

# *Special Supplement*

## **In Memory of BANGABANDHU**

**National Mourning Day  
15 August 2010**



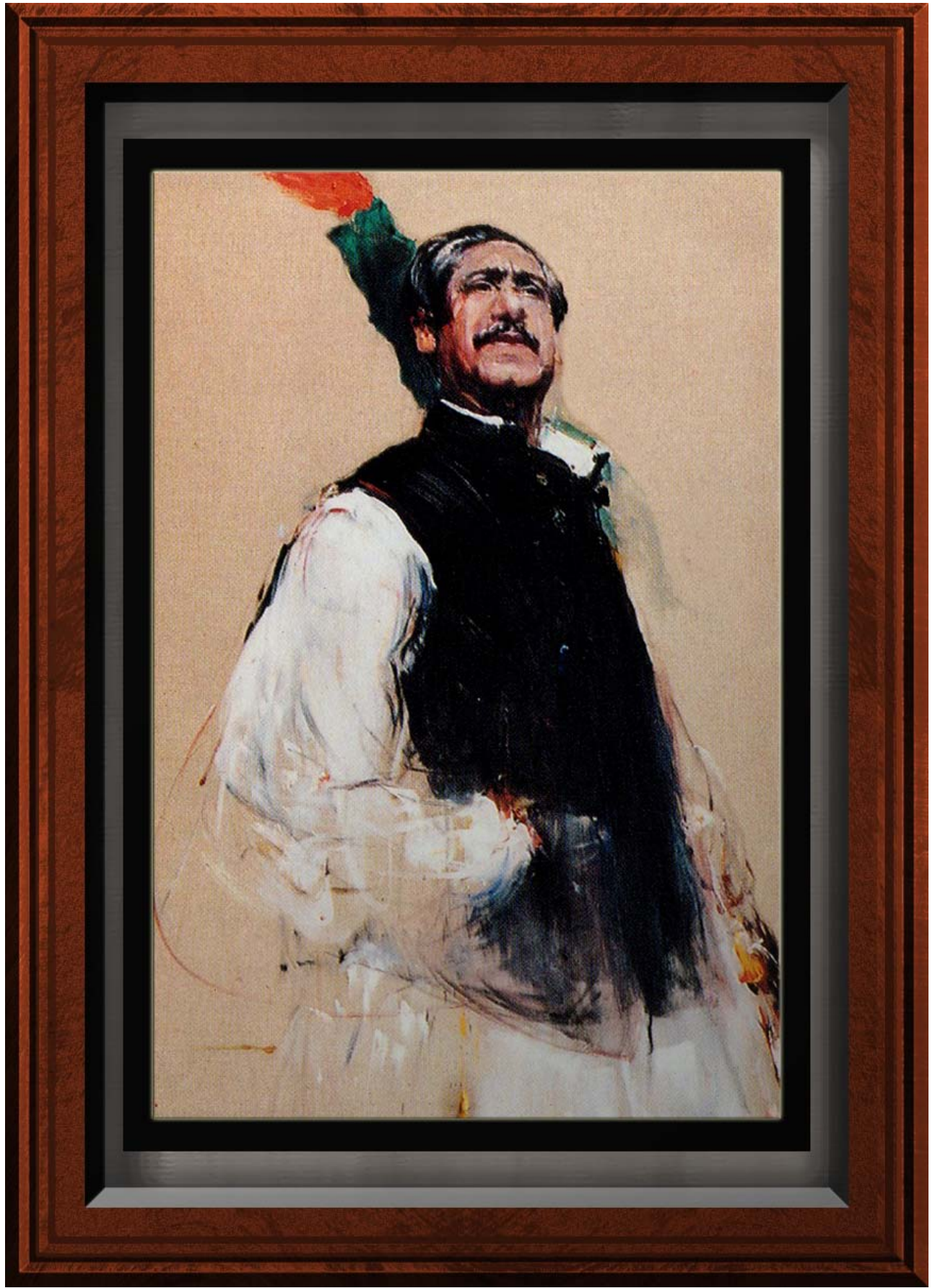
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



PRESIDENT  
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH  
DHAKA

31 Sraban 1417  
15 August 2010

### Message

August 15 is the National Mourning Day of Bangalee nation. Today is the 35<sup>th</sup> martyrdom anniversary of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the greatest Bangalee of all times. On this day I pay, with heavy heart, my profound respect to the architect of sovereign Bangladesh Bangabandhu as well as to the memory of his family members who embraced martyrdom with him.

The 15<sup>th</sup> August 1975 is marked as a shameful chapter in the history of Banglaee nation. On this day the great leader and father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman along with his family members, except his daughter Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana, were brutally assassinated at his own residence by a group of killers who were directly and indirectly indulged with the conspirators. Wife of Bangabandhu Begum Fazilatunnessa Mujib, sons Sheikh Kamal, Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russel, daughters-in-law Sultana Kamal and Rosy Jamal, brother Sheikh Naser, farmers' leader Abdur Rab Serniabat, youth leader Sheikh Fazlul Haq Moni and his wife Arzu Moni, Baby Serniabat, Sukanta Babu, Arif and Abdul Nayeem Khan Rintu were also assassinated on this day. I pray to the Almighty Allah for the salvation of those departed souls of all martyrs on this Mourning Day.

