



BANGABANDHU SHEIKH MUJIB:

The Global Leader Transcending
Time and Boundaries



A Mujib Year Memorial Publication By
International Affairs Sub Committee
Bangladesh Awami League

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Ms. Sharmin Islam
2021

Preface

Bangladesh is currently celebrating the 100th birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Although the coronavirus pandemic has disrupted the nation's plans for celebrating this milestone occasion in a befitting manner somewhat, nonetheless, we were pleased to learn that the Honourable Prime Minister, Awami League President and Bangabandhu's daughter H.E Sheikh Hasina has extended the celebratory timeframe to 16 December 2021.

Coupled with the upcoming 50th anniversary of our glorious independence on 26 March 2021, these two milestone events give us an excellent opportunity to project to the world our rich founding history and the lessons to be learnt from the life of a people's leader whose principles and ideologies transcend time and national boundaries. Our aim in bringing out this publication was to offer a handy preliminary resource on the greatest Bangalee of all times and architect of our independence, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, especially for the international community in Bangladesh.

The following types of content on Bangabandhu have been used in this publication: a brief life sketch of the Father of the Nation, some of his historic speeches which highlight his love, aspirations and visions for the Bangalees and Bangladesh, some of his memorable quotes and selected comments on him by other world leaders, a few selected articles which shed light on his outlook on diplomacy and international relations, and an extensive images' gallery, with particular focus on Bangabandhu's engagement with the global community.

This publication, by no means, claims to be an exhaustive resource on the life of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. It merely provides a good starting point which, we hope, will encourage the readers to undertake their own research on this remarkable person and iconic global leader of the 20th century.

I would like to thank everyone involved with this special memorial publication on the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur. I would like to particularly thank two members of the International Affairs Sub-Committee, Barrister Shah Ali Farhad and Tarik Hasan Shomi, for their tireless efforts in compiling and editing all the content. My gratitude also to the Office of the National Implementation Committee for the Birth Centenary Celebrations of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Centre for Bangladesh Genocide Research (CBGR), and Professor Rashid Askari, for their invaluable support. I would like to thank young artist Saidul Islam whose artwork on Bangabandhu has been used in the cover of this publication.

We hope that you have as much enjoyment in reading this publication as much as we did in preparing and publishing it.

15 January 2021



Dr. Shammi Ahmed
International Affairs Secretary Central Working Committee,
Bangladesh Awami League



Brief Life Sketch of **Bangabandhu**

○ 1920

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was born in the village of Tungipara under the then Gopalganj Subdivision (now District) of the then Faridpur District on March 17, 1920. His father Sheikh Lutfar Rahman and his mother Sheikh Sayera Khatun had four daughters and two sons. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was their third child. His parents used to adoringly call him 'Khoka'.



○ 1927

At the age of seven in 1927, Sheikh Mujib began his schooling at Gimadanga Primary School. At nine, he was admitted to class three at Gopalganj Public School. Subsequently, he was admitted to Gopalganj Missionary School. Before becoming active in student movements and politics, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had an affinity toward sports like any other teenager. He possessed a special love for football. A talented football player, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman spent his adolescent years playing in competitive tournaments, where he received awards for his outstanding performances.



○ 1932/1933

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman married Sheikh Fazilatunnesa (Renu). Together they had two daughters, Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana, and three sons, Sheikh Kamal, Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russel.



○ 1942

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman passed Matriculation examination from Gopalganj Missionary School. The same year he got himself admitted into the Islamia College (currently Maulana Azad College), Kolkata. From there he completed his graduation in the year 1947.

○ 1943

In 1943, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was elected councillor of All India Muslim League from Bengal. He continued to serve admirably in this position till the partition of India in 1947.



1946

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was elected uncontested as the General Secretary of Islamia College Students Union. During the communal riots of Kolkata known as 'The Great Calcutta Killing' on August 16, 1946, he engaged himself in maintaining peace and communal harmony, saving lives of many a member of both Hindu and Muslim communities even at the risk of his own life.



1947

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman joined Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy's move for a United Independent Bengal as a third free state along with India and Pakistan. However, the move was aborted and subsequently became the foundations of the Father of the Nation's vision for an independent Bangladesh. Unlike many others, he did not rush into East Bengal (Pakistan) immediately after Partition, rather stayed over in Calcutta for a few weeks, joining Mahatma Gandhi's Peace Mission along with his political mentor Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy.



1948

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman took admission in the Department of Law at the University of Dhaka. He founded the East Pakistan Muslim Students' League, the first opposition student organization in Pakistan on January 4. He rose in spontaneous protest on February 23 when Chief Minister Khawaja Nazimuddin declared in the Constituent Assembly: 'The people of East Pakistan must accept Urdu as their state language.' Sheikh Mujib immediately plunged himself in overt activities to build a strong movement against the Muslim League's resolve to make Urdu the only state language of Pakistan. On March 2, a meeting held at Fazlul Huq Muslim Hall approved a resolution placed by Sheikh Mujib to form an All-Party State Language Action Committee. He was arrested along with some political workers on March 11 while they were picketing in front of secretariat building in observance of the 'State Language Bangla Day.' The student community of the country became restive following his arrest. In the face of overpowering student protests, the Muslim League government was forced to release Sheikh Mujib and other student leaders on March 15.



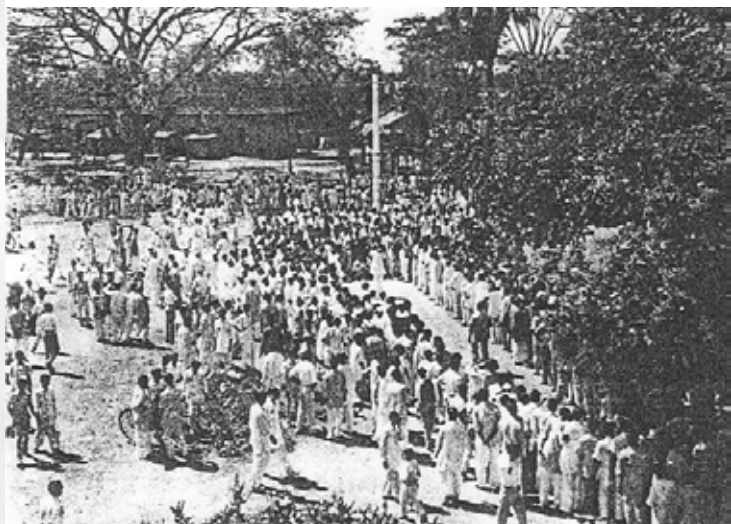
○ 1949

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman extended his support to a movement of the Class 4 employees of the University of Dhaka aimed at realizing their rights and job security. He was arrested on April 19 from the Vice-Chancellor's residence, where he along with some students had assembled for a demonstration. On June 23, the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League (present Awami League) was founded and he was elected as the joint Secretary whilst in prison.



○ 1952

On January 26, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan Khawaja Nazimuddin declared at a public meeting in the Paltan Maidan that Urdu would be the only state language of Pakistan. While in captivity, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman stayed in constant touch with those waging the movement to realize Bangla as one of the state languages. He issued key directives to make the movement a success even from the confines of his prison. On February 16, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman started a hunger strike unto death that lasted for 11 days and was released on February 27. On February 21, the agitated students came out on strike in order to press hard their demand to make Bangla as one of the state languages of Pakistan in defiance of the curfew enforced by the authorities. Salam, Barkat, Rafiq, Jabbar, Shafiur and many others were martyred when the police fired on a rally. In a statement released from the jail, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman expressed deep sorrow for those who lost their lives and continued protesting against the unjust police firing through hunger strike. The same year he visited China to attend World Peace Conference, where he delivered a resounding speech in Bangla, taking the cause of the mother language movement to a global audience.



○ 1953

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was elected General Secretary of the Awami Muslim League at its council meeting and continued to gain prominence as a Bengali leader.

○ 1954

The first elections in East Bengal were held on March 10. The United Front won 223 seats out of 237 Muslim reserved seats. The Awami League alone obtained 143 seats. Sheikh Mujib won the election from the Gopalganj constituency and took oath on May 15 as Minister for Co-operative and Agricultural Development in the new provincial government. The central government arbitrarily dismissed the United Front cabinet on May 30, and as Mujib landed back in Dhaka from Karachi the same day, he was immediately arrested. He was released on December 23.



○ 1955

Under the leadership of the Party General Secretary Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Awami Muslim League was renamed as the Awami League by dropping the word 'Muslim' to open the doors of the party to all, regardless of religion. This decision was made at the council session of the party during October 21-23, 1955. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was once again elected as the General Secretary of the party in the Council.



○ 1956

In September Sheikh Mujibur Rahman joined the provincial Awami League government headed by Khan Ataur Rahman as a minister. He remained in this position for 9 months only. Sheikh Mujib voluntarily resigned on May 30, 1957 from the Cabinet in order to continue as the General Secretary of the party to build the organization on a firm footing as a platform of the Bengalis.



○ 1957

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was re-elected as the General Secretary of the Party at its council meeting held during June 13-14, 1957. From June 24 to July 13, he visited China on an official tour.



○ 1962

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was arrested by the Ayub government on February 6, 1962. He was freed on June 18 following the withdrawal of the four-year-long martial law on June 2. He travelled to Lahore on September 24 and with Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy and other opposition parties formed the National Democratic Front (NDF).



○ 1964

On January 25, a special meeting of the party leaders including Presidents and Secretaries of the district committees was held at Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Dhanmondi 32 residence. In this meeting, the decision was taken to leave the National Democratic Front (NDF) and revive the activities of the Awami League at its council meeting during March 6-8, proposals containing the right of the general people of the country to vote and elect their own parliamentary government were accepted. In the same meeting, Maulana Abdur Rashid Tarkabagish and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman were elected President and General Secretary respectively. As a communal riot broke out in East Pakistan during 1964, a strong Riot Resistance Committee was formed under the initiative of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. He made a clarion call to the people to stand up and resist the communal forces. After the riots, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman took the initiative to prepare for a united movement against the then Pakistani military dictator General Ayub Khan. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was arrested 14 days before the 1965 presidential election.



○ 1965

The Pakistani government charged Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with sedition and for making a 'so called' objectionable statements. He was sentenced to one-year imprisonment and was released by an order of the high court.



1966

On February 5, 1966, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman presented his historic six-point programme known as the 'charter of freedom of the Bengali nation'. It drew the roadmap for the independence of Bangladesh under the garb of greater autonomy. The programme hit hard at the roots of Pakistani colonial rule over the Bengalis. In the Council Meeting held during March 18-20, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was elected the President of Awami League. He travelled far and wide in order to gain support for his 6-Point programme and was arrested 8 times, during the campaign, leading the regime to arrest him finally on May 8, 1966. He was imprisoned for nearly 3 years during this time.

1968

On January 3, the Ayub government filed a case, known as the 'Agartala Conspiracy Case' against a number of Bengalis (Politicians, members of the Army, Navy and Air Forces, Civil Servants etc) on the charge of treason. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was shown arrested on January 18, while already in jail. He was made number 1 accused and the official name of the case was 'The State vs Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Others'. Along with him, 34 others were implicated in the case, bringing the charge of forced secession of East Bengal with the assistance of India. Mass movement spread across the country demanding the release of all the accused including Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. On June 19, the trial of the accused began at Dhaka Kurmitola Cantonment under intense security and scrutiny.

1969

The Agartala Conspiracy Case resulted in a nationwide student movement and mass upsurge demanding the withdrawal of the case and the release of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. With continued pressure from the public, the Ayub Khan government on February 22 was forced to withdraw the Agartala Conspiracy Case and release Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and others. Afterwards, Sheikh Mujib was awarded with the title 'Bangabandhu' at a reception of millions of students and masses in a mammoth public meeting organized by Central Student Action Committee at the Race Course (now Suhrawardy Udyan) on February 23. At a discussion meeting held on December 5 to observe the death anniversary of Shaheed Suhrawardy, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared that henceforth East Pakistan would be called Bangladesh.



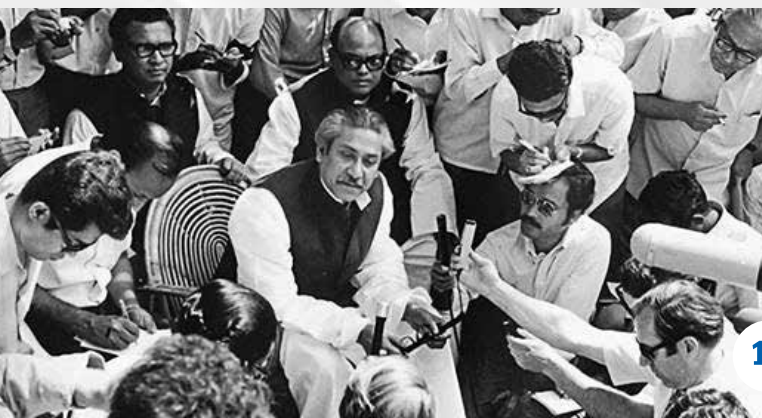
1970

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Awami League President, urged his countrymen to elect Awami League candidates on the basis of the 6-point demand in the country's first general elections held on December 7 (National Assembly), and December 17 (Provincial Assembly), barring few seats in the cyclone affected coastal areas in the south. He chose 'boat' as the symbol to represent Awami League and the nation's hope. When a million people died in a catastrophic cyclone in the coastal areas on November 12, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman suspended the election campaign and rushed to the affected areas. Awami League achieved absolute majority in the general elections on December 7, winning 167 (including 7 women reserved seats) out of the 169 seats of the National Assembly in East Pakistan and 298 seats (including 10 women reserved seats) of the 310 seats of the Provincial Assembly of East Pakistan.



