gives you strength, but loving that someone back gives you courage. I can now see what gave Bangabandhu that courage: it was his deep love and commitment to his people. In his *The Unfinished Memoirs* he recalls one of his visits to a village where he met an old woman who had come a long way just to see him. His love for the poor and the helpless masses of his country was deep and abiding. They also loved him back with the same ardor. In *Prison Diary* he writes about missing two yellow birds that gave him company in his days of solitary confinement and about the suffering of children in Dhaka Central jail who were often picked up by the police from the streets. He wrote his memoirs and the diary without ever realizing these would be published. Their first readers were his jailors, who were in a position to blot out anything that they did not like. That the three books survived was a miracle.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman kept his faith in what he believed, which gave him the courage to face the world and to lead from the front. He lived the life of his dreams and inspired all of us to follow him. He left when we needed him the most, but his legacy lives on. His life and leadership give us courage to dream big and work hard.

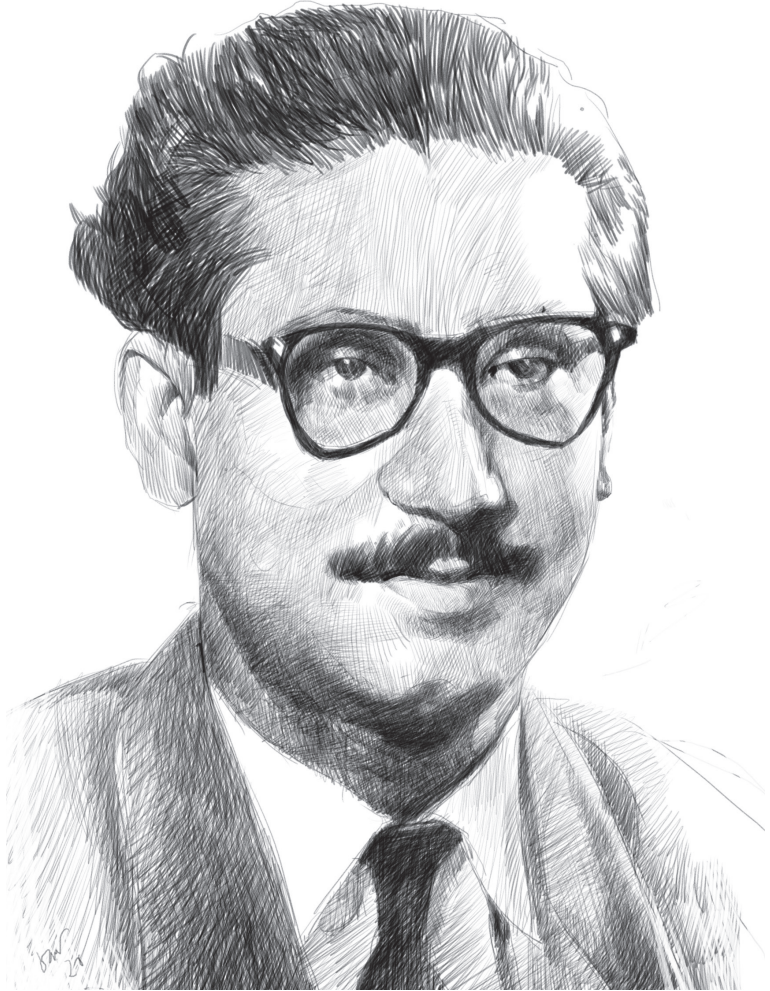
Syed Manzoorul Islam

*Former Professor, University of Dhaka
Professor, School of Arts and Humanities
University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh*





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO





BANGABANDHU'S FOREIGN POLICY AND THE WORLD

Diplomatic practices, not only in the present world, but did exist in ancient times for establishment of relations or cooperation between states. The head of a state or country used to send his trustworthy person as his special envoy at the time of need especially in crisis or delight. Usually the envoy had to carry some important message. The envoy's activities never crossed the boundary of the purpose of his mission. An envoy normally had never to face any disaster whether he could bring any positive result or not, even if the situation went more severe. Later on, that practices took the shape of present day diplomacy. Consequently foreign policies were formulated to establish diplomatic relations among states.

Formulation of foreign policies and their implementation depend on the political philosophy of a country's leadership and its equation of relations with other countries. The success of foreign policies can not only be earned by framing powerful foreign policies but it needs a powerful leadership. Actually a country's success in international relations depends on the degree of correlation between its foreign policy and leadership. Bangladesh is not an exception to that.

Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was flown to London in the morning of 8 January after he was released from Pakistan's jail in the night of 7





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

January 1972. In London, he met British Prime Minister Edward Heath. He returned to Bangladesh on 10 January via India. At New Delhi, Bangabandhu was accorded a very warm reception which was attended by Indian President V. V. Giri, Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi and other cabinet ministers in addition to millions of Indian people.

At returning home, Bangabandhu faced a Bangladesh with burnt houses, destroyed roads. The central bank was empty. In that situation, he had to shoulder the responsibility of his motherland, as well as, his people. Bangabandhu was bewildered in his dream of reconstructing the independent Bangladesh. It was only possible for a brave patriotic leader like him to shoulder such a difficult responsibility standing on the piles of ruins. That self-confident and farsighted person did not wait for a single moment to start the work of reconstruction of the country. The drafting of country's constitution began. At the same time, foreign policies were drawn up. Based on the basic elements of his foreign policies – 'friendship to all, malice towards none' and 'friendly co-existence', the present Bangladesh has established such stronger relationship with the world community.

Bangabandhu did not only think of the welfare of his people, but he always felt the miseries of the have-nots of the world. He used to say, 'The world is divided into two parts- oppressors and oppressed. And I am with the oppressed'. Bangabandhu never stood silent if there were any injustice and exploitation at any place against any person irrespective of caste or creed. Since his early years, Bangabandhu demonstrated attributes that of a world leader who always spoke for the oppressed





people and peace. Bangabandhu was said to have a heart of gold and was compared with the Himalayas. He stood against apartheid in Africa, foreign occupation in Asia and Africa or Latin America. He expressed his solidarity with the people of Palestine. In the same way, he condemned the overthrowing of the democratically elected Government of Cyprus.

Bangabandhu went to Kolkata on 6 February 1972. The Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi received him at Domdom Airport. During the visit, it was decided that India would withdraw its army from Bangladesh by March. Accordingly on 1 March, India declared withdrawal of its army from Bangladesh and the withdrawal was completed on 15 March. Bangabandhu visited Moscow from 29 February to 6 March. Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi came to Bangladesh on 17 March. The two Prime Ministers signed a 25-year Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Peace on 19 March. Bangabandhu met the British Prime Minister Edward Heath on 18 August. From London he went to Geneva on 21 August as their guest. On his return from Geneva on 13 September, he held talks with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi during his stop over at New Delhi.

In 1972, Bangladesh became member of IMF (17 June), ILO (22 June), Inter-Parliamentary Union (20 September), UNESCO (19 October), Colombo Plan (6 November) and GATT (9 November).

On 8 August 1972, Bangladesh officially forwarded application to UN Secretary General seeking UN





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

membership. Bangabandhu, on 10 August, wrote to all members of the Security Council for their support. On 23 August, a resolution backed by UK, India, USSR and Yugoslavia urged UN Security Council to admit Bangladesh but China vetoed. However, UN General Assembly, on 30 November, recommended Bangladesh's membership.

In September, Bangladesh Peace Council urged the US government to stop all bombings in Vietnam. Patrice Lumumba University of USSR decided to award peace medal to Bangabandhu on 23 November. Students' Union of Bangladesh organized a procession on 22 December to condemn the resumption of US bombing on North Vietnam.