The contributions of Bangabandhu in our national history are of paramount. The Bangalee nation, who had been struggling for a long period, achieved their long-awaited independence under his able and courageous leadership. Starting from the historic Language Movement in 1952, Bangabandhu led the nation at every struggle and movement including 58's movement against Martial Law, 66's Six-Point Movement, 69's Mass Upsurge and 70's General Election towards attaining self-reliant and fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of our common mass. He, therefore, was sent to jail for several times and suffered inhuman sufferings for this. Finally, the great leader Bangabandhu declared independence on 26<sup>th</sup> March in 1971 after inspiring our people with the spirit of Banglaee nationalism. Hence, he had been sent to jail again and had to be ready for gallows during his imprisonment. In spite of manifold pressure during his confinement in Pakistan, he was firm with his principle and yet he did not compromise with the opponent on idealism. He always upheld the people's interest throughout his life. Though the conspirators killed the father of the nation they could not wipe out the ideals and believes of Bangabandhu. I am confident that the name of Bangabandhu will remain ever-imprint in the mind of millions of Banglaees so long as the country and its people alive.

It is a matter of hope that the trial of the killers of Bangabandhu has been made in the soil of Bangla after 35 years of assassination. Today the nation is somewhat stigma-free. Now we should bring the death-sentenced fugitives back to country in order to execute the verdict. The nation is aware of that killers have no room at any corner in the world.

The father of the nation Bangabandhu dreamt a 'Golden Bangla' throughout his life. It is our utmost responsibility to materialise his dream in order to build a happy and prosperous country. If we can do so, I believe, we would be able to pay our true homage to him.

On this National Mourning Day, let us make our grief into strength and devote ourselves in building a prosperous Bangladesh.

Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.

*Zahman*  
Md. Zihur Rahman



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



PRIME MINISTER  
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF  
BANGLADESH

31 Shraban 1417

15 August 2010

## Message

The 15<sup>th</sup> August, a grief-stricken day for the Bangalee nation, is our National Mourning Day. On this day in 1975, the greatest Bangalee of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, along with his 18 family members, was assassinated in one of the most barbaric carnages in the human history.

Bangabandhu's wife Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib, sons Captain Sheikh Kamal, Lt. Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russel, daughter-in-laws Sultana Kamal and Rosy Jamal, brother Sheikh Naser, farmers' leader Abdur Rab Serniabat, youth leader Sheikh Fazlul Haq Moni and his wife Arzu Moni, Baby Serniabat, Sukanta Babu, Arif and Abdul Nayeem Khan Rintu were also killed on the fateful night. Bangabandhu's Military Secretary Col Jamil was also killed. Some members of a family at Mohammadpur were also killed by canon-ball fired by the killers.

On the day of National Mourning, I pray to the Almighty Allah for the salvation of the souls of the martyrs of the 15<sup>th</sup> August.

The people of this territory snatched the glowing sun of the Independence, breaking the shackles of subjugation of thousands of years, under the dynamic, courageous and charismatic leadership of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. We got our own nation-state and the pride of self-identity.

But Bangabandhu was killed when he had devoted himself to the arduous task of building a Golden Bangla reconstructing the war-ravaged independent country and unifying the whole nation. The defeated forces of the Liberation War made an abortive effort to ruin the tradition, culture and advancement of the Bangalee nation. Their target was to destroy the non-communal democratic fabric of Bangladesh.

The anti-liberation forces linked to the carnage initiated the politics of assassination, coup and conspiracy. Martial Law has been promulgated suspending the constitution and overthrowing the government elected by the people. Military ruler Zia established stratocracy and destroyed democracy. The trial of the case for Bangabandhu's killing was blocked by promulgation of black laws and the killers of the Father of the Nation were rewarded.

The peoples' right to franchise was established in 1996 through sacrifices of the lives of hundreds of martyrs. Awami League got the opportunity to run the country through people's verdict.

The Awami League government achieved tremendous success in building a welfare society, imbued with the spirit of Liberation War, through signing the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty, Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Treaty, self-sufficiency in food, poverty alleviation, unprecedented success in mass education and empowerment of women. People got back their lost confidence and trust.



**PRIME MINISTER**  
**GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF**  
**BANGLADESH**

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The nation was unfortunate that BNP-Jamaat alliance, with assuming the state power through rigged elections in 2001, undid the achievements and established kleptocracy. The wheel of development has been totally stopped. The 2001-06 period was a black chapter of the country's history to ruin the spirit of Liberation War, democracy and democratic institutions. The main objective of the then government was to annihilate the opposition political forces, especially Awami League, and establish one-party rule in the country. As part of the design, a heinous attempt was made to kill me with a grenade attack on my rally on the 21st of August in 2004. By the grace of the Almighty Allah, I was saved but 24 leaders and workers of Awami League, including Ivy Rahman, were killed in the attack.

Even then, the Bangalees remained undaunted. The people made Awami League victorious again with unprecedented mandate in the December 2008 elections. The present government has been working hard to build Digital Bangladesh to materialise the charter of change. We are marching forward to establish a modern Bangladesh free from hunger and poverty by 2021, which is the golden jubilee of Independence.

We have freed the nation from the stigma to some extent through implementing the verdict of the Bangabandhu killing case. Steps have been taken to bring back the remaining convicts. Measures have also been taken to accelerate the trial of the killers of four national leaders.

When the Awami League government has initiated the trial of the war criminals and launched drive against the corrupt people, the rejected forces are out to subvert the march forward of development and democracy through hatching conspiracy and creating chaos. I urge the countrymen to remain alert about the troublemakers.

The killers could have killed Bangabandhu but they could not kill his dream and ideals. The 15 crore people of this country have been nurturing in their hearts the ideals of sacrifice of Bangabandhu. Let us march forward with bold steps in the struggle to build a Golden Bangla as dreamt by Bangabandhu by turning the grief of the eternal loss of the Father of the Nation into strength.