1971

Following general Yahya Khan's postponement of the National Assembly session on March 1, 1971, only two days before the session was due to take place, every section of the Bengalis' instantaneously came out onto the streets in massive demonstrations. The Bengalis' aspirations for freedom reached an indomitable height. From March 1 onward Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was virtually running East Pakistan as its de-facto head of government. On March 7, in his historic speech before the millions of people at the Racecourse Maidan (Suhrawardy Udyan), Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman called his fellow countrymen to take all out preparations for the war of liberation and independence of Bangladesh. In this grave situation Pakistan's President General Yahya Khan came to Dhaka and held a series of meetings with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman between March 16 and March 24, none of which brought about any resolution. On the midnight of March 25, the Pakistan army launched its heinous campaign of genocide against the unarmed Bengalis. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman proclaimed the Independence of Bangladesh in the early hours of March 26. Right after the proclamation, he was arrested and taken to a Pakistani prison. On April 10, 1971, the first government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh was formed, and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was elected as President by the constituent assembly. Syed Nazrul Islam was elected Vice President and acting President in the absence of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Tajuddin Ahmed as Prime Minister. The government took oath of office on April 17 at a famous mango garden (Amrakanan) of Baidyanathtala in Meherpur, which is now known as Mujibnagar. After nine months of bloody war Bangladesh was liberated with the surrender of Pakistan occupation army on December 16, 1971. During August & September of 1971, the Pakistan Junta held a secret trial of Bangabandhu and sentenced him to death. The freedom loving people of the world was enraged and demanded the security of the President of Bangladesh. On December 27, the Bangladesh government sought Mujib's immediate and unconditional release.



1972

The Government of Pakistan was forced to release Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on January 8, under immense international pressure. On that very day, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman traveled to London on his way to Dhaka. There at a crowded press conference in his hotel in London, he spoke to the world press and on January 9, met the British Prime Minister, Edward Heath. Prior to returning to Dhaka, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman stopped over at Delhi, where the Indian President V. V. Giri and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi along with others welcomed him with grace. When the Father of the Nation reached Dhaka on January 10, millions of jubilant citizens of the newest country in the world welcomed him with open arms. He went straight from the airport to the Race Course Maidan now renamed Suhrawardy Udyan, where he addressed the people of independent Bangladesh for the first time. On January 12, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman took charge as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh government and embarked on the reconstruction of a war-ravaged country. Within a period of three and half years, Bangabandhu laid the foundations of the new Republic by putting into effect several measures, including rehabilitation of 10 million Bengali refugees, withdrawal of all allied forces within 3 months of victory, formation of the constituent assembly & a constitution for the new state within 10 months, recognition of Bangladesh by more than a hundred state, Bangladesh's membership of important international bodies including Commonwealth of Nations, the United Nations, NAM, OIC, enactment of International (Crimes) Tribunal Laws, etc.



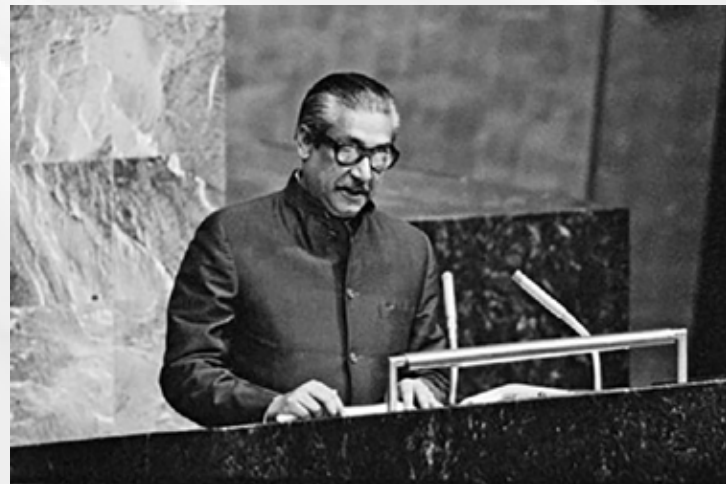
○ 1973

Led by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Awami League secured 293 seats out of 300 in the Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) in the first general elections held on March 7 in an independent Bangladesh and subsequently formed a new Government on the basis of the newly framed constitution. The World Peace Council awarded “Julio Curie” Peace Prize to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for his contribution to world peace on May 23. On September 6 Sheikh Mujib set off to Algeria to participate in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit Conference. On the sideline of the summit he had bilateral talks with the world leaders.



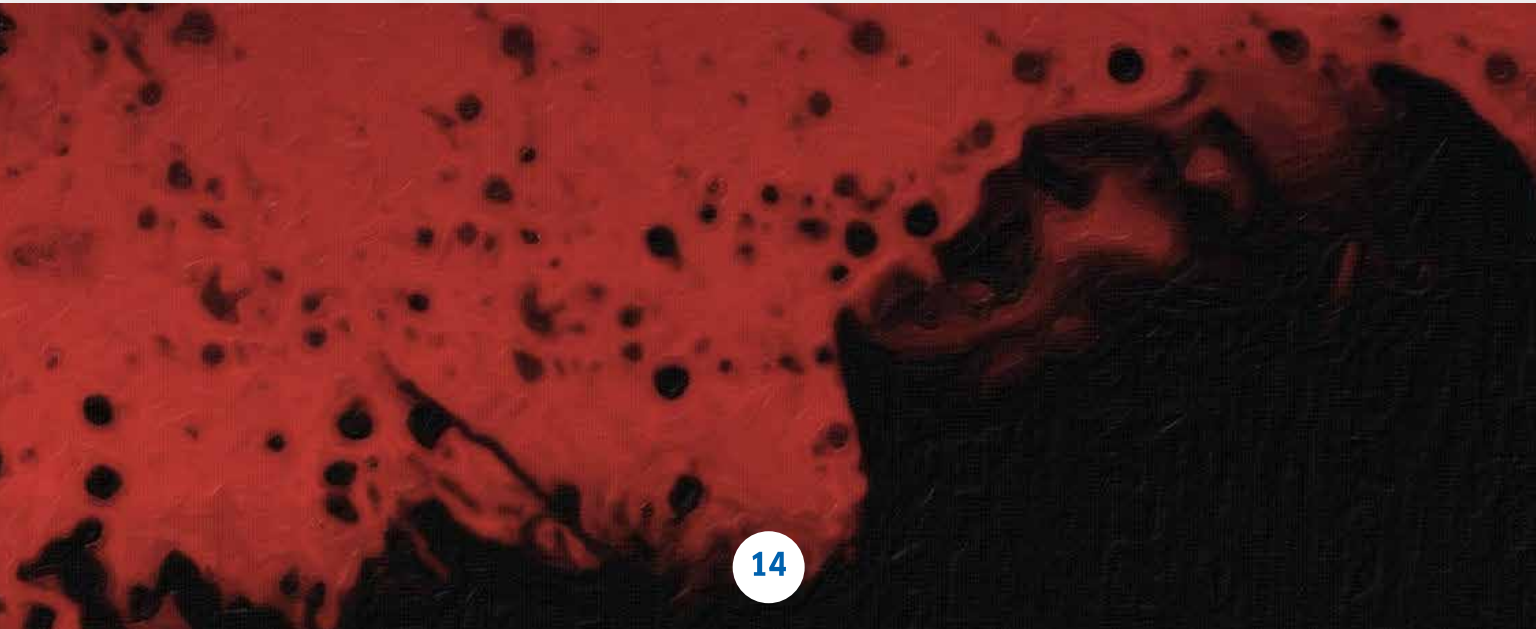
○ 1974

Bangladesh received world recognition by becoming the 136th member of the United Nations on September 17. On September 25, at the 29th General Assembly of the United Nations, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman addressed the world in Bangla, the first ever Bangla speech delivered at the UN.



○ 1975

Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the architect of Bangladesh, was assassinated by a handful of army renegades as part of a larger national and international political conspiracy hatched by anti-liberation forces in the pre-dawn hours of August 15. They murdered in cold blood every member of his family except his daughters Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana, who by fortune alone were abroad at that time. Bangladesh observes August 15 as the National Mourning Day and remembers the noblest and the greatest Bengali who ever lived, through his spirit, ideology, courage and love for the people of his nation.





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Important Speeches of **Bangabandhu**

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The Historic 7th March Speech: Rallying Call for Independence

The speech given by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on 7 March 1971 at the historic Race Course Maidan (now known as Suhrawardy Udyan) is considered one of the greatest political speeches of all time (Field J., 'Speeches that Inspired History', 2013). The speech was taken as a rallying call for the imminent independence struggle by the Father of the Nation by the hundreds of thousands who attended as well as the millions who later heard the speech. Due to the significance and eloquence of the speech, **the UNESCO has listed the speech as part of the world's documentary heritage (October 2017).**

My dear brothers . .

I have come before you today with a heavy heart.

All of you know how hard we have tried. But it is a matter of sadness that the streets of Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Rangpur and Rajshahi are today being spattered with the blood of my brothers, and the cry we hear from the Bengali people is a cry for freedom a cry for survival, a cry for our rights.

You are the ones who brought about an Awami League victory so you could see a constitutional government restored. The hope was that the elected representatives of the people, sitting in the National Assembly, would formulate a constitution that would assure that people of their economic, political and cultural emancipation. But now, with great sadness in my heart, I look back on the past 23 years of our history and see nothing but a history of the shedding of the blood of the Bengali people. Ours has been a history of continual lamentation, repeated bloodshed and innocent tears.

We gave blood in 1952, we won a mandate in 1954. But we were still not allowed to take up the reins of this country. In 1958, Ayub Khan clamped Martial Law on our people and enslaved us for the next 10 years. In 1966, during the Six-Point Movement of the masses, many were the young men and women whose lives were stilled by government bullets.

After the downfall of Ayub, Mr. Yahya Khan took over with the promise that he would restore constitutional rule, that he would restore democracy and return power to the people.

We agreed. But you all know of the events that took place after that I ask you, are we the ones to blame?

As you know, I have been in contract with President Yahya Khan. As leader of the majority part in the national Assembly, I asked him to set February 15 as the day for its opening session. He did not accede to the request I made as leader of the majority party. Instead, he went along with the delay requested by the minority leader Mr. Bhutto and announced that the Assembly would be convened on the 3rd of March.

We accepted that, agreed to join the deliberations. I even went to the extent of saying that we, despite our majority, would still listen to any sound ideas from the minority, even if it were a lone voice. I committed myself to the support of anything to bolster the restoration of a constitutional government. When Mr. Bhutto came to Dhaka, we met. We talked. He left, saying that the doors to negotiation were still open. Moulana Noorani and Moulana Mufti were among those West Pakistan parliamentarians who visited Dhaka and talked with me about an agreement on a constitutional framework.

I made it clear that could not agree to any deviation from the Six Points. That right rested with the people. Come, I said, let us sit down and resolve matters. But Bhutto's retort was that he would not allow himself to become hostage on two fronts. He predicted that if any West Pakistani members of Parliament were to come to Dhaka, the Assembly would be turned into a slaughterhouse. He added that if anyone were to participate in such a session, a countrywide agitation would be launched from Peshawar to Karachi and that every business would be shut down in protest.

I assured him that the Assembly would be convened and despite the dire threats, West Pakistani leaders did come down to Dhaka. But suddenly, on March 1, the session was cancelled.

There was an immediate outcry against this move by the people. I called for a hartal as a peaceful form of protest and the masses redial took to the streets in response. And what did we get as a response?

He turned his guns on my helpless people, a people with no arms to defend themselves. These were the same arms that had been purchased with our own money to protect us from external enemies. But it is my own people who are being fired upon today. In the past, too, each time we the numerically larger segment of Pakistan's population-tried to assert our rights and control our destiny, the conspired against us and pounced upon us.

I have asked them this before : How can you make your own brothers the target of your bullets?

Now Yahya Khan says that I had agreed to a Round Table Conference on the 10th. Let me point out that is not true.

I had said, Mr. Yahya Khan, you are the President of this country. Come to Dhaka, come and see how our poor Bengali people have been mown down by your bullets, how the laps of our mothers and sisters have been robbed and left empty and bereft, how my helpless people have been slaughtered. Come, I said, come and see for yourself and then be the judge and decide. That is what I told him.

Earlier, I had told him there would be no Round Table Conference. What Round Table Conference, whose Round Table Conference? You expect me to sit at a Round Table Conference with the very same people who have emptied the laps of my mothers and my sisters?

On the 3rd, at the Paltan, I called for a non-cooperation movement and the shutdown of offices, courts and revenue collection. You gave me full support. Then suddenly, without consulting me or even informing us, he met with one individual for five hours and then made a speech in which he trend all the blame on me, laid all the fault at the door of the Bengali people!

The deadlock was created by Bhutto, yet the Bengalis are the ones facing the bullets! We face their guns, yet its our fault. We are the ones being bit by their bullets- and its still our fault!

So, the struggle this time is a struggle for emancipation, the struggle this time is a struggle for independence! Brothers, they have now called the Assembly to assassin on March 25, with the streets not yet dry of the blood of my brothers. You have called the Assembly, but you must first agree to meet my demands. Martial Law must be withdrawn; the soldiers must return to their barracks; the murderers of my people must be redressed. And Power must be handed over to the elected representatives of the people.

Only then will we consider if we can take part in the National Assembly or not! Before these demands are met, there can be no question of our participating in this session of the Assembly. That is one right not give to me as part of my mandate from the masses.

As I told them earlier, Mujibur Rahman refuses to walk to the Assembly trading upon the fresh stains of his brothers' blood! Do you, my brothers, have complete faith in me....? Let me tell you that the Prime Ministership is not what I seek. What I want is justice, the rights of the people of this land. They tempted me with the Prime Ministership but they failed to buy me over. Nor did they succeed in hanging me on the gallows, for you rescued me with your blood from the so-called conspiracy case. That day, right here at this racecourse, I had pledged to you that I would pay for this blood debt with my own blood. Do you remember? I am ready today to fulfill that promise!

I now declare the closure of all the courts, offices, and educational institutions for an indefinite period of time. No one will report to their offices- that is my instruction to you.

So that the poor are not inconvenienced, rickshaws, trains and other transport will ply normally-except serving any needs of the armed forces. If the army does not respect this, I shall not be responsible for the consequences.

The Secretariat, Supreme Court, High Court, Judge's Courts, and government and semi-government offices shall remain shut. Only banks may open for two hours daily for business transactions. But no money shall be transmitted from East to West Pakistan. The Bengali people must stay calm during these times. Telegraph and telephone communications will be confined within Bangladesh.