On 9 February 1973, UN Secretary General Dr Kurt Waldheim called on Bangabandhu at 'Ganobhaban', the office of the Prime Minister. Yugoslav Prime Minister Mr. Dzemal Bijedic arrived in Dhaka on 25 March. Bangabandhu left Dhaka for Belgrade on 26 June on a 17-day visit to Yugoslavia and Canada. Yugoslavian President Marshal Tito pledged all out support to Bangladesh including admission to NAM and UN. On 7 August, Bangabandhu addressed the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Ottawa. Bangabandhu left Dhaka on 6 September for Algiers to attend the 4th NAM Summit. During the Summit, he met King Faisal, President Tito, President Anwar Sadaat, President Idi Amin, President Gaddafi and Prime Minister Takeddine Sloth. He went to Tokyo on 18 October on a 7-day visit. He also paid a short visit to Malaysia that year.





Bangabandhu loved his people as much his people loved him. In April, Bangabandhu sent a message to UN Secretary General proposing unconditional and immediate repatriation of all Bangalees from Pakistan and all Pakistanis from Bangladesh. During the visit of UN High Commissioner for Refugees to Dhaka in May, Bangabandhu urged him to save Bangalees in Pakistan. On 28 August, India and Pakistan signed an agreement for resolving repatriation of half a million Bangalees and Pakistanis. Bangabandhu hailed this agreement. British Prime Minister Edward Heath in a message assured Bangabandhu all possible help for repatriation of Bangalees. Finally the repatriation began on 19 September (first batch of 168 persons).

In 1973, Bangladesh became a member of ADB (18 February), ICAO (28 February), ECAFE (23 April) and FAO (12 November). The Foreign Ministers of NAM approved Bangladesh's membership for NAM on 3 September.

Bangabandhu hailed Vietnam peace accord on 24 January. The World Peace Council during its 3-day Asian Conference in May in Dhaka conferred Bangabandhu with Juliet Curie Gold Medal for Peace. On 10 July, National Assembly of Pakistan passed a resolution authorising President Bhutto to accord recognition to Bangladesh. In July, Bangladesh condemned Portugal's atrocities in Mozambique. Bangladesh, on 21 July, recognized the new Afghan government headed by Sarder Mohammad Daud Khan. Bangladesh also accorded recognition to the provisional Revolutionary Government of Vietnam in July.





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

On 6 October 1973, Bangabandhu condemned the Israeli aggression in the Middle East. He instructed to send one lakh pounds of tea for Egypt and Syria as gift. He hailed Tito-Boumedienne move for a concerted effort of the non-aligned countries in support of Arab cause. Bangabandhu sent a medical team to Egypt and Syria in aid to war victims in Arab-Israel war.

1974 began with a 4-day visit of New Zealand Prime Minister Mr. Norman Kirk. Yugoslav President Marshall Tito arrived in Dhaka on 29 January. The Secretary General of OIC visited Dhaka in February. Pakistan gave recognition to Bangladesh on 22 February. Bangabandhu went to Lahore on 23 February to attend the OIC Summit. President of Egypt Anwar Sadat arrived in Dhaka on 25 February. On 8 March, Algerian President Col. Houari Bomedienne had a stopover in Dhaka and held talks with Bangabandhu. In March, Bangabandhu went to Moscow for treatment. President Ne Win of Myanmar visited Bangladesh in the last week of April. Bangabandhu went to India on 12 May on a 5-day visit. Mr. Leopold Sedar Senghor, President of Senegal paid a visit in the last week of May. On 1 June, President of Bangladesh went to Bhutan to attend the coronation ceremony of King Jigme Singye Wangchuk. Indian President V V Giri came to Dhaka on 15 June on a 5-day visit. Pakistan Prime Minister visited Bangladesh in June. President of South Vietnam Nguyen Hu Thu had a brief stopover at Dhaka in September.

On 17 September, UN General Assembly unanimously approved the entry of Bangladesh in the UN as its 136th





member. Bangabandhu left Dhaka on 23 September to attend the UNGA. He spoke before the UNGA in Bangla. He met US President Gerald Ford at the White House on 1 October.

In the first week of October, Bangabandhu paid a visit to Iraq. US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger came to Dhaka in October. Bangabandhu went to Kuwait on 10 November on a 4-day visit. Malaysian King arrived in Dhaka on 3 December. Bangabandhu left for Abu Dhabi on 18 December. The King of Bhutan paid a visit to Dhaka in December. Director General of FAO also came to Dhaka in December.

On 19 July, Bangladesh condemned the use of force aimed at overthrowing the democratically elected government of the Republic of Cyprus headed by Archbishop Makarios. In its first appearance before the UN Security Council on 22 October, Bangladesh urged for immediate expulsion of South Africa from the UN.

Bangladesh became a founder member of the Islamic Bank in August. In November, the site for construction of a 3 mile long bridge over Jamuna was finally selected by Japan and Bangladesh. UNGA nominated Bangladesh to its Commission on Namibia on 19 December.

On 19 January 1975, Australian Prime Minister EG Whitlam came to Dhaka. Crown Prince Akihito of Japan arrived in Dhaka on 20 February. A Bangladesh delegation attended the coronation of the Nepalese monarch held in





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

February. President of Asian Development Bank (ADB) came to Bangladesh in March. President of Afghanistan Muhammad Daud arrived in Dhaka on 14 March on a two-day visit. President of Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) arrived in Dhaka in March. Bangabandhu spoke at the Commonwealth Summit Conference in Kingston on 5 May.

Bangladesh was elected a member of the Executive Council of World Tourism Organisation (WTO) and the Executive Board of World Health Organisation on 19 May and 22 May respectively. On 23 June, Bangladesh was elected as the Vice President of the World Food Council.

From January 1972 to July 1975, Bangladesh received more than a hundred delegations including about fifty VVIPs. During this short time, Bangladesh signed more than seventy treaty, agreement, memorandum and contract with countries all over the world. Many countries and organisations like India, USSR, Sweden, Germany, USA, IDA, Japan, Poland, UK, Canada, Denmark, UNICEF, UN, Australia, France, WFP, UAE, Qatar, Bulgaria, Belgium, Algeria, Netherlands, UNHCR, etc provided billions of dollar as credit, grant, aid, soft loan, assistance and donation (for flood victims).

Bangladesh lost its dynamic leader on 15 August 1975 when it was independent only for three and half years when it had just started its journey. People all over the world became astounded. World leaders, except few, reproached. Millions of Bangalees silently were drowned in tears. The





people, who had grabbed the power unconstitutionally, started implementation of their authority on a country that was born on the blood of thousands of martyrs. However, directly or indirectly, the military ran the country till 1991.

All the countries of the world except a few recognized Bangladesh as an independent country during Bangabandhu's time. What could be more than this success of our foreign policies? In fact, Bangabandhu's leadership, wisdom and personal relationship with world leaders played an important role behind this success. Analysis of the success Bangladesh attained so far in international sector since independence confirms that no other head of government of Bangladesh was able to reach at such height of our foreign relations like Bangabandhu had done.

Dr. A. K. M. Atiqur Rahman

Freedom Fighter, Author

Columnist and Retired Ambassador





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO





BIRTH CENTENARY OF THE FATHER OF THE NATION & OUR ASPIRATION

Year 2020 is the birth centenary of the Father of the Bengali Nation – Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. This is an immensely auspicious and hugely significant moment in the history of Bangladesh and the Bengali nation. The nation will celebrate the Anniversary with great exuberance and spontaneity. We are eagerly waiting for the celebrations to commence. This year 2020, will remain as an extraordinary milestone in our lives. The Government has already formed two committees in this regard: ‘National Committee for the Celebration of the Birth Centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’ and ‘National Implementation Committee for the Celebration of the Birth Centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’. Eminent persons and dignitaries from all walks of the state and the society have been inducted into the committees. The Hon. Speaker, the Hon. Chief Justice, eminent political leaders, academicians, Industrial- Cultural-Sports and Media luminaries and Religious Leaders have been included in the committees. H.E Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is chairing the National Committee for the Celebration.