We must win in the struggle to establish an economically solvent democratic and non-communal Bangladesh which will be totally free from hunger, illiteracy and poverty.

Insha Allah victory is ours.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu  
May Bangladesh Live Forever

**Sheikh Hasina**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

পররাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রী  
FOREIGN MINISTER



GOVERNMENT OF THE  
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH  
DHAKA

## Message

August 15 2010

Bangladesh and its people mourn today the 35th anniversary of martyrdom of our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the architect of sovereign Bangladesh, legendary Bengalee statesman of all times, and liberator of the Bengalee nation from oppression, discrimination, deprivation, and subjugation. On this Day Bangabandhu along with 18 of his immediate family members were brutally assassinated at his residence in one of the most heinous political massacres in human history. I stand solemn alongside our countrymen on this Day of National Mourning, and pay my deepest homage to the unfading memory of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and pray for the departed souls of all those who embraced martyrdom on 15 August 1975.

Today I recall in profound reverence Bangabandhu's indomitable and charismatic leadership that inspired the 75 million Bengalees to stand up time and again to secure their human dignity and worth. An astute champion of fundamental freedoms and human rights, Bangabandhu led the Bengalees triumphant in every national movement including that for our mother language in 1952, against military rule in 1958, in the six-point movement for self-determination in 66, 69's mass upsurge and 70's general election for securing democratic rights. Banglabandhu's clarion call on 7 March and Declaration of Independence on 26 March, 1971 shook the foundation of dictatorship, ignited the Bengalee freedom struggle and eventually secured our long cherished independence and identity as a sovereign nation-state on the map of the world. His fiery oratory and leadership still remains a universal inspiration to all down-trodden and freedom-seeking people of the world.

Unfortunately, Bangabandhu's pre-meditated assassination by anti-Liberation forces was not only aimed at disrupting the onerous tasks that he undertook for nation-building and reconstruction of a war ravaged country, but also to destroy ideals, values and principles that he stood for all his life. August 15 marks the darkest and the most shameful chapter in the history of the Bengalees and a stark reminder of the irreparable loss of its Father. But it also is an occasion to remind every freedom seeking soul that the assassins have only succeeded in killing the Father of the Nation, but not the ideals, values and principles he stood for.

Three and a half decades after his assassination Bangabandhu's vision for a 'Golden Bengal' free from exploitation, oppression, communalism and poverty, still live undaunted in the indomitable spirit of his much cherished Bengalee nation. A nation that has in December 2008 given an unprecedented electoral mandate to Bangabandhu's daughter Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to steer the Bangladesh of 2010 a vibrant, forward looking and resilient nation of 160 million, to a middle income digitalized country by 2021. Her government bears the unshakable determination to protect and uphold those progressive values that Bangabandhu fearlessly professed nationally and internationally, as a champion of peace, justice, democracy, secularism, non-communalism and equal rights for all.

Living upto its electoral pledge, the present government has been making every effort to bring the killers of Bangabandhu to justice. The Trial of Bangabandhu killers have been completed, the verdict implemented and the hunt is on internationally to bring back the remaining convicts. The trial of the war criminals of the 1971 War of Independence has been initiated under an independent international crimes tribunal as per due process of international humanitarian law. The repatriation of the remaining Bangabandhu killers and the successful completion of the War crimes trials would not only uphold the rule of law in Bangladesh but would symbolize universally the triumph of freedom against oppression, secularism against communalism, and justice against impunity.

As we mourn the tragic death of our Father of the Nation, may I call our countrymen, home and abroad, to renew our pledge to uphold Bangabandhu's ideals and aspirations and devote our untiring efforts to fulfill his vision for a 'Golden Bengal', where democracy, rule of law and justice thrives, where every citizen lives in dignity free from the fear of religious or racial discrimination, free from the curse of illiteracy and poverty, and imbued with pride for our strength and identity as the Bengalee nation.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu, May Bangladesh live forever

Dr. Dipu Moni MP  
Foreign Minister

# Bangabandhu-immortal in the Bangalees' memory

Zillur Rahman Siddiqui

The tragedy of the magnitude of the one that happened on the 15<sup>th</sup> August in 1975 rarely happens to a nation. That killing was a glaring example of treason and sedition. Bangabandhu was not only the president of Bangladesh but was also the father of the nation as well as the architect of the country. The 1971 war of liberation was conducted by the exile government but Bangabandhu, though imprisoned in Pakistan, was the declared president of that government. He did not lead the war of liberation. But despite his absence, his presence was conspicuously felt from the first to the last day of the liberation war. He was present in the collective consciousness of the Bangalees and obviously by being the source of inspiration for all the activities of the exile government. It was Bangabandhu in whose name the war of liberation was conducted. In his absence the vice president Syed Nazrul Islam shouldered the responsibility of the president. The killers not only killed the incumbent president but also all the members of his family present there. Nobody, not even the women and children, were spared from that massacre. That kind of cruel violence can hardly be compared with any other in the history of the world. That cruelty and violence were inflicted to two other families comprising his close relatives. Attacks were made simultaneously in three houses. The houses of Bangabandhu's nephew Sheikh Moni and his brother-in law (sister's husband) Serniabat which were located separately came under attack. The number of persons including the members of the three families killed in that attack was 37.

Accomplices of the killers who were the member of Bangladesh Army carried the Bangabandhu's dead body by a helicopter to his paternal home at Tungipara. He was buried in the most insolent manner. The minimum formalities for burial that were observed perfunctorily were possible due to the demand by some village locals. In case of other deceased, even that minimum burial formality was not observed; the members of Bangabandhu's and two relatives' families were buried in Banani graveyard without any religious formalities.