The people of this land are facing elimination, so be on guard. If need be, we will bring everything to a total standstill..... Collect your salaries on time. If the salaries are held up, if a single bullet is fired upon us henceforth, if the murder of my people does not cease, I call upon you to turn every home into a fortress against their onslaught. Use whatever you can put your hands on to confront this enemy. Every last road must be blocked. We will deprive them of food, we will deprive them of water. Even if I am not around to give you the orders, and if my associates are also not to be found, I ask you to continue your movement unabated.

I say to them again, you are my brothers, return now to the barracks where you belong and no one will bear any hostility toward you. Only do not attempt to aim any more bullets at our hearts: It will not do any good! And the seven million people of this land will not be cowed down by you or accept suppression any more. The Bengali people have learned how to die for a cause and you will not be able to bring them under your yoke of suppression!

To assist the families of the martyred and the injured, the Awami League has set up committees that will do all they can. Please donate whatever you can. Also, employers must give full pay to the workers who participated in the seven days of hartal or were not able to work because of curfews. To all government employees, I say that my directives must be followed. I had better not see any of you attending your offices. From today, until this land has been freed, no taxes will be paid to the government any more. As of now, the stop. Leave everything to me. I know how to organize movement. But be very careful. Keep in mind that the enemy has infiltrated our ranks to engage in the work of provocateurs. Whether Bengali or non-Bengali, Hindu or Muslim, all are our brothers and it is our responsibility to ensure their safety.

I also ask you to stop listening to radio, television and the press if these media do not report news of our movement. To them, I say, "You are our brothers. I beseech you to not turn this country into a living hell. With you not have to show your faces and confront your conscience some day?"

If we can peaceably settle our differences there is still hope that we can co-exist as brothers. Otherwise there is no hope. If you choose the other path, we may never come face one another again. For now, I have just one thing to ask of you: Give up any thoughts of enslaving this country under military rule again!" I ask my people to immediately set up committees under the leadership of the Awami League to carry on our struggle in every neighborhood, village, union and subdivision of this land.

You must prepare yourselves now with what little you have for the struggle ahead.

Since we have given blood, we will give more of it. But, Insha'Allah, we will free the people of this land!

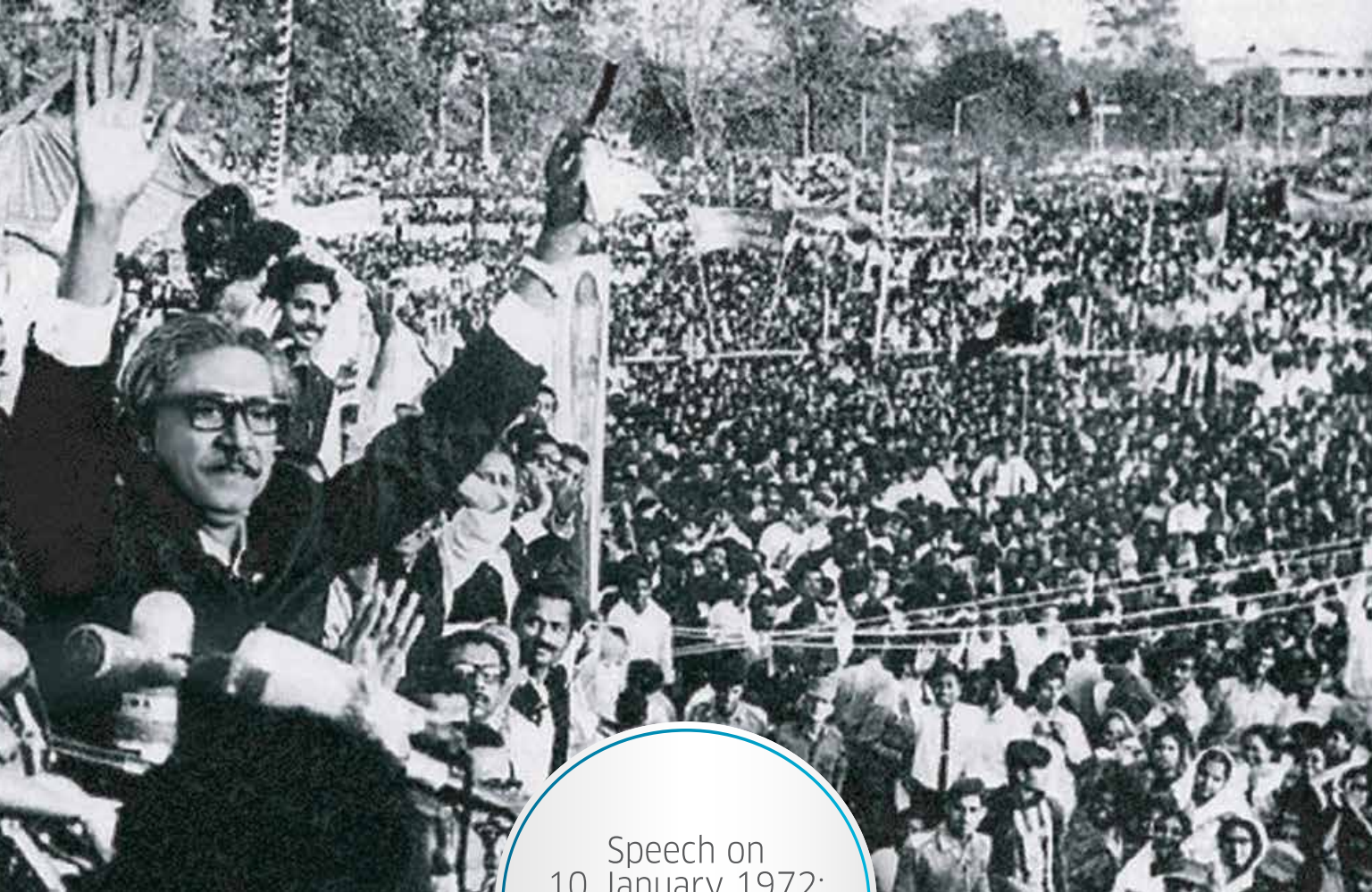
The struggle this time is for emancipation! The struggle this time is for independence!

Be ready. We cannot afford to lose our momentum. Keep the movement and the struggle alive because if we fall back the will come down hard upon us.

Be disciplined. No nation's movement can be victorious without discipline.

Joy Bangla!

(Translation by the Centre for Bangladesh Genocide Research)



Speech on
10 January 1972:
Leader Returns

The speech delivered by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on 10 January 1971 was a passionate and emotional one. Once again, at the historic Suhrawardy Udyan, he spoke of his love for his country, his joy at the victory, his sorrows due to the millions killed, tortured and/or displaced, and also his trust, faith and confidence in the Bangalees to overcome insurmountable odds. It was a moment of hope and optimism for the newly liberated Bangladesh since their leader was back from almost nine and half months of incarceration in the dark and solitary prison cells of Pakistan.

At first I remember the students, the labourers, the peasants, the intellectuals, soldiers, the police, the people, the Hindu and the Muslim of my Bangladesh who were killed. I, wishing for their souls and paying tribute to them, would like to say a few words to you.

My Bangladesh has been independent today, my life's desire has been fulfilled today, the people of my Bengal have been liberated today. My Bengal will remain free. Today I won't be able to make a speech. The way the sons of Bengal, the mothers of Bengal, the peasants of Bengal, the labourers of Bengal, the intellectuals of Bengal did struggle---I was imprisoned, was ready and waiting to go to the gallows. But I knew that they could not suppress my Bangalees. The people of my Bengal would be liberated. I pay tribute to those of my brothers who made the supreme sacrifice, suffered martyrdom, I give them my regards, seek forgiveness of their souls.

Today, in percentage terms, I am reliably informed, nearly 30 lakh people have been killed in Bengal. In the Second World War and also in the First World War, such a number of people, such a number of common citizen did not die, were not martyred, which happened in my 7-crore people's Bangladesh.

did not know I would return to you. I told just one thing, I have no objection if you kill me. Please return my dead body to my Bangalees, this is my only request to you.

I congratulate the Prime Minister of India Mrs. Indira Gandhi, I congratulate the people of India, I congratulate the armed forces of India, I congratulate the people of Russia, I congratulate the governments and people of Britain, Germany, France and those who have supported us.

I congratulate the people of America, I congratulate the oppressed of the world who have supported this liberation struggle of mine.

I am to say, one crore people from Bangladesh took refuge in India leaving the homestead. The people of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi gave them food, shelter, I cannot but congratulate them. I am to congratulate others who too helped us.

However, we should keep in mind, Bangladesh is an independent and sovereign state. Bangladesh shall remain independent. None can suppress Bangladesh. There is nothing to be gained by conspiring against Bangladesh. Before I left, I said, Oh, Bangalees! Your struggle this time is a struggle for independence, your struggle this time is a struggle for emancipation. You've done it. I said, build fortresses at every house. You struggled by building fortresses at every house.

I congratulate my colleagues. Many of my brothers, many activists, many mothers and sisters are no more in this world, I shall not see them. Today I saw the people of Bangladesh, saw the land of Bangladesh, saw the sky of Bangladesh, felt the weather of Bangladesh, I greet Bengal with salaam. My Bengal of gold I love you so much, this is perhaps the reason why I have been called back.

I hope, I appeal to all the states in the world, I have no roads, I have no ghat, my people have no food, my people are homeless-helpless, my people are street beggars. You help my people, I want help from you for the sake of humanity. I want help from all the states in the world. Please recognize my Bangladesh. Give relief from the United Nations, you have to

give, no way you must give. I, we won't admit defeat, We don't know how to admit defeat. Kabiguru, Kabiguri Rabindranath said, "You have made seven crore Bangalees, Oh Mother Bengal, remain as Bangalees, you haven't made them humans."

Kabiguru's words have proved wrong. My Bangalees are now humans. My Bangalees have shown in the history of the world, in the history of the world, that no such numbers of people have made self-sacrifices, no such numbers of people have laid down their lives. That's why I say you could not suppress me.

From today my request, from today my command, from today my order, as a brother—not as a leader, nor as the president or as the prime minister, I am your brother, you are my brothers. This independence of mine will be futile—if the people of my Bengal are not fully fed on rice, this independence of mine will not be fulfilled—if the mothers and sisters of Bengal do not get clothes, this independence of mine will not be fulfilled—if the mothers and sisters of this country do not get clothes for the protection of their modesty, this independence of mine will not be fulfilled—if the people of this country, the youth of mine, do not find employment or do not get jobs.

I congratulate you-- the freedom fighters, the student community, activists. You became guerillas, you gave blood, blood won't go in vain, blood didn't go in vain.

Just a word—from today, from today, let there be no theft and robbery in Bengal. Let there be no plundering in Bengal. The other sections of the population who are in Bengal, the people of other countries, the people of West Pakistan, who do not speak Bengali. I'm still saying, become Bangalees. And I am saying to my brothers, do not raise your hand to them. We are humans, we love humans.

But those who have collaborated, those who have killed my people entering their rooms, will be brought to justice and punished. Leave it with the government, in the hands of the independent government of Bangladesh. None would be spared. However, I want, in the independent country, like the independent citizens, in the independent court, they would be tried and punished. You, I want to show the world that peaceful Bengalis know how to give blood and peaceful Bengalis know how to keep peace. You have received me. I have come. I did not know I was sentenced to death by hanging. A grave was dug for me beside my cell. I prepared myself, I said I'm a Bangalee, I'm a man, I'm a Muslim—who dies once not twice. I said, if death comes to me, I'll die laughing. I will not die dishonouring my Bengali nation, I'll not beg your pardon. And will shout out while dying, Joy Bangla, Free Bangla, Bengali is my nation, Bangla is my language, the land of Bangla is my place.

My brothers, you know, we have a lot of work to do. I want all my people to begin work on the construction of the roads where broken. I want you all to go back to the field and cultivate paddy.

I want to tell the employees, do not take bribes, not even a single person. Remember, it was not an opportune moment then, but now I will not forgive bribes.

My brothers! As I was being taken away under arrest, Tajuddin, Nazrul and others went towards me. I told, 'let me die with seven crore Bangalees. I bless you.' Tajuddin and others were crying. I said, 'you go away. Struggle on. I have faith in you. I want to die at this house. This will be the place of Bangladesh, I want to breathe my last in this house. In no way, I can

bow my head to them.'

Brothers mine, they have interrogated Dr. Kamal there for three months so as to make him testify against Mujib. Some Bangalees have given their testimonies against me, and we all know and recognize them. They will be brought to trial.

You, today, I am not in a position to make a speech. You understand, "Take the salute my beautiful mother, motherland, the banks of the Ganges, the gentle breeze have soothed my life." (Recites a poem by Tagore).

Today, when I landed in Dhaka, I couldn't hold back my tears, because never did I think I would be back to the land, the people, the nation and the country, Bangladesh, that I love so much. Today, I have returned to Bangladesh. I have come back to my mothers, my sisters, my brothers. My Bengal is now independent, and my people of Bengal are independent today.

I tell the brothers of West Pakistan, you stay happy. We bear you no grudge. We will try our best to show respect to you. Things that your military men have done-- raped my sisters and mothers and killed my three lakh people. Go away and be happy. You stay happy. We are no longer with you. It's over. You remain free. I, too, remain independent.

As a citizen of an independent country, I can make friends with you, otherwise there can be no friendship. However, adequate action will be taken for those who have wronged.

I apologize to you. I will make a speech another day, after a few days when I'll get a bit well.

You see I'm not that Mujibur Rahman any longer. When I look at my Bengal, you see, places have been flattened, villages after villages have been burned down. There's hardly any family left where my people haven't been killed. What a howling cowardice that, the military men killed innocent civilians in this way! And what they claim! 'We are the Muslim military in Pakistan.' They should be hated. They should have known that Bangladesh is the second Muslim country in the world after Indonesia. The Muslim are large in number - second position. And India is in the third position. And West Pakistan is in the fourth position. We are Muslims, do the Muslim rape mothers and sisters? We are Muslims. In my state, in this Bangladesh, there will be a socialist system. There will be democracy in this Bangladesh. Bangladesh will be a secular state.