The programs to celebrate the Birth Centenary is being coordinated by The National Implementation Committee. This committee has already formulated an action plan for the celebration which has already been approved by the Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The Cabinet Division of the Government is providing administrative support to the Implementation Committee. An office has also been established at the International Mother Language Institute, Dhaka with the help of Ministry of Education.





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had chaired the first joint meeting of both the committees. The meeting carefully weighed various proposals to celebrate the year-long programme. The Birth Centenary overlaps with the exclusive timeline of national glory – the fifty years of achieving freedom of Bangladesh.

Furthermore, a good number of milestones of development and prosperity indicators transect with the timeline – adding a more profound significance to the Birth Centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. These include, the Golden Jubilee of Independence, creation of the Digital Bangladesh and the attainment of Middle-Income Country status for Bangladesh. All this and more come from the persistent and consistent efforts for upholding the electoral manifesto and commitment of the present government. Numerous scholarly articles have been written on these subjects.

Bangabandhu embarked on the dream journey of building prosperous 'Sonar Bangla' (Bengal of Gold). While his untimely assassination prevented him from seeing to the end of his journey – the dream was picked up and given its due momentum by his able daughter Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina when she took up the mantle of leadership in 2009. Today, Bangladesh as a state, following the global vision of the Father of the Nation under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, has achieved global recognition in its journey towards fulfilling its socio-economic responsibilities to its people at one hand and towards assuming its global role as a distinguished member of the international community to maintain a world order ensuring peace, harmony, security and stability for the humanity as a whole.

It has been stated in the 2018 election manifesto of Bangladesh Awami League, 'Our beloved motherland





Bangladesh stands at the final stage of completing fifty years of independence and the Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. It is our commitment to the nation that we will celebrate the golden jubilee of Independence and the Birth Centenary of the Bangabandhu and to materialize the Vision 2021 to build a happy, affluent future'. The pledge to building a thriving Bangladesh has been added to the celebration of the Birth Centenary and Golden Jubilee of Independence which has provided this whole arrangement a far-reaching significance.

Celebrating birth centenaries is a common practice across countries and nations of the world. Countries and nations rally around such celebrations for consolidating their own ideas of integrity and unity as nations and also to render a shape to their collective vision. Presently, celebration of the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi is going on. Mahatma Gandhi was born on 2 October, 1869. Different committees have been formed in India to take necessary steps in this matter as well. Already the birth Centenary of Shrimoti Indira Gandhi has been observed. She was born on 19 November 1917. The birth Centenary of Nelson Mandela, the iconic leader of South Africa was celebrated some days ago. In the recent past, birth sesqui-centenary of Rabindranath Tagore was jointly observed by India and Bangladesh.

History is nothing but the fulfillment of the will of the people. However, contextualizing the significance of an individual from the perspective of the collective is also very important. Some individuals, over the course of time, emerge as the voice of their nations. An individual rises as an institution from the masses by virtue of his or her quality, ability and courage. To attain such heights, the individual needs to be imbued with an aura of both perseverance and





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

intelligence. All epic life stories of such magnitude need to go through long and strenuous paths of a constant struggle. This is the story of the hero or a national archetype. The hero guides his or her nation towards finding itself and the hero opens up new horizons of emancipation by embracing the aspiration, desire and dreams of the common people.

Recent disclosures from jail records suggest that Bangabandhu languished for 3,053 days in jail. Starting from his apprehension during the first Language Movement on 11 March 1948, jail became his usual place of residence. We came to know about many minute details of those days from the famous books 'Ausamapta Atmajiboni (The Unfinished Memoirs)' and 'Karagarer Rojnamcha (Prison Diary)' and in the recently published book 'Secret Documents of Intelligence Branch on Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman'.

Bangabandhu transcended into an extraordinary height. He transformed himself from being an individual to being the leader of the collective. He embodied the wishes, dreams and aspirations of all his peoples. His 7th March address has been included in UNESCO's 'Memory of the World Register'. This address was an indication of change in the course of history of Bangladesh as none before him could unite the Bengali nation and call for freedom. On his clarion call, the Bengali nation rose and made a valiant endeavor to break the chains shackling their motherland.

The 7th March Address remains as one of the best of its kind. On one side the marauding Pakistan army and their local collaborators were ready with their mechanized killing machines and on the other side – a fearless, indomitable hero – igniting the flame of freedom into the hearts of the unarmed Bengali. He emerged to be the sole symbol of an entire nation. That day, on 7th March 1971, he was no





longer a simple individual or a leader, rather he embodied a thousand years history of the entire Bengali Nation and transformed himself as an echo for his people. He is the first sovereign Bengali to govern a state by the power of his own people.

In the post liberation period, Bangladesh rose from rubbles like the mythical Phoenix. Bangabandhu started the dream journey of second revolution to build the coveted Shonar Bangla. He attained martyrdom by the bullets of miscreants. But his spirit keeps shining bright like an eternal beacon.

We know of few great human souls of such magnificence in the history of mankind. Bangabandhu emerged as the greatest leader of the Bengali Nation through his bravery, steadfast determination and extraordinary eloquence. Reputation of having extra-ordinary qualities and traits, as well as, charismatic leadership, Bangabandhu crossed the boundary of his country and nation making him not only the leader of Bangladesh but also a global leader standing against oppression of any kind and in favour of the oppressed wherever in the world they may be. Imprisonment, oppression and torture – nothing could restrain him from taking up the challenge of standing against subjugation and suppression of human being and human rights.

To the younger generations, he has turned out to be a flame of inspiration. He provides the courage and light for the journey of prosperity of Bangladesh which is led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Hence, it is not a mere birthday, rather a rare opportunity to pay tribute to the soul who set the Bengalis free. In addition, it is also the time for the collective manifestation of gratefulness of the nation to the person who has formed this nation, provided the contour and integrated this nation to world spirit. During his lifetime, he came to be recognized in the world as the 'leader





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

of the oppressed'. Moreover, in the eyes of the world leaders like Fidel Castro, his personality was like the towering Himalayas. He was acclaimed as the 'Poet of Politics' in world media.

Bangabandhu was the leader of this nation and the world. The Bengali people around the globe and indeed, all people who aspire for freedom and independence, is expected to extend their gratitude and love by celebrating the 100th birth anniversary of Bangabandhu in 2020 with us. We are hopeful that this programme will make a glorious mark in the pages of history. In addition, it will also be full of festivity – a token for memory.

We expect the youth to be involved in this celebration extensively. They are the ones who would emerge as the architect of Bangladesh by taking the lessons from the glorious history of his life. Bangabandhu initiated the second revolution in this country. Now the world has reached the doorstep of the 4th revolution in terms of advancement of science and technology. The study of our history and heritage combined with the innovation and prosperity will assist Bangladesh becoming a prosperous and developed nation. His life remains a treasure trove for our past and for our present. It remains a radiant lighthouse for our future.