That cruel incident was quite unthinkable. Bangabandhu never used to pay heed to any caution about probable attack on his life. He did not feel it necessary to

live within the security blanket of Gonobhaban. The security system at his own house at Dhanmondi was not at all befitting for a president. He was certainly aware of that. But he firmly believed that no Bangalee would ever dare kill him. He had the good faith that those whom he loved with all his heart loved him as well. Only great men can afford to have that kind of faith. He paid the price of his good faith by sacrificing his own life as was paid by the Indian Prime minister Indira Gandhi. She too was warned against her Sikh bodyguards in her house but she did not care. Having seen the armed killers, Bangabandhu perhaps could not think that they had come to take his life. Otherwise, he would not have uttered in his characteristic style- what do you want here?

They replied to his questions by pulling the triggers of their guns. They turned his body porous with bullets. They did not stop there. And then they targeted the other members of his family. Even the immaculate boy Russel, Bangabandhu's youngest son, was not spared from the hands of those murderers.

Today, there is not that much of debate or opaqueness as to who masterminded the beastly massacre and what they wanted to achieve. Though they apparently killed the person of Sheikh Mujib but if we judge the extent of that killing and take the killing of four national leaders in November into consideration, there remains no shred of doubt that they did not kill any person, they rather killed the independence of the country. They claimed that by killing Bangabandhu they saved the country from destruction- a claim that they made quite publicly. Never did they deny the responsibility of the killing; rather they confessed with pride and uttered in arrogance- we are the killers, let them try us if they can.

The killers had firm conviction that they would remain above any trial for ever. And that conviction was not baseless. Those that came to power immediately after the assassination sealed the means of the trail by enacting a law. The Indemnity Act was their life saving amulet. Besides, the post -Bangabandhu killing government extended all cooperation to the killers. They were taken care of abroad, not in the country. That government was not satisfied with providing the murderers with legal immunity only, they also rewarded them. At the same time, they discarded the Bangladesh of the war of liberation and got preoccupied in building a new Bangladesh. That Bangladesh would be the Pakistan edition of Bangladesh. Right at the beginning of the process, secularism was to be abandoned as that was against the religion. The religion that occupied the exalted position in state system during the Pakistan regime was brought back pompously. The way for the return of the religion-based politics which was

prohibited in the Constitution was paved for. The objectives of all the amendments made to the Constitution were the same- to re-build the Constitution befitting the new Bangladesh by wiping out socialism and secularism. They were yet to be appeased; the successor to Ziaur Rahman made Islam the state religion through the 8<sup>th</sup> amendment of the Constitution. He drove the last nail in the coffin of secularism.

All governments of the new Bangladesh maintained the singleness of their attitude towards the killing of August in 1975. They did not take the killing to be an offence. Nor did they take any initiative to bring the killers to justice. That initiative had to be taken by the government of Sheikh Hasina who won the 1996 election. During the first five- year tenure the Sheikh Hasina government brought the killers to justice under the normal law of the country. But that government could not witness the verdict of trial delivered. The Awami League could not come to power in the following election. The Jamat-e-Islami was a partner of the next Jote government. Naturally the task undertaken by the Awami League government remained incomplete. The Awami League led-Grand Alliance returned to power with landslide victory in the election of 2008. And the trial of the murder of Bangabandhu got complete in 2009, after 34 years of the killing. Those found guilty of homicide were executed, but partially. Because, the absconding convicted are still outside justice.

In one sense, the long nightmare of post- '75 frustration and waiting has come to end through the establishment of the rule of law by the present government. It is a great achievement in our history spanning about forty years. Criminalization of politics had been in force for more than twenty years after the murder of Bangabandhu. The inevitable result of that process was the retardation of judiciary. The most heinous crime could not be tried in that paralyzed judicial system. The most optimistic change that has become evident today is manifest through the emergence of the judicial system being on its own feet.

The victory of the grand alliance led by the Awami League in the 2008 election would be considered the triumph of people's demand. That demand was to revive the 1972 Constitution and to bring the war criminals to justice. The obstacles to achieving the goals not only spring from outside but also from within. We must not forget that secularism in the 1972 Constitution is an indivisible conception. There is no room for any compromise.

What happened in August and November in 1975 pushed Bangladesh out its orbit politically. That deflection has left a terrible scar on our national life. Political

criminalization does not remain limited to the gamut of politics only. It has escalated to all spheres of our national life. The Prime Minister has to warn her near ones almost every day so that they do not indulge in corruption. Though there are efforts to break away the net of corruption, in our every day life we experience the irresistible attraction of that net of corruption as well.

Why we could not turn about right after the terrible assault of August in 1975, why we had to endure the anguish of defeat and humiliation of long period of tyranny and misrule? - we are yet to get appropriate answers to these questions. Is our political consciousness still not deep-rooted? Our political organizations still weak? But if you look into the election results, who would argue that the voters in Bangladesh made blunder in casting their votes? Or, they delayed in reprimanding the rulers as they erred or failed?

Bangabandhu reposed his confidence on this people of Bangladesh. People were the source of his power. In him did they find their indisputable leader? The reactionary forces wanted the people of the Bengal to forget Bangabandhu. But they have not forgotten him. He is still crowned with their respect, bathes in their love. The black stain resulting from the killing of the father of the nation, the greatest Bangalee in the history, has been removed through the trial of the killers. Bangabandhu's place is eternal in the hearts of the Bangalees.

Translated by: A.M. Saleheen

# On This Day of His Passing Away

By **Mustafa Nurul Islam**

*"As long as the Padma-Jamuna  
Gouri-Meghna flows on,  
Your accomplishment will live on  
Sheikh Mujibur Rahman."*

- *Annada Shankar Ray*

In the light of the above lines, I have firm faith that history has no death; and Sheikh Mujib – the symbolic offspring of history – is immortal; he is forever luminous on the canvas of eternity.