I want to tell them who are eager to know. On my way home, I had a discussion with Mrs. Indira Gandhi in Delhi. I can tell you it since I know her very well. I hold her in high regard. She is the daughter of Pundit Nehru. She is the daughter of Motilal Nehru's son. They were involved in politics, they did sacrifice. They became prime ministers of India. The day I ask, Indian army will leave the soil of Bangladesh, and she is withdrawing little by little.

However, the help she extended to us, I, on behalf of the seven crore sad Bangalees, congratulate Mrs. Indira Gandhi, her government and the people of India, I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

There's hardly any head of the state to whom she did not request personally to secure

Sheikh Mujib's release. She personally told all the states in the world, "you ask Yahya Khan to release Sheikh Mujib, to find a political solution".

A crore of people have moved to a country leaving their motherland. There are many countries having ten lakh, fifteen lakh, twenty lakh, thirty lakh, forty lakh, fifty lakh population. Sixty percent states have population below one crore. Whereas one crore people from my Bengal took refuge in India leaving the lure of the motherland. Many of them died there sick, many suffered the agony of starvation. Many houses were burned down by this gang of beasts.

Forgive me, my brothers, forgive me. Today, I have no desire for vengeance on anyone. Don't tell anything to anybody. I will punish them who did wrong. Don't take the law into your own hands. The youth of the liberation forces, take my salam. The student community, take my salam. The working community, take my salam. The peasantry, take my salam. You take, the luckless Hindus and Muslims take my salam.

And those of the employees who received bullet injuries shot from machine guns and those who fled for fear of life leaving behind their mothers and sisters, their young wives captured and thrown into Pakistani camp at Kurmitola, I salute you all and offer my best regards.

Together we will build a new and prosperous Bengal. The people of Bengal will cheer up again, live life merrily and breathe freely in an open atmosphere. The people of Bengal will have two squire meals a day. All my endeavors are aimed at achieving this goal. In fact, establishing the country on a firm financial footing is the motto of my life. With these words I would like to take leave of you. I wish I could die with the solace that the woes of my people are over. I seek your wishes and blessings to this end. With these words I would like to take leave of you. I express my sincerest thanks to my colleagues who stood by me at the hour of need, who obeyed the orders I gave, they proved through their deeds that they were equal to the challenge and spared no pains to translate into action the orders of their Mujib bhai: fight to the last, liberate the country, sacrifice your lives and emancipate the people. Don't worry about me. Let me go. I doubt whether I would be able to come back here. But Allah is helper of the helpless. That's why, I've been able to get back to you again with His blessings.

My dear colleagues, I congratulate you wholeheartedly on your snatching victory. I know well the severe pain you have taken. You know I was detained in prison. For nine months I was kept out of touch with any newspaper. It is true that at the moment of my departure Mr. Bhutto said: Sheikh Shaheb, please make an effort to maintain a semblance of unity between the two wings. I said I had not made up my mind about it yet. Even I was unsure of my whereabouts then. I said I would speak my mind as I returned home. Today, I say in no uncertain terms that the knot has been undone for ever. It's time to part our ways.

And if you're entering a secret deal with any superpower and attempting to sabotage our independence, then mark it, Sheikh Mujib would be in the commander's position this time. He would rather die than let our independence slip.

My dear brothers, four lakh of our Bangalees are languishing in West Pakistan. I would put in a request, of course with your approval, my dear colleagues, to the international bodies like the UN or International Court of Justice to institute an enquiry as to the brutal atrocities committed and the colossal massacre perpetrated by the Pakistani army, the truth must be

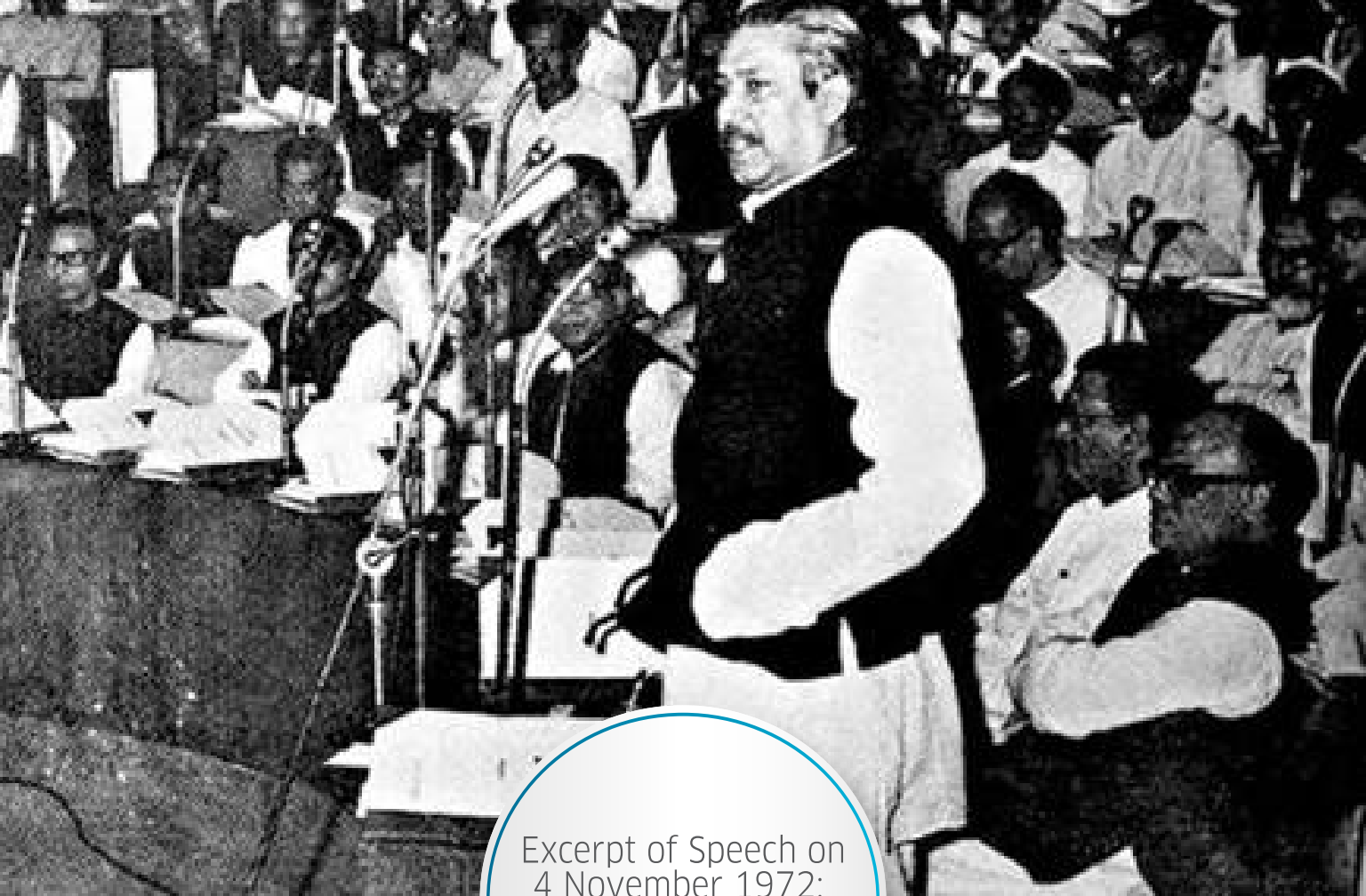
revealed to the international community. I would urge the UN that Bangladesh be granted membership immediately and institute an enquiry.

Dear brothers, if you attempt at any foul play, the consequences would be dire. I know the cycle of conspiracy hasn't ended. Bangalees, beware of conspiracies being hatched against us. Once I gave a clarion call to my people: turn each of your houses into a fortress, didn't I? And fight with whatever you have, didn't I? I said our struggle this time is a struggle for freedom and emancipation. I said it standing on this ground on 7 March. Today, I urge: be fair and stay united and don't listen to the words of the mischief makers.

Since we have been independent we'll remain independent if Allah wills. The struggle shall continue as long as a single living soul exists in this Bangladesh.

Today, I can't continue my speech any longer. I wish to speak to you again after I get a bit better. Please do forgive me. Pray for me. You will keep me in your prayer. Please put up your hands with me in supplication to Allah for His mercy.

(Translation by Dr. Rashid Askari)



Excerpt of Speech on
4 November 1972:
**Fundamentals
of the State**

On 4 November 1972, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivered an important speech at the Constituent Assembly regarding the new constitution which had been drafted for the country. The speech highlights Bangabandhu's visions for the state and the role to be played by the constitutional principles therein. An abridged version of the translated speech is provided below.

Mr. Speaker, this is the day that 75 million Bengalis are set to get their hands on the constitution of their own. This, to my knowledge, is the first time that Bengalis are handing a constitution to themselves. This, to the fact (not my conjecture), is the first time that Bengalis received a constitution from the people they voted to power.

This time we can lend our hindsight to a long history. But, that's not what I have set out on. Since the period when today's India and Bangladesh used to be jointly known as the sub-continent, people in Bangladesh were at the forefront of shedding blood in pursuit of freedom. Places such as Jalalabad are evident of that struggle and our mothers and sisters in the houses of Bangladesh testify to that history.

There was no district or no mahakuma in Bangla where the fire of rebellion didn't sweep across since the British period. Even the mutiny of sepoy sparked from the land of Bengal.

Then the officers of Bangladesh fought in many battles, advanced their struggle even at the cost of their lives that they sacrificed at gallows. They languished in jails for a long. We are not regretting all that. But, happiness never settled in their fate. Once someone said to me jokingly, "You are doomed all because of your fertile land. That is why traitors ransacked this land over and over again as they eyed the resources and richness of this region.

Honorable Speaker, the entire world, and the autocrats in then India looted money and resources from this land. It is with the properties of the destitute, landless peasant, toiling worker, the starving man that they built the port in Kolkata, the port in Mumbai, the city of Madras, Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore, and Dandy, Great Britan. The abundance of Bengalis brought about their miseries.

Bengalis have always built the wall of resistance and waged wars against that. Titumir called for war, Hazi Shariat Ullah waged battle. They deserve a heart-whole tribute on this day when Bengalis are all equipped to get their hands on the constitution of their own.

This day rings in the memories of Sher-e-Bangla Fazlul Haque, Late Suhrawardy, and also Manik Mia whose pen carried forward Bangla's struggle for freedom. This day chimes with the memories of my colleagues, their dedication, and their consigning lives towards freedom.

It was not in the nine months that the struggle for freedom was confined to. Rather, it began in 1947 and gained momentum step by step. That struggle has a history. It needs to be advanced little by little. No struggle reached its peak just in a day.

The seed of the struggle spanning nine months was sown long ago.

.....

Mr. Speaker, our constitution is based on four pillars, which have so far been talked about in detail in the house...My colleagues delivered their speeches on that ground. Among the four pillars that the constitution is based on, the basic rights of people are one of the core principles. People proved the essence of the four pillars through the votes they cast. It is testified not just by votes but by the lives consigned by 30 million people as well.

Yes! People are entitled to sharing their opinions.

Imbued with nationalism, the Bengali nation dived into the deadliest struggle. No nation can march forward without a sense of nationality. We are also striding ahead based on that principle. We believe in nationalism. Nationalism can be defined in many ways. Many saints, thought leaders, and educationists had their own ways to define it. So, I am not going to add one on my own. All I want to say is that I am a man of Bangladesh, I represent a nation.

Let me share just one insight into nationalism. Be it language, be it education, civilization, or culture – there is one thing anchoring everything, which is emotion. Without this emotion, no nation can amount to anything big, no sense of nationalism can grow. There are many nations in this world whose people speak in multiple languages but uphold one identity. On the other hand, there are many countries where people speak in one language, have one religion and many other things in common but they couldn't become one nation. Nationalism depends on emotions.

Today we are Bengalis, we uphold Bengali nationalism owing to the emotions based on the bloodshed through which our nation earned their freedom, through which we continued our struggle. If anyone wants to raise questions about it in this situation, I humbly request him not to play with fire.

Secondly, we believe in democracy – that democracy, which ensures people's wellbeing.

We want democracy for the exploited. What I mean by the democracy for the exploited is that the provision mentioned in the code for democracy in our country ensures the protection of the people without privilege, not of the exploiters. That sets our democracy apart from others. That is prevalent in many schedules of law and many bills, which you already know.

Much has been discussed that no one can snatch the property of someone else. Therefore, we are not interfering with someone's personal property. But, we want to divert the method of exploiting people into the one used for their wellbeing. That is why we nationalized banks, insurance companies, garments factories, jute mills, and sugar industries so that the exploiting quarter cannot use democracy. This democracy is dedicated to protecting the exploited. That is why the way we define democracy can stand out from others.

Thirdly, socialism! We believe in socialism. We nationalized those sectors because we believe in socialism. Those who keep saying, 'socialism goes missing', should first figure out what they do mean by socialism.

Russia, the breeding ground of socialism, has crossed 50 years. But, they couldn't realize its essence yet. Socialism is not a fruit on a tree that you can pluck and taste. It takes a long journey along a rugged trail to figure out what socialism is.

That is why the first step we undertook is a society free of exploitation, which we believe socialism is aligned around. We don't want to borrow socialism from other parts of the world. Different countries have different ways to march towards socialism.

The basis of socialism is an exploitation-free society. We can move step by step towards socialism, considering all aspects including the climate of a country, people's psychology, and their financial solvency.

China didn't model its path after that of Russia. Despite being in the vicinity of Russia, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Bulgaria chose different courses towards socialism, considering their environment and the background of their nation. In the middle east, Iraq followed one path, while Egypt opted for another.

Socialism cannot stand on its feet if it is imported from abroad. Those who are doing that could never establish socialism. Playing by books and following fool stops and commas can neither establish socialism nor can carry out a movement.

Towards that goal, one has to understand the environment of that country, realize people's condition, their psychology, custom, financial solvency, mentality. Considering all the steps, they have to move step by step. Socialism cannot be brought about in a day. But, I can challenge no other country in the world, not even the ones that established socialism through a revolution could take up so many initiatives in nine months like us. When you are doing something, some issues arise. That gets fixed through the process.