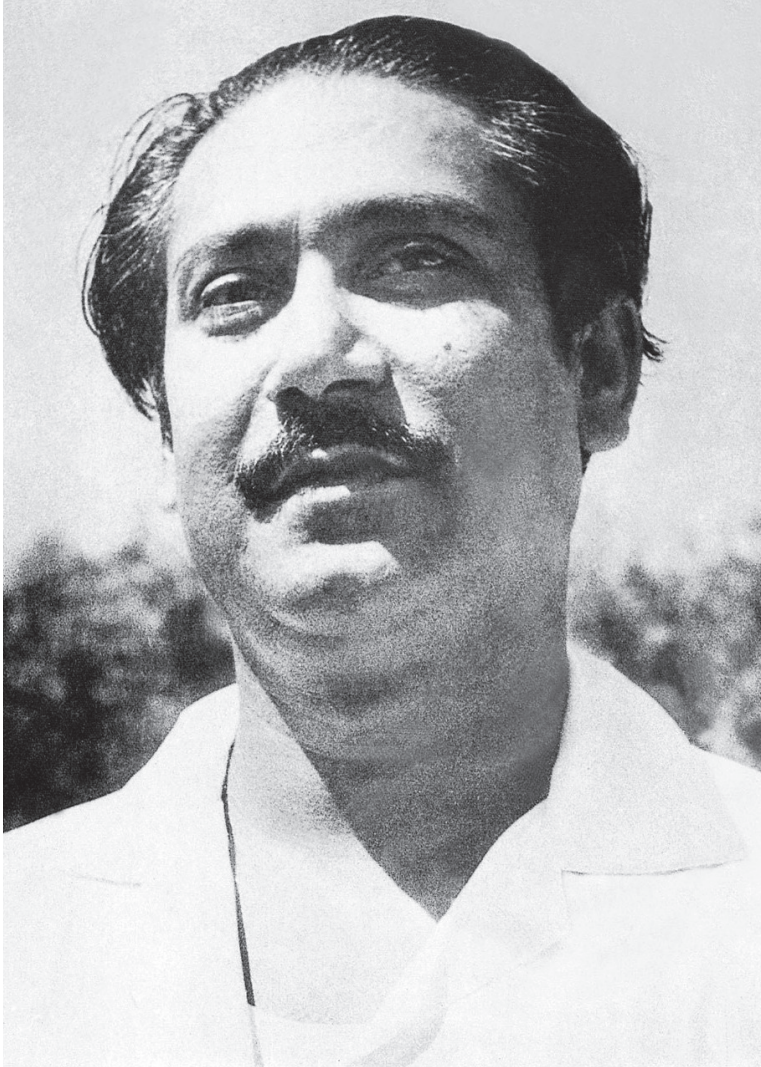
On the eve of celebrating the Birth Centenary of Bangabandhu, we expect that Bangladesh will be enlightened by the ever emanating radiance of this great soul.

Dr. Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury

Member Secretary of the National Committee for the Celebration of the Birth Centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman & Chief Coordinator of the National Implementation Committee.



BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO





BANGABANDHU SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN'S INITIATIVE ON HUMANITARIAN SERVICE IN INTERNATIONAL ARENA LEADING TO FUTURE JOURNEY OF BANGLADESH IN THIS FIELD

We recall with reverence the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on the auspicious occasion of his birth centenary. Deprived of their rights, the repressed Bangalees could emerge victorious against the powerful Pakistani military force because of the foresight, love for his people, intellect and mindset of this great leader. He had tremendous sympathy and affection for the suffering masses in different regions of the globe. Consequently, he took such a timely humanitarian decision in October 1973 for human welfare by means of which the door to the infinite potentials of Bangladesh was opened up on the global stage.

The joining and contributions of Bangladesh to the United Nations Peacekeeping Missions have been a matter of pride for us. The armed forces of Bangladesh have been running this program for many years. The Bangladesh Armed Forces and Bangladesh Police have remained actively involved in UN Peacekeeping Operations since 1988. The armed forces of Bangladesh have helped in creating a bright image for Bangladesh in the international arena by accomplishing





their tasks during disasters both at home and abroad through demonstrating humanism, efficiency and untiring efforts. Notable among the peacekeeping missions were: Reconstruction of Kuwait (OKP or Operation Kuwait Punargathan) in 1990; Operation SAARC Bandhan following Tsunami in Sri Lanka and Maldives in 2004; the mission following the cyclone 'Nargis' in Myanmar in 2008; and the earthquake in Haiti in 2010. Besides, the armed forces, the police and civilian staffs have made significant contributions by participating in numerous UN Peacekeeping Missions, such as: UNIIMOG, UNGOMAP, UNTAG, MINARSO, UNIKOM, UNGCI, UNAMIC, UNPROFOR, UNTAC, UNOSOM, UNIMOG etc.

The Arab-Israeli War had commenced on Saturday, 6 October 1973 at 2:00 pm immediately after mid-day. This war is also known as the 1973 Arab-Israel War, the Ramadan War, etc. The war lasted until 25 October. Bangabandhu was always concerned about the repressed people of the world. As he was keen about helping them, he promptly extended support to the Arab countries in their just war. It was not confined to mere moral support; a decision was taken to send a team of military doctors for actively participating in the war. It may be noted that many Arab countries had not accorded formal recognition to Bangladesh till then. Above everything else, Bangabandhu sent the assistance out of humanitarian consideration despite the uncertainties and risks inherent in the situation.

That historic decision taken by Bangabandhu was very courageous, one that wielded a far-reaching impact. It may be mentioned that only a few Muslim countries outside the



Middle-East had taken such a brave decision against powerful America, Europe and Israel. Bangabandhu summoned the Director and Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Muhammad Zamir and directed him to accompany the medical team after completing all administrative formalities. He also called the Army Chief Brigadier K.M. Shafiullah and the Director of Army Medical Services Colonel Khurshid Uddin Ahmed, and told them that the Middle-Eastern Arab and Muslim countries were in grave danger; it was therefore, our humanitarian obligation to stand beside them at this critical juncture. Although our capacity was limited, standing beside the suffering brethren was our duty.

Colonel Khurshid became very emotional on hearing Bangabandhu's words. It may be mentioned that Colonel Khurshid Uddin Ahmed was one of the principal accused in the Agartala Case. He was then a captain and was the accused number 34. The Pakistani intelligence agency ISI had brutally tortured him during interrogations while the case was in progress. Bangabandhu had great affection for Khurshid Uddin from that time onwards. Glancing at Khurshid Uddin he said affectionately; Khurshid, I am sending you on this tough mission. After saluting Bangabandhu, Khurshid Uddin said: Sir, I shall accomplish this mission successfully even at the peril of my life. Later on, Bangabandhu instructed 7 officers from the Army Headquarters and 21 soldiers were assigned for this task and directed them to take preparations swiftly. Before the mission's departure, Bangabandhu invited the 28-member contingent to his office and issued necessary directives. While concluding, he said: 'The welfare of the





repressed people, and the prestige of Bangladesh depend upon your successful performance.' This prediction by the Father of the Nation proved to be accurate: Later Bangladesh also sent 4 tons of tea-leaves with the medical team that went to Egypt and Syria.

The team of Bangladesh Army that participated in a foreign mission for the first time left Bangladesh on 19 October 1973. The group included Colonel Khurshid Uddin Ahmed, the Director and Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Muhammad Zamir, Major Amir Ali, Major Shafiqul Islam, Captain Shahjahan, Captain Noor Hossain, Captain Rezaul Islam, Captain Mafidul Islam and others. The Bangladesh contingent took off from Tejgaon Airport aboard a Boeing 707 aircraft at 10:00 am in the morning.

In accordance to their plan, the team was supposed to land in Baghdad first. But the Israeli planes were attacking the area. Therefore, the Bangladeshi aircraft flew towards Syria after refueling from Dubai. But the plane could not land in Damascus and Beirut as well due to persistent Israeli air attacks there. The British pilot of the plane Captain Macintosh then overflew the Caucasus Mountain, the Island of Malta, and Syria and then landed at night at Benghazi of Libya after sending SOS signal, although the plane did not have permission to land in Libya. This was done as the plane had only 30 minutes of fuel left. The landing of the plane carrying the Bangladesh contingent inside Libya was an unexpected event. But the Libyan authorities extended all-out assistance to the Bangladesh team after learning about its importance.



With the help of the Libyan authorities, the contingent moved towards Beirut the next day i.e. on 20 October noon aboard a Middle-East Airlines flight. The ambassador of Bangladesh welcomed them at the airport after the plane reached Beirut. The team then set off for Damascus on a bus at 10:00 pm night after crossing the Lebanon-Syria border check post. They arrived near the city of Damascus at dawn. There was war-like situation all around. The siren started to blare immediately after they entered the city as 5-6 fighter jets of Israel attacked the area. The Health Minister of Syria Dr. Madani Al Khyami formally welcomed the Bangladesh contingent on that day, 21 October.