## **ONE**

The month of August has once again come back through yearly rotation, and today is that accursed date of fifteenth. Those emissaries of hell had killed the 'greatest son of a thousand years' of motherland Bangla, Sheikh Mujib along with his family-members. Again, history bears witness, he was that 'Bangabandhu' who was the noblest source of indomitable inspiration for us millions of Bangalis, and it was he who was the 'Father of the Nation' of a new-born state. They were the defeated enemies in the battlefields of 1971 – the local black-sheep collaborators of the marauding Pakistanis, the regressive, fanatical, fundamentalist groups – they had hatched conspiracies behind the curtain. And then like an ill-omened fate, they re-emerged on the scene on that accursed date of fifteenth. Naturally, I shall go back to that same answer – such an incident could not have happened all of a sudden. Or it could not be merely some terribly violent acts by a handful of power-hungry individuals bent on realizing their sinful designs. It has already been indicated before; and such instances have been observed in various countries at different junctures of time, history bears witness to that. Symptoms of a counter-revolution following the success of a revolution achieved through the liberation war are overwhelming. Example may be cited here of the termination of the regime of Emperor Louis, which yielded the fruit of equality-fraternity-liberty in post-revolution France. But it led to the emergence of another 'emperor' Napoleon. On the other side, people saw the all-devouring rise of fascist dictator Benito Mussolini in the land

of Garibaldi – Italy. Similar rise of anti-freedom and anti-progress evil forces were observed in different shapes and forms in Sun Yat Sen's China, Sukarno's Indonesia, Africa's Algeria, Egypt and Iran of the Middle-east. In some cases, fundamentalism and militancy had mushroomed quite dangerously.

Let us now consider our own Bangladesh; and our very own 1971 – which saw unprecedented, immortal and exceptional successes during the liberation war. Again, it was we the general masses who were the victims within a span of only four and a half years. The pronouncement, 'The struggle this time is for our freedom' was then sent into exile from the country of 56 thousand square miles. The period that followed showed they came out from the ditches of cantonment and demonstrated that a political 'party' in political attire swiftly rose due to direct patronization and protection of military camps. And after that, the horses of power have maintained their dominance by uttering the dialect of democracy; and in parallel, religion-based fundamentalists were allowed to thrive.

## **TWO**

I am trying to relate everything, including the symbolism of Fifteenth August for Bangladesh and Bangalis in the above backdrop. They did not merely kill a bodied man Sheikh Mujib during that dark dawn. Deep inside their conspiracy was the design to eliminate our Bangaliness, which flowed throughout our history, and to uproot and completely destroy the spirit of 1971 liberation war. They wanted the medieval darkness of Pakistanism to return alongside unquestioned restoration of religious edicts. I believe, it is known to the honest and conscious Bangalis – 'Bangabandhu' was a person who had fought on the bed of ideals throughout his life. And even there, Bangladesh was the truth.

History gives shape to those rare personalities only occasionally. They are the offspring of eternity. Sometimes it is they who make possible the creation of history. And sometimes, these two are complementary to each other. We come to know about such luminous men from the canvas of eternity.

In the present context, we are looking at one such personality named Sheikh Mujib, who was the chief architect of a sovereign and independent nation-state. Let us present these words in a different way; that will make our articulation clearer. Let me cite example from the Asian landmass of the previous century – Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib was the last notable personality

to be added to this sacred list, which includes Ata-Turk Mustafa Kamal Pasha of modern Turkey, Bapuji Gandhi of India and Uncle Ho of Vietnam.

Needless to say, the positions of these saviour men lie above their own names and beyond their state-boundaries. They have become transformed into assets of eternity. On the global map, we got such a person in our midst in a small country of the orient.

### **THREE**

Let us consider the global scenario of 1971. The two most talked about countries then were Vietnam and Bangladesh. In one country, the American forces were carrying out carpet bombings, and in the other an indiscriminate genocide was being perpetrated by the occupying Pakistani army. And resistance took the shape of armed liberation war of the masses in both the states. A question can be asked here, is there any other instance in history where an all-out war of resistance was organized and inspired in a mere nine months in the absence of the leader. Everybody knows Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib was captive in a remote West Pakistani jail at that time of Bangladesh liberation war with a death sentence hanging on his head. He was counting his last hours. Then a question of faith comes – what was that inspiration which motivated millions of battling Bangalis to wage a war for their motherland?

In the meantime, some decades have already passed. But we have not forgotten those noble words of faith uttered by Bangabandhu – “Before climbing the gallows, I shall pronounce, I am Bangali, Bangla is my country, Bangla is my language, Joy Bangla”. We repeatedly recollect how that deathless mantra had made us fearless and brave. The man named Sheikh Mujib then no more remains a bodied man with five senses; he gets transformed by representing all our hopes and dreams.

I would like to say in this context that although a mourning day is being observed today, it does not end there. We get the opportunity of looking at him again and again, because he is that father figure who has remained the torchbearer of our forward march.

Another question comes here: in the kingdom of nature, or in the realm of mortal human life, how far the role of destiny is acceptable in worldly existence? Or, what role sudden occurrences play, which do not have any cause and effect relationships? The science of logic does not support such contention at all.

The inquisitive scholars explore and search; certainly, the so-called destiny or sudden events do not work in the making of history or the emergence of great men from its depths. Therefore, it does not happen that one descends from outer-space at an opportune moment. The place of avatars shall remain in the mythologies, not in history. Our Sheikh Mujib is discussed in this backdrop.