The next issue is secularism. Mr. Speaker, secularism doesn't mean the absence of religion. Seventy-five million people of Bangla are entitled to following their faiths. We never want to keep people aloof from their religion by force and never will we do so in the days to come.

Secularism is not synonymous with the absence of religion. Muslims will observe their religious rites. No one, not even the state, holds the right to stop them from doing so. A Hindu will follow his religious rituals. No one can interfere with his faith. Buddhists will keep going with their own path. No one will resist them. Christians will follow their path. No one can stop them. The only thing we object to is using religion as a political weapon.

We observed gambling, exploitation, torture, murder, and adultery in the name of religion in this country over 25 years.

Religion is sacred and this sacred practice should not be used as a political weapon. When someone says that religious rights have been curtailed, I must say that that actually is not the case. Rather, we ensured protecting the religious rights of 75 million people.

If someone says that there is no democratic basic rights, I will say if ensuring rights of 75 million people require compromising on that of a handful of people, we have to do that.

(Translation by Barrister Shah Ali Farhad)



Speech at UNGA:
**Bangla on the
Global Stage**

It was a watershed moment when Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman addressed the United Nations General Assembly in New York on 25 September 1974. This was the first address by a Bangladeshi head of state/government at the General Assembly, and the first such speech delivered in Bangla. The speech urged global leaders to build a brave new world free of economic inequalities, social injustice, military aggression and threats of the nuclear war.

Today in this august council, I feel fortunate to have the privilege of speaking a few words in front of you. I am also part of the satisfaction I notice in you derived from the achievement of the representation in the great parliament of mankind by the seven crore people of Bangladesh. This is a historic moment for the Bengali nation. Because, today their struggle for achieving the rights to self-governance has met with big success.

The Bengalis have struggled for many centuries for the right to live a free and honourable life as independent citizens of an independent country. They expected to live in peace and harmony with all the nations in the world.

The great ideology which has been enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations is the ideology of our people and for this ideology they have made the supreme sacrifice. The Bengali nation is dedicated to building such a world order in which will be reflected people's desire for achieving peace and justice. And I know in this pledge of ours is lying the memory of the departed souls of millions of martyrs. It is the good fortune for us that Bangladesh entered the United Nations at such a time when the post of the president of this council has been assumed by such a great man who himself was an active freedom fighter.

Honourable President, I remember your valuable contribution to making the Non-Aligned Movement in Algiers a success last year. I would like to have the privilege of congratulating them whose supreme sacrifice has enabled Bangladesh today to take its place in the United Nations. I also express deep gratitude from the bottom of my heart to the countries and nations who have extended their support for the independence struggle of Bangladesh. I also express my heartfelt thanks to the countries and the nations who have helped us in the efforts of consolidating the newly-earned independence, reconstructing the war-ravaged country and accepting the challenge of rendering more services for the good of the people. I also express my sincere thanks, on behalf of the people of Bangladesh, to them who congratulated us on our being seated in the United Nations. The struggle of Bangladesh epitomizes the universal struggle for justice and peace. So, it's quite natural that Bangladesh would stand by the oppressed of the world from the beginning.

It is observed in the experience of a quarter century since the birth of the United Nations that it had to carry on incessant struggles against overwhelming odds for the implementation of its ideals.

Millions of freedom fighters of Asia, Africa and Latin America had to sacrifice their lives in order to achieve the right to self-control promised in the UN Charter. The struggle is still going on. The war is going on against the unlawful occupation of areas by the exercise of muscle and the abuse of power to vitiate the equitable rights of the people and against racism. The struggle hasn't ended in failure. Great victory has been achieved in Algeria, Vietnam, Bangladesh and Guinea-Bissau. It is proved by the victory that history is in favour of the people and the final victory of justice is inevitable.

Injustice is still rampant in many parts of the world. Our Arab brothers are still fighting for the complete eviction of the invaders from their land. The equitable national rights of the Palestinian people have not yet been achieved. In spite of the acceleration of the process of abolishing colonialism, it hasn't reached its ultimate goal. This is more strongly true of Africa, where the people of Zimbabwe and Namibia are still engaged in the final struggle for national independence and absolute freedom. Although racism has been identified as a serious offence in this council, it's still destroying the conscience of the people. On the one

hand, we have to struggle to overthrow the flow of injustice and on the other; we'll have serious challenges ahead of us. Today all the nations of the world are confronted with the hard struggle for choosing their paths. On the wisdom of choosing the path depends our future. Whether we will move towards a frightening world ridden with starvation, poverty, unemployment and hunger and utterly shaken by the fear of being completely ruined by the nuclear war, or we will look forward to one where, in the age of astonishing advancement of science and technical knowledge, human creativity and enormous success are able to build a fear-free better future. This future will be free from the threats of nuclear war. By the equitable distribution of all the wealth and technical knowledge of the world, the door to such welfare can be opened where everyone will have the minimum assurance of a happy and honest life.

We should take immediate measures to work towards building an equitable international economic system against the backdrop of the economic disaster that has recently occurred in the world. At a special session of this council held earlier this year, the serious economic situation of the present world was discussed. I am speaking on behalf of such a country which is currently at the top of the list of countries affected by the economic disaster. I'd like to talk a little about how serious this loss is.

Bangladesh was born on the ravages of war. Since then we have been faced with natural disasters one after another. At last occurred the unprecedented flood. We are grateful to the United Nations, the related organizations and the Secretary-General for taking effective measures to recover from the recent flood disaster by extending a helping hand to Bangladesh. The President of Algeria Boumédiène and the Foreign Minister Bouteflika have appealed to the Non-Aligned countries to help Bangladesh. We are receiving good response from the friend countries and humanitarian organizations. Natural disasters not only hindered Bangladesh's progress—a near famine situation was created in the country.

With this, due to global inflation, there has been a loss of crore of taka in the repayments on the liability for a country like ours. The standard of living of the people has reached below the level of subsistence. The condition of the people whose annual per capita income is less than \$ 100 is more miserable. Those who were living on less than the minimum food requirement estimated by the World Health Organization are now facing complete starvation. The indication which has been given about the future of the poor and needy countries is more disappointing.

Due to continuous hikes, the price of food has gone beyond the purchasing power of poor countries. On the other hand, the rich and developed countries are the main exporters of food. Because of the impossible increase in the price of agricultural machinery and materials, the attempts to procure food for the poor countries have not been successful. As a result of the global inflation, the cost of development planning for the developing countries has increased manifold. Their power to utilize their own resources has also diminished. Countries that are already suffering from huge unemployment problems have been compelled to cut down on their far minor development plans. If these plans had been executed, there would have been a possibility of income increase by only five to six percent. If all the nations of the world do not come forward to face the situation concertedly, the suffering of the people would assume such massive proportions, which is unprecedented in history. However, it is also unparalleled in history that a handful of people are enjoying incomparable material riches and opportunities alongside the accumulated suffering of numberless people.

The revival of human unity and brotherhood among us can bring about the change in the situation. Only the recognition of interdependence is capable of giving a logical solution to the current problem. Immediate and concerted efforts are needed to overcome the current disaster. The United Nations did not ever meet such a big challenge like the present one. The challenge is to try to harness the power of reasoning to build an equitable international economic system. This system will ensure the sovereignty of each country over its natural resources. The system will build international cooperation, practical framework, the basis for which would be the recognition of the common interests of all countries in the world in a stable equitable economic system. Now is such a time when we have to declare with unambiguous voice that we have an international responsibility. The responsibility is to make sure that everybody in the world can enjoy their economic, social and cultural rights conducive to the development and dignity of their personality.

This right is ensured in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we have to maintain our international responsibilities in such a way that every human being is assured of achieving the establishment of standard of living for the happiness and prosperity of themselves and their families. We are fully aware that the establishing of international rights, negotiations and peaceful environment can alleviate economic crisis. It has to be mentioned in this regard that emergency action should be taken to control the current competition of armament. The abatement of armament competition will not only create an environment for the elimination of economic crises—the enormous resources that are being wasted on this competition— can be used toward the well-being of mankind.

Bangladesh has been pursuing a non-alignment policy since its inception. The main idea of this policy is peaceful coexistence and friendship with all. Our complete allegiance to peace has emanated from the realization that only in a peaceful environment, we will be able to enjoy the fruits of our hard-earned national independence and employ all our resources and energy to fight hunger, poverty, disease, illiteracy and unemployment. So, we welcome all those efforts which are aimed at reducing tensions in the world, limiting armament, strengthening peaceful coexistence policies everywhere in the world, including Asia, Africa and Latin America. According to this policy, we have given continuous support to the proposal for keeping Indian Ocean as a peaceful area. The proposal to keep the Indian Ocean as a peaceful area was strongly approved in this Council.

We have given unwavering support to declare Southeast Asia as an area of peace, liberty and neutrality. We believe the rising nations who were united at the Non Alliance Conference gave strong support for peace. They have again declared the same promise of the vast majority of people in the world. The aim of this declaration is to protect national independence and establish peace and justice.

Peace is absolutely necessary for the protection of the existence of mankind. The hopes and aspirations of all men and women in world are embodied in this peace. Peace can never be sustainable if not based on justice.

Since we are peace-loving, we follow the principles of settlement in this subcontinent. This is our firm conviction that the emergence of Bangladesh has been instrumental in establishing peace and stability in the subcontinent. And instead of previous conflicts and rivalry, it will be possible to establish cooperation and friendly relations among the people of three

countries of ours. We have established friendly relations with our great neighbours-- India, Burma and Nepal. Forgetting the past, we are trying to establish new relations with Pakistan. We have never stopped trying to bury the bitterness of the past. We have given the proof of our sincerity in making new history of peace and co-operation in this subcontinent by granting general amnesty for 195 war criminals. There were lots of evidence against these 195 war criminals of involvement with crimes against humanity, nevertheless, forgetting all the crimes we have wanted to create such an example of forgiveness which will herald a new chapter of peace, prosperity and co-operation in the subcontinent. In ensuring peace in the subcontinent we haven't given any preconditions nor have we done any bargaining. Rather, we have been motivated and influenced by an auspicious future inspiration for the people. We have also emphasized on justice and mutual understanding in resolving other major disputes. The distress of 63,000 Pakistani families has been a pressing humanitarian problem. They have again expressed their allegiance to Pakistan and got their names listed to the International Committee of the Red Cross with a view to returning home. According to international negotiations and rules, they preserve the right to return home. At the same time, an immediate solution to their problems is necessary for the sake of humanity. The fair share of the assets of former Pakistan is another problem which needs immediate solution.

Bangladesh is ready for negotiations and settlements. Our expectation is that Pakistan will respond to our call for the greatest interest of the people of this subcontinent and will come forward to solve the unsettled problems on the basis of justice and negotiations. If so, there will be no more impediments on the way to normalizing the situation in the subcontinent. Bangladesh will continue its efforts to establish good neighbourly relations with all its neighbouring countries.

The basis of the relations will be peaceful coexistence, respect for each other's sovereignty and regional integrity, and noninterference in each other's internal affairs. We will keep continuing our support for establishing peace in this part of the world and elsewhere.

In this world beset by grief, distress and conflict, the United Nations is the center of people's future hopes and aspirations. Despite numerous difficulties and obstacles, the United Nations, for more than a quarter century since its birth, has made significant contributions to the progress of mankind in the political, economic, social and cultural fields. The number of such countries is very less which like Bangladesh have been able to realize the practical success and prospects of this organization. This United Nations, under the inspirational leadership of Dr. Kurt Waldheim and his worthy and dedicated colleagues, has done a plenty of relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction work in our country. The aim of the work is to remove the wounds of war from the heart of Bangladesh, to revive the productivity of the war-ravaged economy and to rehabilitate about a crore of refugees who had taken refuge in India during the liberation war. The Secretary-General, his colleagues and various international organizations have given inspiration and lead in the coordination of performing this big responsibility. I express my gratefulness to them on behalf of the Government and the people of Bangladesh. It's my firm conviction that the United Nations will also come forward with such constructive mindset to resolve the rest humanitarian crises remaining in the subcontinent.

We are also grateful for the efforts the United Nations is making to collect aid to help people

affected by the recent devastating flood in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is one of the countries which are affected by natural disasters time and again. Therefore, Bangladesh has special interest in tackling the situation arising from natural disasters and building regular institutions capable of facilitating the world communities to be more prompt. Of course, such a system has already been introduced as the beginning. This system is the establishment of the office of the coordinator of United Nations disaster relief. It is very necessary to strongly build the organization so that it can play its role effectively. All member states of the United Nations have special responsibility in this regard.

Dear President, finally I want to declare again our complete faith in the indomitable power of the human being to achieve the impossible and overcome the difficult barriers. For countries like ours which have emerged from the struggle and sacrifice, faith in this ideology will keep them alive. We may have to suffer. But we defy dissolution. In facing these battles of life, people's power of resistance and firm commitment are the final word. Self-reliance is our goal. People's joint effort is our prescribed course of action. There is no room for doubt at all that international cooperation and partnership in resources and technology can facilitate our task, can alleviate people's sufferings. However, the emerging countries like ours should have confidence in their own efficiency. It should be kept in mind that only through the united and concerted effort of the people, we can be able to reach our specific goal, can build a better future."

(Translated by Dr. Rashid Askari)

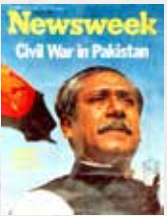
Quotes on Bangabandhu: In the Eyes of the World



“

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 Bengalee journalist upon hearing the news of the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.



“

Tall for a Bengali (he stands 5 feet 11 inches), with a touch of gray 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



“

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



“

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



“

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's entire life is a tremendous inspiration for all of us... He was a leader of courage, a man of conviction, a sage of peace, a champion of justice, equality and dignity, a hand of defiance against brutality, and, a shield against coercion.

Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India



“
Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was a brave leader. The Bangalee nation and the people of the world will remember him forever for his role.
Sonia Gandhi, President of Indian National Congress



“
Father of the Nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, through his life and work, set an example for the entire world.
Mahinda Rajapaksa, Sri Lankan Prime Minister.



“
I have not seen the Himalayas. But I have seen Sheikh Mujib. In personality and in courage, this man is the Himalayas. I have thus had the experience of witnessing the Himalayas.
Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro.