The Bangladesh contingent was deployed at Dares Salam behind the 9 Division of Syrian Army, about 4 kilometres west of Damascus. The team set up a field hospital there with facilities for operations at a 2-storeyed girls' school building. The Bangladesh team stayed there until 22 November. A few thousand army-men, Mujahids and wounded villagers were provided with treatment at this hospital over a period of 30 days. The members of the medical team untiringly took care of the war-wounded patients. The Bangladesh contingent became well-known in Syria as it earned a good reputation while discharging its responsibilities. A number of newspapers in the Arab world commended the activities of Bangladesh team.

At the end of the war, the Grand Mufti of the Great Mosque of Damascus highlighted the contributions of Bangladesh contingent in one of his sermons and showered praises on them profusely. The significance of this mission was huge and far-reaching. The Bangladesh contingent





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

moved to the Lebanese capital Beirut from the battle-field on 22 November. On 24 November, high officials of Syria gave a hearty send-off to the Bangladesh team at Beirut airport. This support and firm stand in favour of the Arabs played a special role in eliciting recognition from them. In fact, Bangladesh was able to earn the confidence of the Arabs by the end of 1973 and relations with them improved notably. Ultimately, 15 Middle-eastern countries accorded recognition to Bangladesh at the end of 1973. As a token of recognition for Bangladesh's support and contribution, the Egyptian President Anwar Sadat presented a regiment of tanks to Bangladesh.

Today, Bangladesh occupies a place of honour in the international arena because of the foresight, diplomatic positioning, timely and courageous decisions, and competent leadership of the greatest Bangalee of all times, the most auspicious leader and Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Until now, Bangladesh has successfully completed 54 peacekeeping missions under the United Nations, with participation of 1,75,089 personnel. At present, a total of 6,413 personnel are discharging their duties in peacekeeping missions. Significantly, this journey of peacekeeping had started in 1973 under Bangabandhu's directives with the participation of only 28 members of a medical team.

Lt. Col. (Retd.) Quazi Sajjad Ali Zahir Bir Protik

Swadhinata Padak Awardee

Freedom Fighter and Author



BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

‘Friendship to all, malice towards none.’

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (back row, 7th from left) at the Commonwealth Summit held from 29 April to 6 May 1975 at Kingstone in Jamaica



Bangabandhu
Sheikh Mujibur Rahman
with Foreign Leaders
and in Events at
Home and Abroad





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



British Prime Minister Edward Heath receives Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at 10 Downing Street after his release from Pakistan's jail, 8 January 1972



Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi signing the India-Bangladesh Friendship Treaty, 19 March 1972





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



The Prime Minister of India Mrs. Indira Gandhi visited Dhaka from 17 to 19 March 1972 at the invitation of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. During the visit, the two Prime Ministers discussed matters of mutual interest and declared their determination to continue to adhere to the policy of non-alignment.

Inspired by the common ideas of peace, secularism, democracy, socialism, and nationalism, the two countries signed the 'Treaty of Friendship, cooperation, and peace'— a 25-years treaty.

The Prime Minister of India assured of their full support and cooperation for the admission of Bangladesh to United Nations and other UN agencies



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman addresses at the Kremlin, Soviet Union, March 1972





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev greets Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in Soviet Union (USSR), 1 March 1972



Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with His Majesty King Faisal of Saudi Arabia in Algeria. Following the meeting Bangladeshis received permission to perform the Holy Hajj (1973)





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



Bangabandhu with President of Egypt, Anwar Sadat, 1973



UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim meets Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Ganobhaban, Dhaka, 9 February 1973

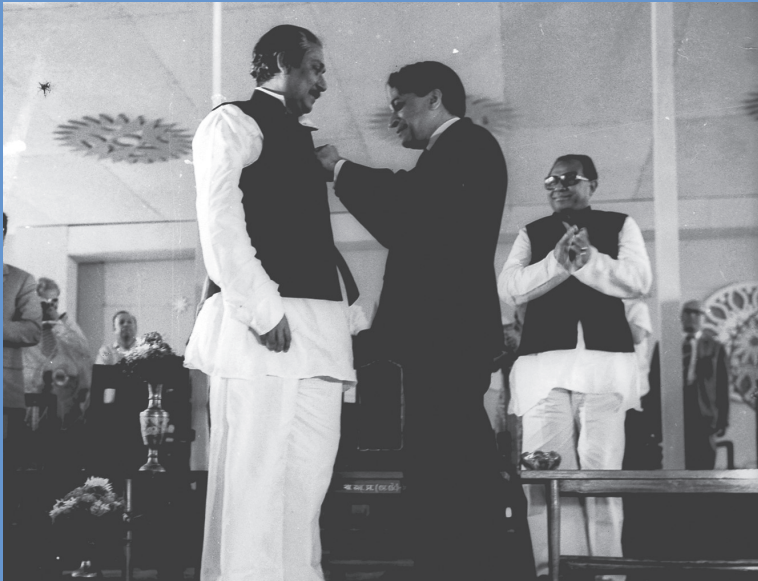




BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



Renowned French writer and diplomat Andre Malroux visited Dhaka on invitation of Bangabandhu, 21 April 1973



President of World Peace Council Ramesh Chandra Sen awarding Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the Joliot-Curie Medal of Peace, 23 May 1973





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Conference at Ottawa, Canada, August 1973



Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with Zambia's President Kenneth Kaunda, 3 August 1973





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with the Head of State of Cambodia Norodom Sihanouk during the NAM Summit, September 1973

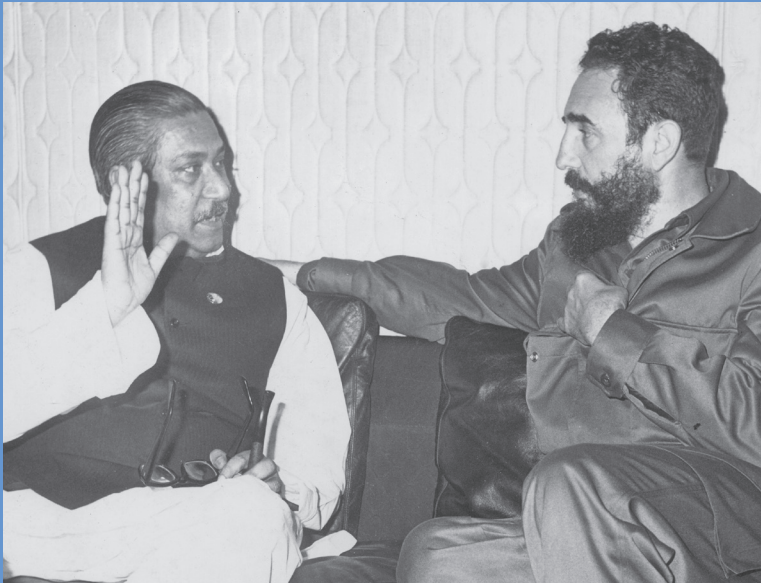


Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman addresses the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit Conference in Algeria, September 1973





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in a conversation with Cuba's revolutionary leader Fidel Castro in Algiers, Algeria, September 1973



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman receiving the guard of honour on his visit to Japan. Present with him is the Prime Minister of Japan Kakuei Tanaka, 17 October 1973





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in a discussion with the Prime Minister of Japan Mr. Kakuei Tanaka during his visit to Japan, 19 October 1973



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in conversation with His Majesty King Abdul Halim of Malaysia, 3 December 1973





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman receives guard of honour at Lahore prior to his attendance to the second summit of OIC held between 22–24 February 1974



Indonesian Foreign Minister Dr. Adam Malik calls on
Bangabandhu, 1974





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman welcomes President of Algeria Houari Boumediène during latter's visit to Bangladesh, 8 March 1974



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with the Burmese President
Ne Win, 28 April 1974