#### **FOUR**

There was a gap of five years between his declaration of the 6-point charter of survival for the Bangalis in 1966 and his historic speech before a sea of people at Ramna Racecourse on 7 March 1971. We witnessed within this short span of time his swift rise to the ivory peak of people's love and leadership, just like a meteor. I am speaking from my own experience; starting from the midst of leaders and workers of a political institution called the Awami League, he soon ascended to the position of Bangabandhu (Friend of Banga) in the hearts of the masses throughout this land. Certainly, there is no room for suddenness in history. And with amazing swiftness, a huge transformation had taken place in the chronological context of Bangladesh.

I would like to comprehend, how that fearless leader of teeming millions could issue instruction in such a language, "Build up fortresses in every home. The enemy has to be confronted with whatever you have." We did not look back since then; we heard his call in an invincible voice of thunder – "You shall not succeed in suppressing seven crore people .....the struggle this time is for our freedom, the struggle this time is for our independence." Did he become a superman on that day? May be that was possible. In the meantime, after traversing some distance over time, we now have the opportunity to analyze that 7 March Address of Bangabandhu. There were undoubtedly emotions galore. And people all over the country wholeheartedly wanted such a declaration. But this development did not take place all of a sudden, on a single day. It involved a huge work-load of channelling the sense of deprivation, anger and complaints of the people into a single current through massive organizational effort. In reality, the then history of Bangladesh flowed through the man named Sheikh Mujib during that period.

He was a victim of misrule and had to undergo tortures during the prime years of his life. His work was directed at upholding the interest of the people in his homeland. The arrest warrants of hostile governments had chased him from one corner of the country to another so many times! Frequent captivity in jails, and sometimes hunger-strikes inside prisons; leading anti-government processions

outside in protest against misrule, confronting baton-charges by police, all these had become part of his physical existence. The man Sheikh Mujib had extraordinary organizational capacity, enormous courage and deep love for his countrymen. In return, the countrymen also held him in their heart as Bangabandhu by reciprocating that love.

## **FIVE**

At the fag end of the first decade of the new millennium comes the Fifteenth August of 2010. We are today observing the Mourning Day in memory of the Father-Architect of the Nation. Instead, let us identify the event in a different way; today is the day of passing away of the greatest man in the history of the Bangalis. Needless to say, it is not merely a ritualistic observance. It has more depth. Bangla and Bangalism of a thousand years become manifested here. I propose that we study history. And a question arises within me, was that the final decree of destiny – for the noblest saviour of mortal men? Many of these great men had to perish at the hands of the evil forces from hell.

Here, I want to present some relevant examples. In ancient times, the great guru and guardian Socrates had to commit suicide by drinking hemlock in the Greek city of Athens. From Socrates to Jesus, their famous message had been, "Love thy neighbour". Jesus was killed at the cross. Let us cross the sea of time and come to France. One of the principal symbols on the eve of the French Revolution – Saint Joan of Arc – was burnt to death in fire. And these were followed by the assassinations of the people's voice of 19<sup>th</sup> century – US President Abraham Lincoln, the proponent of non-violence in twentieth century India Mahatma Gandhi, and advocate of the rights of the black people in the USA Martin Luther King. The cruel acts of assassinations had befallen these personalities in different countries of the world. Now, in that list, the latest and brightest addition has been our very own Sheikh Mujib of victorious Bangla.

On this special day today, we remember him, who was the Father, the Architect of this new-born nation. And especially, in the backdrop of the critical times of the present, we repeatedly take inspiration from his unequivocal assertion – "I am Bangali. Bangla is my country. Bangla is my language."

No more sorrow. Let us today sing the victory-song of this mantra, this conviction.

*Translation: Helal Uddin Ahmed*

# The Man who Conquered the Death

--- Mostafa Kamal

‘After death of Mujib Bangalees can no longer be trusted. The Bangalees who can kill Mujib, can perpetrate any heinous deed.’ This comment was made by the then Nobel Laureate West German leader Willy Brandt. This is how the German leader expressed his reaction after the martyrdom of the greatest Bangalee of the millennium Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman and his family at the treacherous night of 15<sup>th</sup> August 1975.

Nirod C. Chowdhury commented, ‘Insidious Bangalee.’ The Bangalees exposed to the people of the world their suicidal character by killing the dreamer of Bangalee nation and father of the state named Bangladesh. That did not end here, an Indemnity Ordinance was promulgated to indemnify the killers. Further, those killers were rewarded with prize posting in different Bangladesh missions abroad. Not only Ziaur Rahaman, his wife Khaleda Zia as well, rewarded the killers in various ways. They were given shelters and indulgence. What else can be a sin more abominable than that! The people of the world may naturally, for that, look upon us with hatred.

I myself visited different countries of the world and got proof of that. Many senior citizens said to me, ‘Have you killed your Father? If it is so, you can commit any misdeed.’ I also witnessed, there were many foreigners who did not know Bangladesh, but knew Bangabandhu. Bangabandhu meant Bangladesh to them. Where ever I went - Europe, America, Australia, I found votaries of Bangabandhu. They evaluated Bangabandhu every inch a patriot leader head to feet, and viewed him with profound regards. According to them, a charismatic leader like Bangabandhu is rarely born. The Bangalees as a nation are fortunate as they were bestowed with a leader like Bangabandhu. On many a occasion, I was rather ashamed of witnessing the foreigners’ profound regards for Bangabandhu. Because, what have we done for him? We have, in various ways, wrongly evaluated him and underestimated him. While doing that, the reactionary forces have distorted history in Goebles’ technique. Shamelessly used the media to do that. History in text books was changed overnight. We had to see the malicious attempts to make him controversial. Whereas the world famous leader Fidel Castro compared Bangabandhu with the Himalayas. Fidel Castro, while in Algiers in connection with Non-aligned Summit (NAM) in 1973, held a formal meeting with Bangabandhu. After that meeting, he made his evaluation about Bangabandhu in the words as follows, ‘I have not seen the Himalayas, but I have seen the Bangabandhu. His personality and intrepidity are like that of the Himalayas. That was my impression after I saw him.’