“
The speciality of Sheikh Mujib's character was his uncompromising fighting leadership with a generous heart.
Yasser Arafat, Chairman, PLO (Nobel Laureate).



“
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 fulfilment of his vision:
John F Kerry, US Secretary of State



“
South Asia has given to the world over the centuries many great teachers, philosophers, statesmen, political leaders and warriors. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's place of honor in that pantheon of immortal figures is assured among them for all time.
Lakshman Kadirgamar, Sri Lankan Foreign Minister



Selected Quotes of Bangabandhu



Over his illustrious political career spanning over three decades, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman made numerous significant speeches and memorable comments which are worth archiving and using. Thus, it was difficult to select any specific number. However, we have selected some considering their general application transcending time and national boundaries.



Quotes of Bangabandhu

“

Our flag today flies proudly in the skies. We can say today that Bengalis are a nation. We can say today that the soil of Bengal is our soil.

7 June 1972, Suhrawardy Udyan

“

A nation which has achieved its independence through blood does not know how to bow its head to anyone.

26 June 1972, Maizdi Public Meeting

“

In the annals of history, no other country has paid as steep a price in blood for independence as the people of Bangladesh.

30 January 1972, Public Meeting in Tangail

“

In the annals of history, no other nation has paid as steep a price for independence as we did.

SAA

“

Safeguarding one's independence is as difficult as achieving it. It is only through ensuring democracy and education of our people that we can truly become free.

SAA

“

The struggle to build a nation is more difficult than the struggle for independence. That is why we have to completely devote ourselves to the task of nation building.

SAA

“

In the annals of history, no other nation has paid as steep a price for independence as we did.

7 February 1972, Speech at Brigade Parade Ground, Kolkata

“

We believe in world peace. We believe in peaceful co-existence.

18 March 1973, Speech at Suhrawardy Udyan

“

We want to build such a society where the smiles on the faces of our farmers, workers and people are restored.

20 February 1972, Speech at Ramgati

“

We want to build a discrimination-free Golden Bengal where the interests of future mothers and children are given paramount importance.

26 February 1972, Speech at Nagarbari, Pabna

“

A nation which does not respect the rule of law can never advance.

26 June 1972 Speech At Adamjinagar

“

What do I want? I want that no one should remain hungry. What do I want? I want jobs for the unemployed youth. What do I want? I want my people to be happy.

26 June 1972 Speech At Adamjinagar

“

A nation cannot survive on handouts. They must become self-reliant.

26 December 1972, Speech at Jessore Stadium

“

A nation cannot advance without sacrifices.

10 December 1974, Address to Navy

“

To build a Golden Bengal, we need golden humans.

15 December 1974, Address for Victory Day

“

Terrorism cannot ensure people's welfare or solve any problems. This method has already been rejected in various parts of the world.

SAA

“

We want to build such a society where the smiles on the faces of our farmers, workers and people are restored.

20 February 1972, Speech at Ramgati

“

We cannot build our nation with foreign assistance alone. We must generate wealth internally.

SAA

On Secularism and Non Communalism

“

Secularism does not denote atheism. Hindus will observe their religion, Muslims will observe their religion, Christians and Buddhists will observe their respective faiths. None will interfere in each others' faiths. That is not what the people of Bangladesh want. Religion cannot be used for political purposes. If that is attempted, they will be rejected by the people of Bangladesh.

12 October 1972, Speech at Constituent Assembly, Dhaka

“

Some are trying to spread communal hatred in this country. That will not be allowed. Communalism has no place in our society. Muslims, Hindus, Christians and Buddhists are all citizens of this country. They will enjoy equal rights in every aspect.

15 December 1974, Address to nation on Victory Day

“

Muslims, Hindus and Christians will all live in this land. Bangladesh is here to stay.
3 January 1971, Speech at the oath taking ceremony of the newly elected Awami League members of the Provincial Assembly

“

The days of securing victory through arms has long passed. This is the age of conquering the hearts of others with love.

SAA

On his love for the people

“

What does one seek from life? Some seek wealth; some seek power, while others seek love. I only covet the love of people.

25 February 1973, Speech at Nilphamari

“

Learn to love others. Love the people of your country unconditionally.

26 February 1973, Speech at Siraniganj

“

If you love your people, they will love you back. If you sacrifice for the people, then they will be ready to lay down their lives for you.

SAA

“

The days of securing victory through arms has long passed. This is the age of conquering the hearts of others with love.

3 January 1971, Speech at the oath taking ceremony of the newly elected Awami League members of the Provincial Assembly

“

I do not fear oppression, repression and the lonely dark cells of prison. But I am weak for the love of my people.

SAA

“

I have come to politics because I love my country and its soil.

11 January 1971

“

I am ready to sacrifice my life to turn around the fate of my people.

SAA

“

Remember this: I will never betray my people. I am ready to make any sacrifices in order to uphold their trust on me. I will never betray them.

3 March 1971, Speech at a meeting of Chatro Legaue at Paltan Maidan

“

I can give up anything. But I can never give up the love of my people.

To Government Employees

“

To the government employees I say, corruption and bribery have no place in Bangladesh. Your jobs are not immune. If there is any evidence of misdeeds, they will receive notice stating: 'Your service is no longer required'.

24 January 1972, Speech at a public meeting at Tangail

“

Government employees must devote themselves to public service and put the nation's interests above everything else. The old ruling mindset of the bureaucracy must be discarded. The focus should be on serving the people.

1 February 1972, Speech for members of Cabinet and government employees

“

The biggest question today what we have we done for those who pay for our carpets, fuel, embassies, families and the state.

25 January 1975, Speech in National Assembly

“

We need self-reflection, self-restraint and self-purification.

SAA

“

We need reflect on ourselves. If we don't engage in self-reflection, we will never know our true selves.

18 January 1974, Speech at Council Session of Awami League

“

We need to remember that life is temporary and short. Apart from a few yards of shroud, we can't take any belongings with us.

15 January 1975, Speech at the first police week at Rajarbagh Police Lines

“

You have to take an oath to personally remain above corruption, fight those who are corrupt and to love the country and its people.

SAA

“

No peace is greater in this world than that achieved through serving the people.

SAA

“

I urge all government employees to serve those whose tax money pay for your families. Make sure they do not face any hardship. Deal with criminals with an iron fist but make sure that not even a single innocent person is harassed.

SAA

“

You have to change your mentality. Never exploit those who pay for your salaries and your families with their hard earned tax money.

25 January 1975, Speech in National Assembly

“

Corruption can only be eliminated if nepotism is discarded.

21 July 1975, addressing the newly appointed District Governors at Bangabhaban.

“

Engage in self-criticism, self-restraint and self-purification. Only then you can become humans.

SAA

“

Even oppressors are afraid of going against the people. When the rulers become oppressors, it is the country that suffers.

Unfinished Memoirs

On Arts and Literature

“

We need music which represents the people and soil of this country. Only then can the recognition of the people be secured.

24 January 1971, Speech at a reception for musicians

“

No great piece of art or literature can be created whilst being separated from the people.

14 February 1974, Speech at Bangla Academy

“

We need to establish the prestige of our language, culture, literature and heritage at home and abroad. Only then can we stand proud and tall as an independent nation in the world arena.

SAA

“

Devoid of connection with a country's land and people, culture becomes unsustainable.

31 December 1970, Speech at the sixth founding anniversary of cine weekly 'Purbani', at Hotel Purbani, Dhaka

“

Artists and poets must reflect the aims and aspirations of the people. They must acknowledge the people, the motherland and culture in their work.

SAA

“

Without cultural independence, economic and political independence is meaningless. Thus, Bangladesh's indigenous literature and culture must develop centering the land, the people and their aims and aspirations.

SAA

On press and journalism

“

Even in an independent country, no one has an unfettered right to do anything. Only someone who appreciates the value of independence has the right to enjoy the fruits of independence.

16 July 1972, Speech at the annual session of Dhaka Union of Journalists

“

Democracy must operate within a framework. By the same token, journalism too, needs to operate within a framework. If these two points are considered, we can solve many problems.

SAA

On police and law enforcement

“

Conduct yourselves in such a manner that people can feel proud of you. You need to serve the people, not rule over them.

8 May 1972, Speech at Sarda Police Academy

“

Your duty is to serve the people, love the people and help them during their crises.

15 January 1975, Speech at the first police week at Rajarbagh Police Lines

“

The only thing the people of Bangladesh want from you is security so that they may sleep peacefully at night.

SAA

“

You need to take an oath to build such a force that serves the people, not rules over them.

SAA

“

Many police were among the three million martyrs of the Liberation War. Make sure that their sacrifices were not in vain. It is up to you to uphold their dignity and honour and eternal peace of their spirits.

SAA

“ You must remember, preserving independence is as difficult as achieving it.

SAA

“ If you are honest and have the genuine will and commitment to fighting corruption, then you will prevail.

SAA

“ There will be no issues with the law and order situation if you are disciplined and committed to your roles.

SAA

“ You need to remember that you must be loved, not feared, by the people.

SAA

“ There are many countries where the police are highly respected. You need to learn how to earn that respect.

SAA

“ Except for a few yards of shroud, we take nothing with us to the afterlife. Then why would you exploit and oppress others?

SAA

“ If you exploit the poor, you will need to answer for that to your creator.

SAA

On the medical profession

“ Without discipline and honesty, no nation can grow to its full potential.

8 October 1972, Speech at PG Hospital, Dhaka

“ As doctors, you must be very liberal and open minded. You must have a ‘serving’ mindset. You cannot discriminate on the basis of rich and poor. Your only focus should be to help those who need your help. Only then you can create a positive impact on society and secure the goodwill of the people.

SAA

To Students

“ Learn to reflect on yourselves. Without self-reflection, you can never know your true selves. Then exercise self-restraint and self-purification. Only then can you truly contribute to the country.

18 January 1974, Speech at the council session of Awami League

“ Only degrees alone would not do. They can't make you good human beings. Don't be deluded by them. Only true acquisition of knowledge can make you good human beings.

18 March 1973, Speech at the public meeting at Suhrawardy Udyan following the first general election of Bangladesh.

“ It is our ability to feel that gives rise to our language, education and heritage. Without feelings, no nation can grow and nationalism cannot exist.

4 November 1972, Speech at the Constituent Assembly on adoption of the draft constitution



On corruption

“

The corrupt officials, hoarders and smugglers, who enrich themselves on the back of the sufferings of others, will be evicted from Bangladesh.

18 January 1974, Speech at the council session of Awami League

“

Our main task is to resist and bring to book those the corrupt. I will apply the full force of the law against them. There will be no mercy or exceptions. But I need your help. You must wage a mass movement against corruption.

26 March 1975, Speech at Suhrawardy Udyan

“

We must eliminate corruption from our society. It is not my farmers and workers who engage in corruption.

25 January, Speech at National Assembly

“

You need commitment and sacrifice for fulfilling any great task.

Unfinished Memoirs

“

If you love your people, they will love you back. If you sacrifice for the people, then they will be ready to lay down their lives for you.

Unfinished Memoirs





Selected Articles on Bangabandhu



Bangabandhu: The Architect of Bangladesh's Foreign Policy

| Tarik Karim

We celebrate 2020 as "Mujib Borsho", to mark our Founding Father Bangabandhu's birth centenary; we also mourn, and reflect on, his brutal assassination 46 years ago on the 15th August 1975. This year also appears to have triggered off a "media war" in our region engaged on the direction of our foreign policy, and some angst on its direction. It would be very moot to revisit the foundations of our policy that were laid down by the Father of the Nation during his lifetime and to reflect on whether we have followed or deviated from them.

A fundamental dictum in foreign policy formulation and analysis is unquestionably this: each country, as a sovereign, independent nation-state, contextualises its every move or action within the overall rubric of preservation and advancement of its own national interest. Therefore, each party, in any bilateral relationship must acknowledge and be fully conscious of these mutual constraints, and also respect "where the other party is coming from". It takes two to tango, as they say, and if each dancer in performing this very difficult and complex choreography is not in tune, innately, with the partner, a misstep or miscue would end in serious accident or injury to one or both.

Bangabandhu was very much, like all individuals, a product of his time and space, and his political and worldviews were shaped by his own associations with his own family, community, mentors and the larger society that he was born into. This is very honestly reflected in his "Unfinished Memoirs" and other writings published posthumously. While he became very deeply involved in the larger movement for Indian independence from colonial rule, he also espoused the cause of democratic federalism like his political mentor, Huseyn

Shaheed Suhrawardy. Suhrawardy, also representing Bengal at the 1940 All-India Muslim League Conference at Lahore Conference, had passionately argued for an united Bengal and that "each of the provinces in the Muslim majority areas should be accepted as a sovereign state and each province should be given the right to choose its own constitution or enter into a commonwealth with the neighbouring province or provinces". It is another matter that between 1940 and 1947, many factors in the evolving dynamics changed rapidly; and that Jinnah was singularly unsympathetic to the idea of Calcutta being included as a part of East Bengal or to the request of the Muslim (Rohingya) leadership of then Arakan province of Burma (now Rakhine state of Myanmar), then also part of Imperial Britain's colonised India and an integral part of their Bengal Presidency, and rebuffed brusquely to these being included as a part of the new state of East Bengal-East Pakistan at Partition.

Bangabandhu was also acutely aware of the stark reality, that Bangladesh was born in the midst of not only a very deeply divided subcontinent but also a very extremely divided world, and that states do not live or survive in isolation. They are all part of a greater comity of nations. Bangladesh's birth was after all midwived, and its politics nurtured, so to say, by the Cold War. He was better aware than most that his newly independent nation-state had to navigate through treacherous waters and numerous hidden shoals that lay ahead in its course to viable consolidation.

A parsing of his speeches since his return to Bangladesh in January 1972 following his long incarceration by the brutalising military authority in Pakistan during 1971, and indeed his first actions immediately on his release even before he left the soil of his incarceration, all are very clear reflections of this. While he was flown to London at his request rather than to any other third country in an aircraft of his Pakistani captors, from London he deliberately opted to fly in a British aircraft to his beloved Bangladesh than on an Indian plane that was also on standby. Immediately on his return, when the future of the new-born state of Bangladesh was still in ICU and his own law and order and defence forces largely not organised and still vulnerable, he also requested Mrs. Gandhi to withdraw all Indian forces immediately from Bangladesh. These were not merely symbolic but real assertions of his and Bangladesh's sovereign independence.