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with the Heads of States of Commonwealth, Kingston, Jamaica, 29 April 1974



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with the United States President Gerald Ford at the White House, 1 October 1974

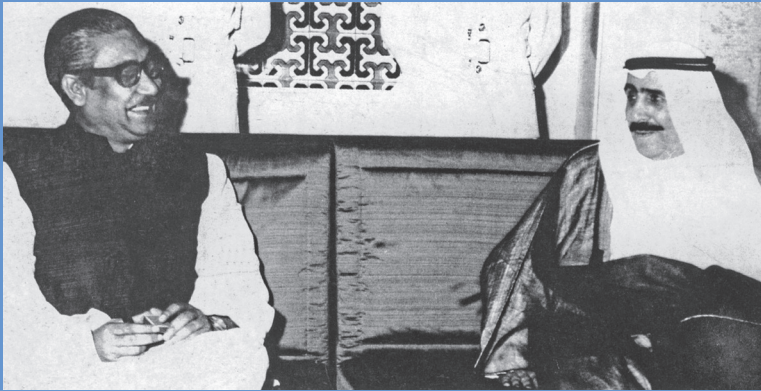




BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



Senator Edward Kennedy, calls on Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman during his visit to the USA, October 1974



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with the Amir of Kuwait, Sabah Al-Salim Al-Sabah, 10 November 1974





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, the founding father and ruler of United Arab Emirates, UAE, 18 December 1974

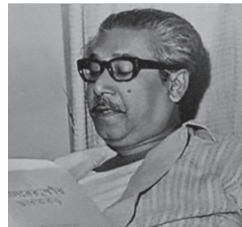
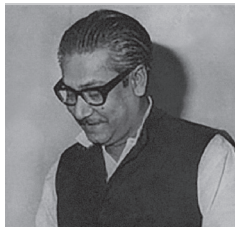
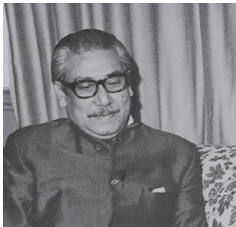
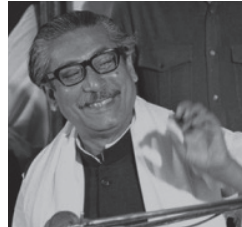
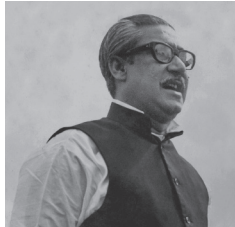
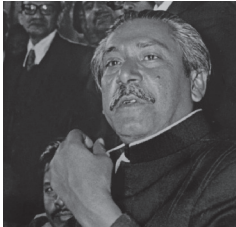
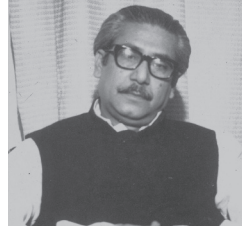
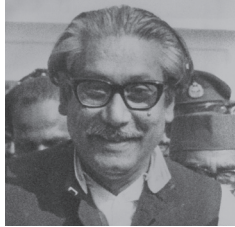


Bangabandhu with Yugoslav President Marshal Josip Broz Tito,
Madam Tito at Chandpur, Bangladesh, 1974





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO





Brief Life Sketch of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



Ancestral home of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Tungipara in Gopalganj



1920

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was born on March 17, 1920 at Tungipara in Gopalganj sub-division of Faridpur district. He was the third child of Sheikh Lutfur Rahman and Sheikh Sayera Khatun. At the age of 7, he started his formal education at Gimadanga Primary School. Later he moved to Gopalganj Public School and completed his school life at Gopalganj Missionary School.





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with his wife
Sheikh Fazilatunnesa (Renu)



1934

At the age of 14, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman married Sheikh Fazilatunnesa (Renu). During his whole political career, Sheikh Fazilatunnesa, also known as 'Bangamata', kept the family together even in the hardest times.





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



Bangabandhu with his family



1947–1964

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Begum Fazilatunnesa were blessed with two daughters, Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana and three sons, Sheikh Kamal, Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russel. The family photo was taken in 1972.





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



Bangabandhu with Mahatma Gandhi and his political mentor Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy. Bangabandhu is standing pointing in the back of the room, second from the left



1939-47

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman got involved in politics when he was barely 19 years old or so. He joined All India Muslim Students Federation in 1940 and was elected Councillor in its Bengal chapter. He passed his Entrance Examination in 1942 and subsequently got admitted into Islamia College in Kolkata. Later he became the General Secretary of the Islamia College Student Union in 1946. He completed his BA in 1947 from that college. During the communal riot of 1946 in Kolkata, he played a crucial role in preventing the riot. By this time, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had grown into a popular student leader.





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



Young Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy



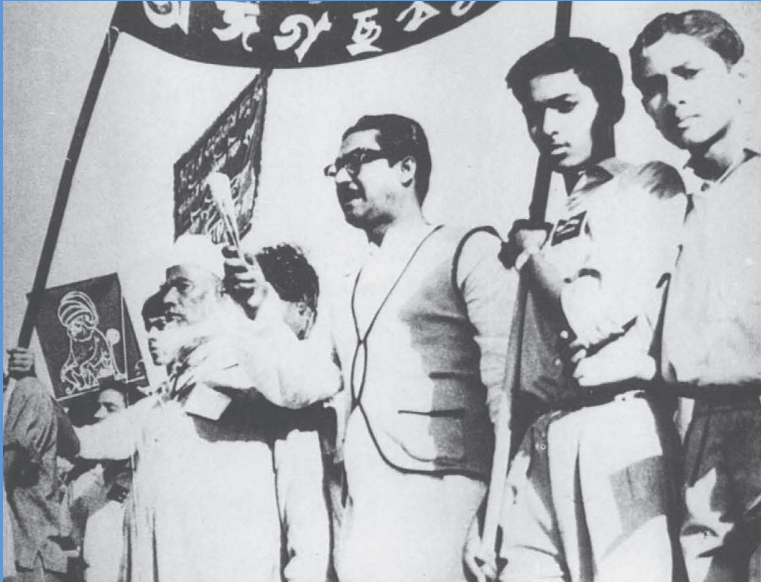
1948-49

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman got admitted into Dhaka University as a law student. He pioneered establishment of the Muslim Student League in 1948. At the very early days of Language Movement, he was arrested on March 11, 1948 for his leading role in the movement. He left Muslim League in 1949 and joined with Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy and Maulana Bhashani to form Awami Muslim League, the party that led the people of Bangladesh to independence under the leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1971.





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



Sheikh Mujib at 'Probhat Ferry' (early morning procession in memory of Language Movement martyrs of 21 February, 1952) with Moulana Bhashani and others, 21 February 1953



1953

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman got involved in Language Movement from the very beginning. Because of his political activities, the Pakistani authoritarian government arrested him several times and kept him imprisoned until February 26, 1952. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was elected the General Secretary of Awami League on July 9, 1953.





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman taking oath as Minister of Jukto Front Government, administered by Sher-e-Bangla A. K. Fazlul Haque



1954

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was elected a Member of the Parliament from Gopalganj constituency during the National Election of 1954. Eventually he was appointed as the Minister of Agriculture and Forest by the Provincial Government.





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



First coalition government led by Awami League in East Bengal



1955-58

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was elected to the National Assembly on June 5, 1955. He became a strong voice for the provincial autonomy. In 1956, in the national assembly he protested the militarization of government. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman resigned from the cabinet and dedicated himself in organizing the party. Following declaration of Martial Law on October 7, 1958, he was arrested on 11 October.





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman addressing a meeting in protest of militarization of government



1962-65

In 1962, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman became vociferous against the military dictator Ayub Khan. In 1963, after the death of Suhrawardy, he became the prime leader of Awami League. On January 25, 1964, he became the General Secretary of the Awami League. In 1965, the military dictator again imprisoned Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, but could not keep him there for long due to court's intervention.