Bangabandhu is a rarely born person in the history of Bangalee nation. It can be said for certain, - had he not be born, Bangladesh would not have been born as well. Recognition of Bangabandhu as well by the international media time and again reminds us of that. The influential British daily *The Guardian* said about him, ‘Sheikh Mujib was

a miracle personality.’ According to *The Times*, ‘He is a great personality. In spite of all, Sheikh Mujib will be remembered for all time to come for the fact that without him Bangladesh would not have acquired its entity in reality.’( *The Times*, London, 16 August,1975.). And *The Financial Times* asserted, ‘Had there been no Mujib, Bangladesh would not have been born.’

Bangabandhu can not be compared with any other Bangalee. He is the symbol of liberty. He dreamt of an independent nation and had materialised that. Such a big achievement in one life of a man is rare in history. For that, he made sacrifices for a long time. He suffered imprisonment for long 23 years. Had he compromised with autocratic rulers, he could have become the Prime Minister of undivided Pakistan. But he did not do that. To him, his country and people were greater than himself. And for that, we can say that he may not be physically among us, but he is very much mixed with mud and men of this country. Bangabandhu showed the Bangalee nation the road to liberty by playing an unparalleled courageous role against a monstrous force. He has established an independent homeland for the Bangalee nationhood. Such an intrepid hero can never die. He has conquered the death only.

Bangabandhu was not only a courageous leader. He was a protesting voice against all wrongs and injustices. The goal of his struggle was to find out a way of freedom for people from the suppression of bureaucracy, and establishment of the just rights of toiling masses. People of this country have been drenched by his unbounded sincere affection. And for that he could become their dear one.

His political life started as an ordinary worker in the limited periphery of school life. He was not lost in the crowd of thousands of workers. One who would build a new history could not be lost. He was destined to grow out as extraordinary from among the ordinary ones. As a result, an ordinary worker later on turned out to be an undisputed leader. He delivered a new independent and sovereign state- Bangladesh.

It needs to be said that independence was not the fruit of only nine months’ war. It preceded a history of long struggle and bleeding. The struggle for language commenced since partition in 1947. The revolutionary students and masses of this country destroyed the nefarious conspiracy of West Pakistan ruling clique to make their language as the state language. The Bangalees established the right of Bangla language in 1952 at the cost of blood of Salam-Barkat, Rafiq-Jabbar, Shafik and many others. Since then, people of this country started to dream of independence. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman, the dreamer of independence, organised the students and masses in order to earn the right of self-determination of the people of East Bengal. He announced in 1966 the six point known as the Charter of Independence of Bangalee nation. Bangabandhu called for movement on the basis of six point. On account of that, allegation of sedition was brought against him and he was kept interned. At one stage he was charged as the principal accused in the Agartala Conspiracy Case. The blue print was made to hang him. An extensive mass movement started in East Bengal demanding release of Bangabandhu, which culminated into a successful peoples’ revolution in 1969. Fall of dictator Ayub

Khan on the one hand and release of public leader Sheikh Mujib on the other hand made the agitating students and masses more self-confident.

With the change of power General Yahia Khan appeared in the scenario. He called for a farcical general election in 1970. In that election the Awamee League under Bangabandhu acquired single majority. Though the government had declared to summon the session, it had actually been passing time on different pretexts. Sensing that, Bangabandhu made a fervent call at the foot of Shahid Minar at 12 hour 01 minute past night on 20 January 1971, 'I can see ominous days ahead. I may not be before you always. A man lives to die. Survival in life is but an accident. I do not know when again I will be able to meet you. But I have a demand of you, let the right of the people of Bangladesh be established. You shall ensure that. Let not the blood of the martyr go in vain.'

When Awami League was deprived of the power to rule in spite of winning majority in the general election, Bangabandhu realised that the Pak rulers would not part with power. Therefore, on 7 March 1971 at the Race Course field (now Sarwardy Uddyan) he appealed to the nation in the huge crowd of millions of people, 'Build fortress at each and every house. Face the enemy with whatever you have, and even if I can not pass on orders, you shall, for ever, close down the roads and stations whatever there are.' He said, You build up council of movements in every village and ward under the leadership of Awami League and remain vigilant with whatever you have. Remember, once we have given blood, we shall give more blood, and shall liberate the people of this country, Insha Allah. This struggle is struggle for our liberation. This struggle is struggle for independence.'

Bangabandhu is called the epic poet of politics on account of his speech of 7 March. And his speech of the 7 March is an epic indeed. Such an important speech is rare in the history of the World. Whereas that speech had no written manuscripts. The speech that he made on that day is not comparable with any other thing. This single speech has immortalized him.

No further formal declaration was necessary after that declaration. Because, the Bangalees started taking preparation for war after that declaration of Bangabandhu. The Bangalee officers of the defense services treated that declaration as the 'green signal' of struggle for independence, and accordingly they took preparation. That is evidenced by the fact of resistance war of the Bangalees in Joydebpur of Gazipur on 19 March. The Bangalees jumped into war as soon as the Pakistanies unleashed the barbarous attack upon the sleeping Bangalees at the inauspicious night of 25 March. However, the formal announcement of the declaration of independence of Bangabandhu expedited the war of independence.