As a very young director (personnel) in 1973 in the fledgling foreign ministry, I was also the ex-officio 'rapporteur' at the senior officers' meetings that the Bangladesh foreign secretary held once every week with his senior-most officers (additional and joint secretaries only), at which Bangladesh's foreign policy options and actions were discussed, formulated and planned, and actions evaluated. I learnt how clear and unambiguous Bangabandhu's directions were to his foreign secretary: on India, we were deeply grateful for all Indian assistance in our struggle for liberation and independence but safeguarding our national interest and sovereign independence came first. We would not sacrifice our national interest an iota. Our actions in those early years, riding on the back of his personal charisma and regional and international stature, on seeking permanent but equitable solutions on all cross-border issues inherited from the Pakistan days, whether on sharing of Ganges waters (as a first step towards holistically addressing all other shared water bodies), demarcation of the land boundaries and the delimitation of our maritime boundaries with India and Myanmar with whom we shared the Bay of Bengal, all were initiated in real earnest in those early years. Bangabandhu was confident that he would be able to arrive at amicable resolution of all these given the personal rapport that he enjoyed with Mrs. Gandhi. I personally believe that he would have achieved all that, had he not been so brutally assassinated in 1975.

His ideas on regional relations were spelt out right at the infancy of our independent state. Immediately after liberation, in a speech at a public reception hosted by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in his honour in Kolkata on February 6, 1972, he had unequivocally asserted that in a world of war and confrontation, "We could live side by side as neighbours and pursue constructive policies for benefit of the people... achievement of peace and stability in this region can be a model for others...."

While building bridges with our immediate neighbour India, he also reached out to the other awakening giant in Asia, China, a country he had visited earlier in the sixties, and where he had been deeply impressed by what he saw. Even though China had sided with Pakistan in the Cold War politics of 1971, and had not recognised Bangladesh diplomatically, he understood only too well that he must make the first move towards a reconciliation, sooner rather than later, particularly since China as member of the UNSC held the key to our admission in the UN. He dispatched Ambassador K. M. Kaiser (who as Pakistan's ambassador to China earlier had developed very close personal rapport with the top Chinese leadership), early in 1972 to convey a personal message to them. This quiet diplomacy was sustained throughout Bangabandhu's life. He also understood only too well that he must reach out equally to both the superpowers of the day, namely the US and USSR, and build practicable bridges with both.

His commitment to non-alignment stemmed from the deep-rooted belief that it was not in Bangladesh's interest to be caught as a vulnerable nut in the nut-cracker jaws of the contesting powers. He made several allusions to Bangladesh becoming the "Switzerland of the east", not merely in the sense of promoting tourism. I do believe that he understood full well that neutrality entailed not getting enmeshed in the cut-throat rivalries of fiercely contesting great powers, whether between the powers in his immediate neighbourhood (India and China) or the superpowers that dominated a deeply divided world (US-USSR).

As a country with the then second-largest Muslim population globally, after Indonesia, and also considering how initially many, if not most, of these countries, taken in by the Pakistani propaganda of a Hindu-India having deliberately split a Muslim Pakistan apart, were initially hostile to Bangladesh, he recognised the necessity of reaching out to those countries. In 1974, he dispatched delegations led by his foreign minister to several countries considered to be of great political and economic importance. As the first director of the just created Middle East and Africa Desk of the foreign ministry, I had the privilege of being a member of these delegations to Iran, Iraq, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. We were successful in all but one of these missions – Saudi King Feisal, while ready to offer humanitarian assistance to Bangladesh, refused to accord recognition unless we changed our Constitution to abjure secularism and became an Islamic Republic. Our response to this was polite but firm: the Constitution reflected the will of the entire nation and it could only be changed by the people, not by any government or leaders. Regardless of this initial rebuff, quiet behind-the-scene efforts were sustained throughout Bangabandhu's lifetime.

In 1974, Bangabandhu agreed to the request of a very high-powered OIC delegation to Bangladesh to join the OIC and attend its forthcoming summit in Lahore, but only if Pakistan first formally recognised Bangladesh as a sovereign independent country, and he would be accorded full state honours with the guard of honour with the national anthem being played, and the flag of Bangladesh flown. I also had the rare privilege of being a member of Bangabandhu's official delegation to Egypt, Iraq, UAE and Kuwait and witnessed first-hand how his mesmeric charisma and personality almost miraculously resolved seemingly intractable problems at arriving at a joint position on issues that had seemed insurmountable at senior officials' level till only the day before he met his counterpart.

His worldview emanated from his own and his people's collective experiences, in fighting for justice against the denial of equality, fundamental political, economic and cultural rights and particularly the right to self-determination, and of equity in development. One sees this as a repetitive theme in his national and international pronouncements. His speech at the United Nations delivered after our admission as member on September 25, 1974, in my view seminally set the tone and tenor of the underlying principles for our foreign policy. Several points in that speech, with cutting clarity, enunciated his world vision. He alludes repeatedly to the overriding importance of ensuring peace and justice for all peoples in the world, and he reasserts in paragraph 5: "The very struggle of Bangladesh symbolised the universal struggle for peace and justice." He looked beyond the immediate horizon, into the future and in paragraph 7 of that speech he affirms: "While the legacy of injustice from the past has to be liquidated, we are confronted by challenges of the future. Today the nations of the world are faced with critical choices. Upon the wisdom of our choice will depend whether we will move towards a world haunted by the fear of total destruction, threatened by nuclear war, faced with the aggravation of human suffering on horrendous scale, and marked by mass starvation, unemployment and the wretchedness of deepening poverty, or whether we can look forward to a world where human creativity and the great achievements of our age in science and technology will be able to shape a better future free from the threat of nuclear war and based upon sharing of technology and resources on a global scale, so that men everywhere can begin to enjoy the minimal conditions of a decent life." In hindsight, these words were almost prophetic in nature and we could equally relate this assertion to the global situation today.

Deeply aware of the pitfalls of taking sides in a treacherous and dangerous confrontation between two superpowers and their respective alliances in a deeply and bitterly divided world, his penchant for non-alignment and avoiding any display of partisanship that could prove fatal to his fledgling state was clearly enunciated in practically all public statements at every bilateral or international meeting, and encapsulated in that address to the UN: "Bangladesh, from its very inception, adopted a non-aligned foreign policy based upon the principles of peaceful coexistence and of friendship towards all. Our total commitment to peace is born of the realisation that only an environment of peace would enable us to enjoy the fruits of our hard-earned national independence and to mobilise and concentrate all our energies and resources in combating the scourges of poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy and unemployment (paragraph 12)." Then he affirms: "Peace is an imperative for the survival of mankind; it represents the deepest aspirations of men and women throughout the world. Peace to endure must, however, be peace based upon justice" (paragraph 15).

But the global agenda can only begin from consolidation of friendly relations nearer to his home base. So, he ringingly declares, in paragraph 16: "Consistent with our own total commitment to peace, we have striven to promote the process of reconciliation in our own subcontinent. It was our firm belief that the emergence of Bangladesh would materially contribute towards the creation of a structure of peace and stability in our subcontinent and that the confrontation and strife of the past could be replaced by relations of friendship and co-operation for the welfare of all our peoples. Not only have we developed good-neighbourly relations with our immediate neighbours, India, Burma and Nepal, but we have also striven to turn away from the past and to open a new chapter in our relations with Pakistan." But here he added a caveat. This offer to Pakistan was not unconditional. He asserted, almost immediately in the following sentence: "The just division of the assets of former Pakistan is the other problem which waits urgent solution, Bangladesh for its part was, and remains, ready to move forward towards reconciliation. We expect that, in the overriding interest of the welfare of the peoples of the subcontinent, Pakistan will reciprocate by coming forward to solve these outstanding problems in a spirit of fair play

and mutual accommodation so that the process of normalisation can be carried to a successful conclusion." Tragically, that reciprocity never came, and the rest is history.

What underlay his vision of regional cooperation and development? This is neatly encapsulated in paragraph 23, when he comes around back to the central theme of national development within the larger concentric circle of regional aspirations: "In facing the challenge of survival, the resilience and determination of the people is our ultimate strength. Our goal is self-reliance; our chosen path is the united and collective efforts of sharing of resources and technology that could, no doubt, make our task less onerous and reduce the cost in human suffering. But for us in the emerging world, ultimately, we must have faith in ourselves and in our capacity, through the united and concerted efforts of our peoples, to fulfill our destiny and to build for ourselves a better future."

His famously enunciated dictum, that our foreign policy was based on the bedrock of "friendship towards all, and malice towards none," therefore, is not merely a catchy phrase inspired by Lincoln; it flows from his convictions as enunciated above. His illustrious daughter, our current Prime Minister who inherited his mantle, has done well to remain unswerving to these tenets, not merely through words but actions as well, reiterating that our relations with foreign countries flow from the demands of our own national interest; that we shall not develop any relationship with any country that is at the cost of our existing friendship and cooperation with others; that we shall progressively deepen and even expand existing cooperation wherever it advances or consolidates our own development and nation-building efforts towards being self-reliant; and that these relationships that we engage in are not tilted towards anyone, but enable us to form a neutral space where all, even contesting and competitive parties in the region, and beyond, can come together amicably. Everyone around us would do well to try and fathom better where we, as a nation, come from, just as we too shall respect their own visions. The art of arriving at an equilibrium will be dependent on how skillfully we manage these different sets of relationships, hewing to the timeless foundational tenets enunciated by our Father of the Nation.

(Tariq Karim is a retired ambassador and Senior Fellow at the Independent University. This article was first published in the Daily Star on September 7, 2020).



The Diplomat in Bangabandhu | Syed Badrul Ahsan

Quite some conversation has been generated in light of a picture, posted by yours truly on Facebook, of Henry Kissinger with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in New York. The month is September. The year is 1974. Bangladesh had just become a member of the United Nations and Bangabandhu had spoken before the UN General Assembly. Kissinger was yet secretary of state, albeit under President Gerald Ford. Richard Nixon had resigned over the Watergate scandal a little over a month earlier.

One of my friends wished to know why Kissinger, whose role in America's 1971 tilt toward Pakistan was well-known, had to be there in Bangabandhu's company. Another was quite surprised that the Father of the Nation had permitted Kissinger to be in his presence when he should not have, given the American's patently anti-Bangladesh stance in the year we went to war for freedom.

This is where the question of diplomacy comes in. In foreign affairs, there is no concept of permanent friends or permanent enemies. What matters is the level of pragmatism that a state demonstrates in maintaining its links with its friends and at the same time reaches out to nations and governments that may not have been sympathetic to it in critical phases of its history.

The Nixon administration knew of the atrocities the Yahya Khan junta was perpetrating in occupied Bangladesh in 1971 and yet looked the other way in a manner that remains inexplicable. Kissinger was a significant cog in the diplomatic wheel the White House operated in that year of decision for Bangladesh.

For Bangabandhu, the requirement post-liberation was the formulation and practice of a foreign policy that would expand Bangladesh's links with the wider world. He did not forgive Nixon and Kissinger for their misdeeds in 1971. But he also realized that in a real world, a paramount need was statesmanship. He was willing and ready to be a statesman for his newly independent country. He was fully aware of the diplomatic truth that Bangladesh and the US needed to build bridges to each other. Washington's recognition of Bangladesh's sovereign status in April 1972 was the offshoot of that diplomacy. It therefore stood to reason that Bangabandhu would talk to Kissinger and later visit the White House for a conversation with President Ford.

Foreign policy is only as successful as those behind its formulation are willing to pursue it. In the days immediately following the liberation of the country, Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmad was not keen about any rapprochement between Dhaka and Washington given the story of 1971, at least at that early stage. He had a point. The degree to which Tajuddin Ahmad was indignant about the Nixon administration's role could be gauged from his refusal to interact with Robert McNamara, at the time president of the World Bank, at a conference in Delhi.

And yet realism would soon convince Tajuddin, by then minister for finance in Bangabandhu's government, that Bangladesh could not play an isolationist role, that it needed to reach out to its detractors. In October 1974, on a visit to Washington, Tajuddin Ahmad met McNamara. Realities mattered. Bangladesh had just come through a famine; rising oil prices had pushed the country into dire straits; overall, the economy was at a low ebb. The country needed to engage with the Bretton Woods institutions. Tajuddin's trip to Washington was one more sign of the pragmatism that was beginning to define Bangladesh's foreign policy perceptions.

Foreign policy in the early 1970s bore Bangabandhu's indelible stamp on every aspect of it. In a Cold War era, he knew more than anyone else that Bangladesh had to play its cards well. He could very well have declined to travel to Lahore for the Islamic summit in February 1974, but realities were what he was acutely conscious of.

For him, the invitation to the summit was a leverage he utilized to the full in securing Pakistan's recognition of Bangladesh as an independent nation. At the same time, he knew that attending the summit was for him a good opportunity to interact with the leaders of the Muslim world, given that many of the heads of state and government present in Lahore had been implacably opposed to Bangladesh and were even at that point unhappy with the country's secular foundations.

At the Islamic summit, Bangabandhu was emphatic in his assertions on two points. First, he made it clear to his fellow leaders that Bangladesh's Islamic heritage was part of its history. Second, he made it known that the country entertained no majoritarian politics and that it was home to all religious beliefs on the basis of secular Bengali nationalism.

On the question of China, another country that refused to offer any support to or sympathy for Bangladesh in 1971 and which blocked Dhaka's entry to the UN for two consecutive years, diplomacy did not give way to propagandist rhetoric. Bangabandhu's position was based on how he conceived the future of Dhaka-Beijing ties to be. Khwaja Mohammad Kaiser, who had served as Pakistan's envoy to China throughout the 1971 war, was Bangladesh's link to Beijing in Bangabandhu's time.

Unofficial channels of communication were maintained, and they paid off in 1974 when

Bangladesh gained membership of the UN.