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman announcing the Six Points Demands
in Lahore, 1966



1966

On February 5, 1966, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared the 6-point proposal for the first time at a conference of opposition parties in Lahore. The military government again tried to imprison him. Within the first three months of this year, the military government arrested him eight times. On March 18, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman became the President of the Awami League. He was again arrested after a meeting at Narayanganj Jute Mills on 8th May. This time the military government kept him imprisoned for long three years. One June 7, 1966, mass people started protest to free Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and all other political activists from imprisonment. Political agitation spread all over the country. Soon the 6-point proposal turned into a popular movement and paved the steps towards independence of Bangladesh. Subsequently, the 6-point proposal became the Magna Carta for the freedom-loving people of Bengal.





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman walks towards the court trying him in the Agartala Conspiracy Case in 1968



1968-69

To suppress the popular 6-point movement, oppressive Pakistani government framed the Agartala Conspiracy Case against Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in January 1968. Following a huge protest by the mass, he was released on February 22, 1969. On February 23, 1969, in a gathering of millions, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was given the cognomen 'Bangabandhu'-the Friend of Bengal.





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with Syed Nazrul Islam and Tajuddin Ahmed and others after the landslide victory in the election of 1970



1970

Awami League seized a landslide victory in the general election of 1970. In that election Awami League secured 167 out of 169 seats of the National Assembly of the then East Pakistan.





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is delivering historic speech of 7th March



1971 March

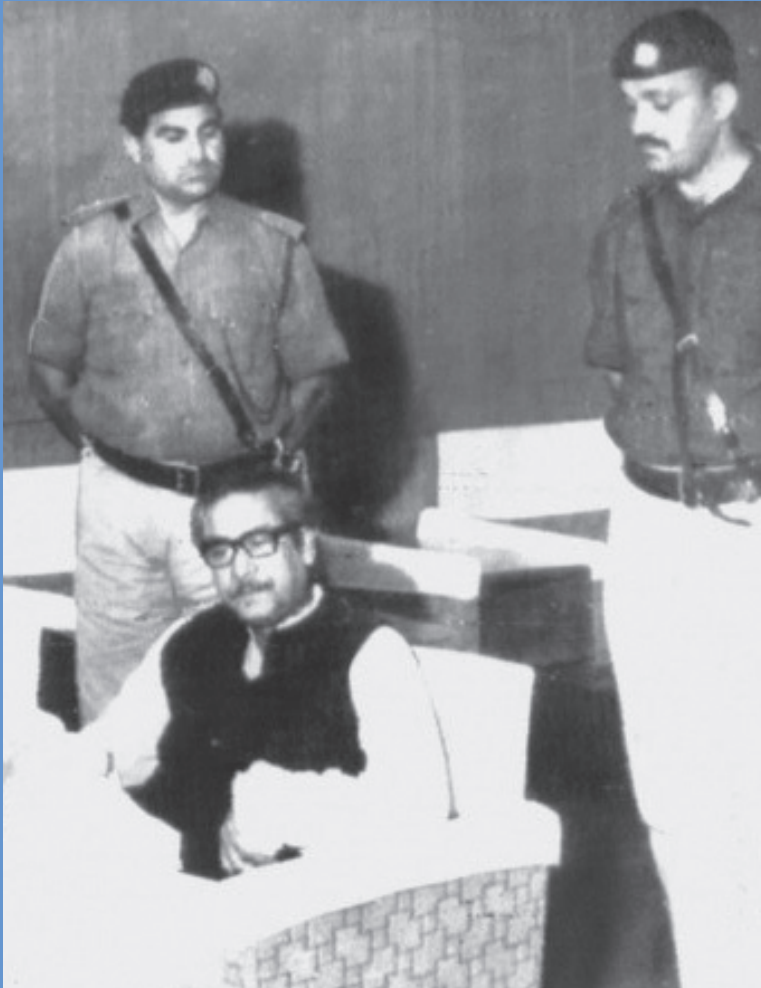
On March 1, 1971, military dictator Yahya Khan postponed the session of National Assembly. At the call of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, non-cooperation movement against the authoritarian government set in. On March 7, 1971, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman called for the independence of Bangladesh in a mammoth gathering of his people. That historic speech is now a part of the UNESCO's Memory of the World Register.

On the fateful night of March 25, 1971, the occupational Pakistan Army began unleashing one of the most gruesome genocide in the history of mankind over unarmed Bengali population. On that very night, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was arrested and taken to Pakistan. Before that, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman officially proclaimed the Independence of Bangladesh and asked the people to stage resistance against the occupying Pakistan Army. His message was transmitted from Kalurghat Radio Station in Chattogram on March 26, 1971.





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was arrested on 26th March 1971



1971 April–December

On April 10, 1971, the first government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh was formed and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was made the President of the country in his absence. Soon after that, Mukti Bahini– the Freedom Fighters' force was formed and it started putting up strong resistance against the Pakistan Army.

On August 11, 1971, in a military court in Lyallpur, the oppressive government of Pakistan started a trial in secrecy against Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on the charge of sedition. On December 4, the military court sentenced him to death, but could not execute so because of global voice in favour of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

After nine months of bloody war which resulted in over 3 millions of Bengalis martyred and more than 200,000 Bengali women violated at the hands of invading army and their local collaborators, the Pakistan Army surrendered to the allied forces of Mukti Bahini and Indian Army on December 16, 1971. A new nation- Bangladesh was born.





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at a reception by millions on January 10, 1972



1972

Upon release from Pakistan prison on January 8, 1972, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman returned to his beloved motherland, Bangladesh on January 10, 1972. Soon after, he devoted all his efforts towards the reconstruction of the war-ravaged country.





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



The photo shows Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman addressing the 29th Session of the UNGA on 25 September 1974



1972-75

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's 'Friendship to all, malice towards none' became the foreign policy dictum of the newly independent Bangladesh. His diplomatic acumen led Bangladesh into joining Commonwealth, Non-Aligned Movement, OIC and United Nations and brought recognition from majority of the countries of the world. On May 23, 1973, Bangabandhu was awarded Joliot Curie Peace Prize for his endeavour to promote global peace.





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO



*Burial place of the Father of the Nation
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman*