In running governance of the state, Bangabandhu left proof of sagacity. He presented the nation with a Constitution for the independent Bangladesh within only eleven months. His party won absolute majority in the election held under that Constitution. Bangabandhu, upon assuming charge of the Prime Minister, devoted

himself to building the country. He rapidly rebuilt the war devastated country. He took up not only the massive works for reconstruction of the roads, culverts, bridges, educational institutions etc, but also moved earth and heavens to straighten the backbone of the country. He tried to rebuild the country as a 'golden bangla' by piercing through the net of national and international conspiracies.

A leader like Bangabandhu could succeed on that day in sending back Indian allied forces. No where in the world an instance is there that after independence an allied force left the country so quickly. The foreign policy of Bangabandhu played a very effective role to firm up the position of Bangladesh in the international arena and to earn international recognition. He attended the special OIC summit held in Islamabad in 1974 to earn the recognition of the Muslim World. Again, he attended Non-aligned Summit held in Algiers to clarify his position. Bangabandhu left proof of sagacity by taking decisions readily at that time.

No conspiracy about Bangabandhu by the conspiring clique will help them earn any benefit. Bangabandhu has earned permanent place at the heart of the Bangalees. The name of Bangabandhu can not be erased by conspiracies or intrigues. He will remain ever awake at the deepest core of the heart of the people, as long as Bangladesh remains, Bangla language remains, and as long as people shall live on this deltaic land.

On 16 August 1975 in a news review programme of Akash Bani made comments as follows, 'Jesus died. Now millions of people remember him by wearing cross. Perhaps, once Mujib as well will be like that.' On the same day *The Daily Telegraph* published from London said, 'millions of people of Bangladesh shall consider the gruesome death of Sheikh Mujib to be irreparable loss.' Sheikh Mujib is an object of regards and love of people even today.

That prediction of international media came true. Therefore, in the language of the poet I would like to say, 'As long as stay the Padma-Jamuna/Gouri-Meghna flowing on /Thy accomplishment will live on/Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman.'

[Translated by Shahana Akhter Khanam.]

# Noblest Man

By Belal Chowdhury

*They may appear in thousand years, a handful one or two  
Their fame spreads all around for good deeds, they themselves  
Sanctify their lives - the noble ones, they fill the fallow lands  
By cultivating golden crops.*

*He came in this way by illuminating all ten sides, in the family of Sheikhs  
Lying on the lap of his parents at a remote and faraway village,  
- We know people age, environments change, and the plant raises its head....*

*Does the river also grow old? I don't know. But she is always restless, resolute and  
rebellious  
It doesn't take long to realize while listening to the reckless ripples of its waves  
In perilous shape its current becomes unstoppable, flowing parallel to the  
meandering Modhumati.....*

*Beautiful like its own name, Baigar came out of its own heart  
Hazy rows of trees donned its dilapidated banks on both sides,  
Amid diverse hazards were his confident movements;  
There was hunger, poverty, want and a grey picture of nature all around  
Observing keenly these pale miserable faces in his early hours  
He could realize, 'these numb and dumb mouths shall have to given speech'.*

*Rosy smile in abundance shall have to be brought to the faces of the exploited*

- And to dedicate himself in that onerous task he had to be  
A daring sailor in a vast sea, a fully focused and combative boatman.

His was not the path of compromise; he was a voyager of inaccessible roads  
Confronting obstacles at every step, he faced one struggle after another  
throughout his life

Oblivious of where his wife, children, parents, brothers, sisters and relatives  
lived.

He belonged to the whole country, the entire nation; he was the tallest man of  
the century

With virtues and failings he was a pure Bangali, generous and unbounded like  
the blue sky

He could not be moved by the thought of gains or losses, greed or partiality.

Crushing the mountain of barriers he was bent on moving ahead

Lean and thin, his head was forever held high, verily a simple and plain  
patriot.

Leaving behind an indebted nation, with his kith, kin and companions,

He left us smilingly by dropping his own blood from the heart

- Hoping even then that smiles would appear on the faces of teeming millions.

The people of Bangla are a distressed lot, though they seek very little,

Let them find a little happiness, and laugh to their heart's content

- Only this was his pure, sincere and simple desire.

*Translation: Helal Uddin Ahmed*

# You, the Pole Star

by **Shihab Sarkar**

Darkness fades as decades go by  
The fiends of the cruel night crumble into dust  
The clusters of poison-fruit fall  
one day—rotten and withered and stinking.

You see a maiden path in the dark of the wilds?

An apocalyptic night of tsunamis swallowed our  
dreams in the small hours of *Sravana*,  
We've seen the dance of black monsters  
in the sun-bathed, wistful Bengal after the war.

But the paws of darkness clawed at my  
vitals, they gouged out my eyes  
The wind stopped amid groans of the tongueless,  
In a grave at Tungipara was lowered the Pole Star,  
On the stairs of the 32 echoed the blood-stained boots  
The orphaned pair of spectacles lied motionless.

But see, his smoking pipe still exuded a serene warmth.

Then the new star came up in the evening sky  
None had noticed it in the sky before,  
As the night turned deeper, the star shone brighter  
In the morning sky the star keeps shining,  
Who'll resist us, primordial darkness has died down  
Hyenas won't burst into laughters anymore.

Look, there shines the Pole Star  
Rusts get swept away from nightmares.  
I take a long, fresh breath

The earth awash with starlight flooding the stifling dark.

*Sravana: The second month of the season of monsoon in Bengal.  
The poem has been translated from the original Bangla by the poet.*