Bangladesh's foreign policy in those early years were nowhere more manifest than in the government's agreeing to initial, with India and Pakistan, a tripartite deal in April 1974. Bangabandhu comprehended the need for a new beginning in South Asia, which is when he consented to free the 195 Pakistani military officers charged with committing genocide in his country. It is another matter that the Bhutto government in Islamabad reneged on its promise to try the officers in their home country, but Bangabandhu perceived the need for a tension-free sub-continent.

He brought diplomacy once again into the South Asian narrative when he invited Prime Minister Bhutto to Dhaka in June 1974, the objective being a removal of the detritus that had accumulated in pre- as well as post-1971 times. The Pakistan government failed to seize the moment. The record shows that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman pushed diplomacy to the limits -- to inaugurate a new era. The impediments were there, but they did not give him second thoughts.

Wariness often underscores relations between nations, but hostility is a stranger to diplomacy. Adversaries do not have to be treated with disdain, for if they are, the concept of international relations takes a nosedive. Bangabandhu respected his detractors abroad and so disarmed them. That was the diplomat in him.

(Syed Badrul Ahsan is a journalist and biographer. This article was first published in Dhaka Tribune on September 30, 2020).



Philosophy of Bangabandhu in Sheikh Hasina's Foreign Policy | Bashir Ahmed

"Friendship to all, malice to none" is what Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman articulated in the 1972 Constitution and it is still very much relevant and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is maintaining diplomatic relations with the world following this policy. The fundamental foreign policies of Bangladesh originate from the article no. 25 of the Constitution of Bangladesh. Foreign policy of Bangladesh comprises personal circumstance techniques picked by the Constitution of the nation to defend its national advantages and to accomplish objectives inside its worldwide relations milieu. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs details and executes the strategies as indicated by the direction from the important segment of the Constitution of Bangladesh. It is evident from the history that the country's internal and external policy was greatly influenced by the philosophy, objectives and programmes of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. He had established friendship with all countries of the world whether a country follows capitalist, democratic or socialist ideologies. 'Friendship to all, malice to none' was the inner feelings of Bangabandhu, which had translated his expression of love for all the people of the world.

A scope of points of view is applied so as to offer profundity to the investigation and to limit predisposition however much as could reasonably be expected. These points of view consider what is occurring inside and outside the locale for the most part; just as what's going on inside Bangladesh. An investigation of Bangladeshi international strategy shows that the local viewpoint requires more prominent accentuation than it has been given until now. Therefore, the territorial perspective goes before the residential in consequent parts managing Bangladesh's most basic relationship: that with India. In my brief note, how the Prime Minister of Bangladesh is extending leadership towards deepening bilateral relations of Bangladesh with India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan will be conversed.

Both India and Bangladesh share common civilizational and cultural values. There is a huge potential for the expansion of bilateral trade, which helps maintain peace and harmony on both sides of the border. In the past five years, the two nations showed impressive development and perseverance in settling complex pending issues, like demarcation of the land boundary. In recent decades, the two countries continued to consolidate their political, economic, trade and cultural relations and built a comprehensive institutional framework to promote bilateral cooperation. Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visited India from October 3 to 6, 2019. The visit occurred barely months after Prime Minister Narendra Modi formed his government for the second consecutive term. The visit underscored the unique bond that now exists between the two nations. During the visit, a 53-paragraph long joint statement was issued, featuring the key issues discussed between the leaders. The report is significant as it provides an outline to further deepen India-Bangladesh relations, upholding the spirit of mutual trust and confidence.

The issue of sharing the waters from the Teesta has been pending since 2011 and I urge upon the Indian government to take necessary steps to sign the water sharing treaty without further delay. Bangladesh also expects India to assume greater responsibility in the repatriation of the displaced Rohingya, a large number of whom have been living in Bangladesh since 2017, after they were forced to leave their homes in the Rakhine state in Myanmar. Because, at the end of the day, a consensual vision of this particular relationship, with such an important neighbour, has to be created, for better regional integration. Apart from formal relations between the Indian and Bangladeshi governments, members from different cross-sections of society must become stakeholders in the relationship.

Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are a clear example of South-South cooperation which is essential for the developing world. This is a blessing in disguise for developing countries who should give preference to trade and cooperation among themselves instead of looking to the traditionally rich countries for conventional OECD assistance. Bringing up their commitment to multilateralism, both nations have acknowledged increased interaction and cooperation between the two countries on contemporary multilateral issues like climate change, disaster management, migration, health, peacekeeping, etc. at the UN and other regional and international platforms. It has been because of the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. They have further agreed to share respective knowledge, ideas, innovation to effectively realise the Agenda 2030 in the name of sustainable development goals (SDGs). We earnestly believe, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka will keep the momentum forward to "consolidate the already excellent" relations for the benefit of their peoples. With the rise of Asia, the partnership between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh can be taken to a whole new level by being a model to be emulated by other South Asian countries for enhanced economic growth leading to economic development in the region.

When states recognise one another as sovereign states and agree to diplomatic relations, they create a bilateral relationship. Bangladesh and Bhutan are leveraging one's own opportunities and elaborating methods for handling the competitive advantages that are available. These are primarily factor advantages, among which raw material sources and production potential consequently come forward as interchangeable priorities for both countries with a transition economy. We observe that over the years both countries have been so compassionate for a strategic development partnership encompassing hydropower, free trade and transport. Regionally, Bangladesh engages and cooperates through a plethora of forums and mechanisms - such as BIMSTEC, Colombo Plan, SAARC and UNESCAP - where

significant progress has been achieved and several initiatives and projects in key areas of cooperation are in the pipeline. Being neighbours by geography, the foundations of the two countries' age-old friendship have been laid down by the visionary leaders of the two countries on the common aspirations for peace, mutual respect, collective prosperity and deeper integration. The two countries have walked a similar path of socio-economic progress and are on a track towards LDC graduation within the next decade. As much as the two countries take pride in their collective history of partnership and headway advanced on multi-faceted fronts, the strong political leadership they inherit and the complementarities, opportunities and untapped potential the two countries offer make the future equally appealing and their bilateral ties all the more promising.

Bangladesh and Nepal, countries of South Asia with different ecological conditions, social systems and historical and cultural backgrounds, are making smooth progress in their bilateral relations. In the context of fast changing global structures, more creative steps are required to protect and promote interests of smaller economies and to maximize mutual interests. Despite excellent bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Nepal, their economic relations have remained at a less than desirable level. Nepal's relationship with Bangladesh is unique, characterised by ties at the people's level. Economic and commercial relations between Nepal and Bangladesh have been growing steadily, but the volume of bilateral trade has not seen much improvement despite tremendous potential for expanding and diversifying trade. The Bangladesh government has to focus on convincing neighbours that, within the SAFTA (South Asia Free Trade Agreement) framework of SAARC, Bangladesh offers excellent investment opportunities and the overall investment climate is conducive to foreign investment. Economic diplomacy of Bangladesh should go beyond political relations and help pave a way for globalisation. Nepal and Bangladesh have to keep friendly relations with India due to our similar cultural and religious traditions and geographical attachment.

It is evident that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is following the path of Bangabandhu for consolidating the regional cooperation on the basis of mutual respect and trust. Bangladesh is uniquely positioned to take advantage of its location in the eastern region of South Asia. It will be a centre point of different initiatives that seek to connect Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal with the ASEAN and other East Asian countries. Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina is trying to engage in various sub-regional connectivity projects through road, rail and sea routes with India and other South Asian countries. Bangladesh now keeps its head high before the world because of maintaining good relations with South Asian countries.

(Bashir Ahmed is a Professor of Government and Politics and the Provost, Sheikh Hasina Hall, Jahangirnagar University. The article was first published in the Financial Express on August 14, 2020).



On the World Stage: Images Gallery



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the young student leader (standing at the back) and Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy with Mahatma Gandhi in Kolkata. They were there to support Mahatma Gandhi's protest against the Hindu-Muslim communal riots (1947).



Chief Minister Ataur Rahman Khan and Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with the Indian President Rajendra Prasad during an official visit to New Delhi, India (1957).



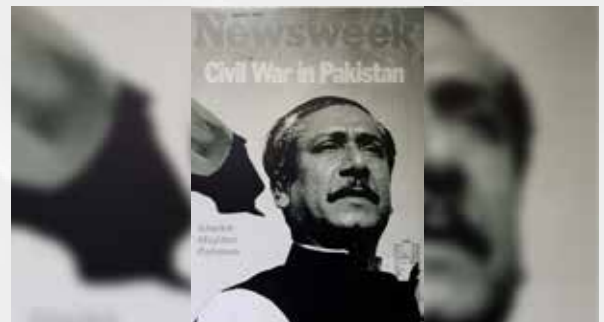
Young politician Sheikh Mujibur Rahman attends the Asia & Pacific Rim Peace Conference held in Beijing (erstwhile Peking), China from 2-12 October, 1952.



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with Mao Tse Tung (Mao Zedong), Head of State and the Chairman of the Communist Party of China (October, 1957).



Awami League General Secretary Sheikh Mujibur Rahman reads out the welcome address during Chinese Premier Chou En-Lai's (Zhou Enlai) visit to Dhaka. Pakistan's Prime Minister Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy was present (February 26, 1956).



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on the cover of Newsweek Magazine where he was termed as "Poet of Politics" (April 5, 1971).



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman speaks at a crowded press conference at London's Claridge's Hotel hours after his arrival in London on January 8, 1972 following his release from Pakistani prison (January 8, 1972).



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with the outspoken supporter of Bangladesh's Liberation War, US Senator Edward Kennedy and his wife. Bangabandhu's three sons; Sheikh kamal, Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russel are pictured with them (February 15, 1972).



British Prime Minister Edward Heath receives the First President of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at 10 Downing Street (January, 1972).



Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin in Moscow (March 1, 1972).



Prime Minister of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivering a speech to an ocean of people at Kolkata's Brigade Parade Ground (Gorer Math). Behind him sits the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi (February 6, 1972).



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's address at the Kremlin, Soviet Union (March, 1972).



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib and the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi (March 1972).



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



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in conversation with the UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim (November 27, 1972).



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



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at the Commonwealth Head of Government Conference at Ottawa, Canada (August 1973).



Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in conversation with Syrian President Hafiz al-Assad (September 5, 1973).



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with Cuba's revolutionary leader Fidel Castro in Algiers, Algeria (1973).



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



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman embracing Anwar el-Sadat, the President of Egypt (1973).



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



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



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the OIC meeting in Lahore (February 23, 1974).



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



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman welcomes the Indian President VV Giri during his visit to Bangladesh (June 15, 1974).



Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with Senegalese President Léopold Sédar Senghor (May, 1974).



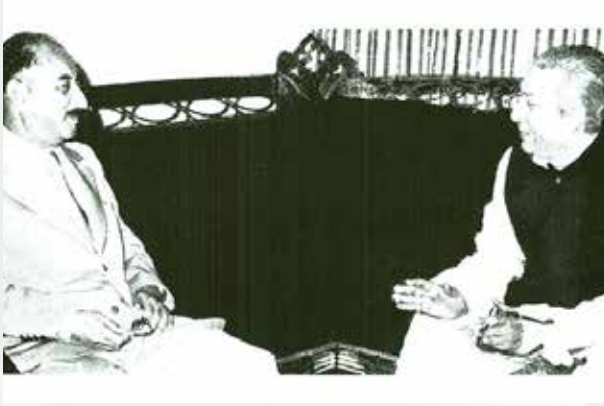
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman addresses the United Nations General Assembly at New York in BANGLA for the first time (September 24, 1974).



A smiling Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman during the signing of Mujib-Indira treaty (May 16, 1974).



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



Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with Iraqi President Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr (October 8, 1974).



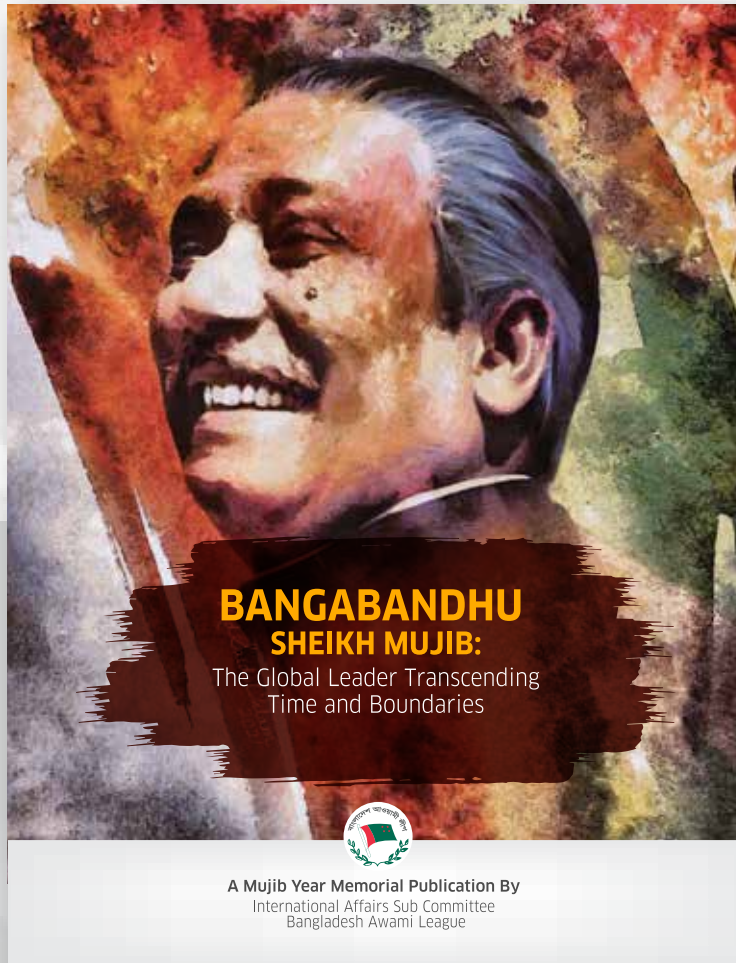
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, the founding father and ruler of United Arab Emirates (December 18,



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with Saddam Hussein and members of Iraq's Revolutionary Command Council (October, 1974).




Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with the Emir of Kuwait (November 10, 1974).



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Bangladesh Awami League

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