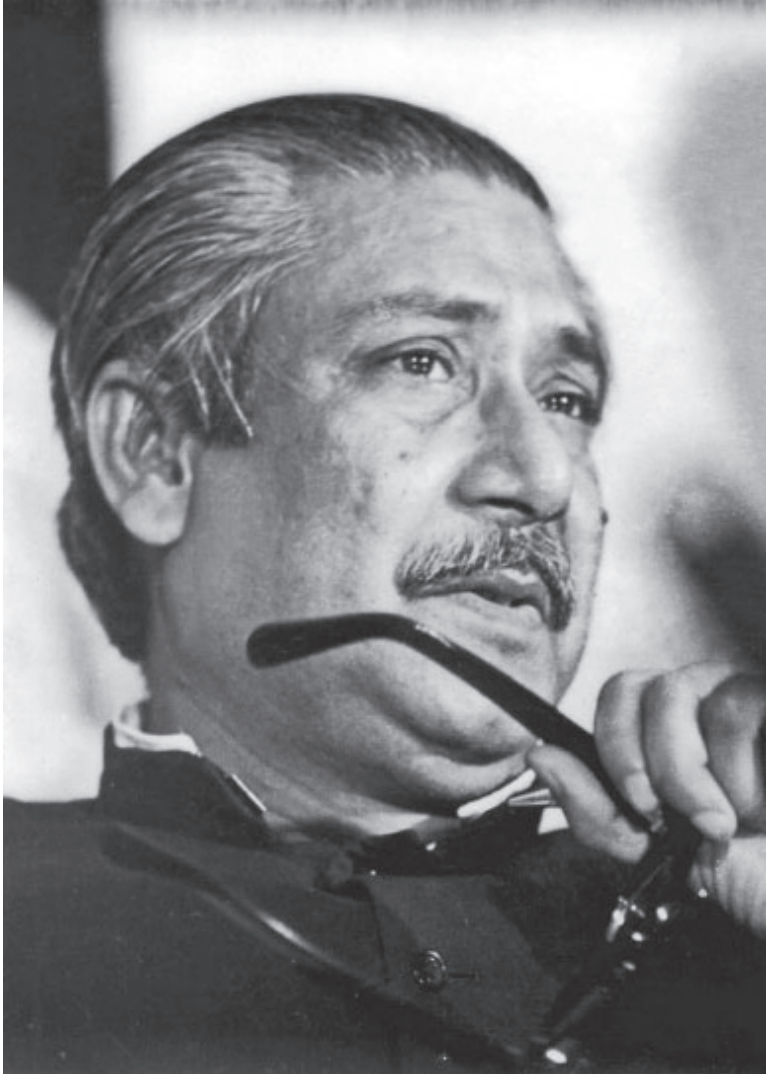
15 August 1975

On the night of August 15, 1975, a group of renegade army officers, part of a larger political conspiracy hatched by those who never could accept the independence of Bangladesh, assassinated Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and all of his family members except his two daughters—Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana, who at that time were abroad. This brutal assassination not only put an indelible smudge in the newborn nation's history, but pushed the country into a political vacuum. Democracy started fading away and the national reconstruction process suffered a major setback.





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO





Quotes on Bangabandhu by World Leaders



'He was a great leader. His extraordinary heroism has been a source of inspiration for the people of Asia and Africa.'

Indira Gandhi
Prime Minister of India



'I have not seen the Himalayas. But I have seen Sheikh Mujib. In personality and in courage, this man is the Himalayas.'

Fidel Castro
Prime Minister of Cuba



'The speciality of Mujib's character was his uncompromising fighting leadership with a generous heart.'

Yasser Arafat
Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization





**BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO**



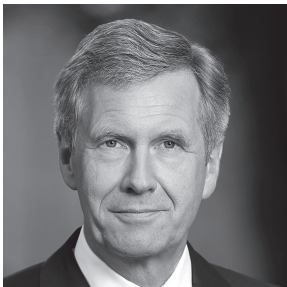
‘Sheikh Mujib was a pioneer who fought for establishing people’s rights and dignity in one of the most profound struggles for liberation in the twentieth century. The title of Bangabandhu bestowed on him reflects the extraordinary love that this patriot had for the people of his country. He was a leader of the masses and made the ultimate sacrifice in their service.’

Pranab Mukherjee
President of India



‘This is surely a supreme national tragedy for you. For me, it is a personal tragedy of immense dimensions.’

British Prime Minister Harold Wilson
to a Bengali journalist upon hearing the news of the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.



‘Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was a great statesman who fought for the rights and dignity of his people and was steadfastly committed to independence and national duty.’

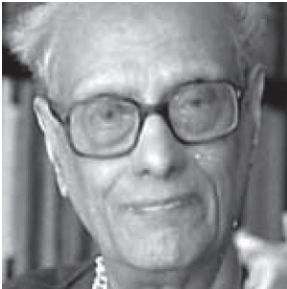
Christian Wulff
President of Germany





‘Sheikh Mujibur Rahman does not belong to Bangladesh alone. He is the harbinger of freedom for all Bengalis.’

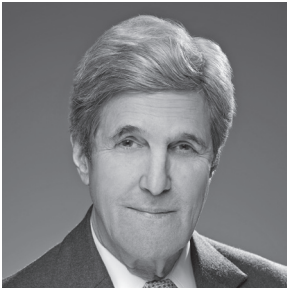
Mohamed Hassanein Heikal
Egyptian journalist



‘As long as Padma, Meghna, Jamuna, Gouri flows on, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, your accomplishment will also live on.’

Translated into English

Annada Shankar Ray
Poet and Essayist



‘What a tragedy to have such brilliant and courageous leadership stolen from the people of Bangladesh in such a moment of violence and cowardice. But today, Bangladesh is growing in the vision of Bangabandhu – and under the strong leadership of his daughter. The United States is proud to be a friend and strong supporter of the fulfillment of his vision.’

John F. Kerry
US Secretary of State





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO





Selected Quotes by Bangabandhu

‘As a man, what concerns mankind concerns me. As a Bengali, I am deeply involved in all that concerns Bengalis. This abiding involvement is born of and nourished by love, enduring love, which gives meaning to my politics and to my very being.’

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman
May 1973

‘When we have an unprincipled leadership at the helm of affairs, we may make some progress for a while but such gains will vanish in times of crisis.’

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman
The Unfinished Memoirs

‘When I decide to do something, I go ahead and do it. If I find out that I was wrong, I try to correct myself. This is because I know that only doers are capable of making errors; people who never do anything make no mistake.’

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman
The Unfinished Memoirs





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO





‘I know at least this much that no one should be murdered because he holds views different from mine. That certainly was not what Islam taught and such an action is tantamount to a crime in the religion.’

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman
May 1973

‘My greatest strength is the love for my people. My greatest weakness is that I love them too much.’

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman
During an interview with David Frost

‘In politics, I look at people as humans. Not as Muslims, not as Hindus, not as Christians but as humans.’

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman
At a reception hosted by Kolkata Press Club (07-02-1972).

‘Bangladesh is committed to build an exploitation-free society. Independence becomes meaningless without economic emancipation. We cannot let the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. None in Bangladesh shall die of hunger, all will live in happiness and prosperity.’

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman
At a reception hosted by Kolkata Press Club (07-02-1972).





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO





Bangladesh- The Present and Future: Remarks by Important World Personalities

‘ Bangladesh is growing in the vision of Bangabandhu under the strong leadership of Sheikh Hasina.’

John Kerry
US Secretary of State

‘ Bangabandhu founded Bangladesh and his daughter Sheikh Hasina saved it.’

Narendra Modi
Indian Prime Minister

‘ The strong leadership of Sheikh Hasina has set Bangladesh on the road of progress and prosperity.’

Pranab Mukherjee
Indian President

‘ Sheikh Hasina’s leadership in socioeconomic development and ensuring gender quality is unmatched and also an example for the world to follow.’

David Cameron
British Prime Minister





BANGABANDHU
THE PEOPLE'S HERO

‘ Sheikh Hasina has demonstrated leadership and vision in achieving MDGs in her country and setting an example for the world to follow.’

Sir Jim Bolger

Premier and Special Envoy of New Zealand Prime Minister

‘ Sheikh Hasina has demonstrated an exemplary commitment for women empowerment, rooting out militancy and terrorism, and strengthening democratic institutions.’

Princess Anne

Daughter of UK's Queen Elizabeth II

‘ Sheikh Hasina is the symbol of liberal progressive global leadership and her government's steps to protect child rights, especially the girl child, are praiseworthy.’

Anthony Lake

UNICEF Executive Director

‘ Under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina Bangladesh has the potential to emerge as a key player in addressing the climate change and disaster risk reduction issues at the international level.’

Ban Ki-moon

UN Secretary General





‘ Sheikh Hasina is a woman of courage and is a strong voice on the globe in women empowerment. It is her able leadership that made Bangladesh a Champion in the field of global education first initiative.’

Irina Bokova
UNESCO Director General

‘ Sheikh Hasina is a pillar for women’s rights in South Asia.’

Marie-Claude Bibeau
Canadian Minister of International Development

‘ Bangladesh advanced much in establishing ‘Sonar Bangla’ as dreamt by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Your (Sheikh Hasina) role in establishing world peace and security is praiseworthy.’

Ban Ki-moon
UN Secretary General

‘ Bangladesh is a brand name in peacekeeping.’

Atul Khare
UN Under Secretary General
Department of Field Support (DFS)





Published by
External Publicity Wing
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
www.mofa.gov.bd