



PRIME MINISTER
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH

26 Poush 1427
10 January 2021

Message

The legendary comet in the history of Bengali liberation struggle, the greatest Bangali of all times, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman returned home on this day in 1972 after being freed from captivity in Pakistan's prison. In absence of this great leader, there was an imperfection in the ecstasy and excitement of the final victory over the liberation war, just as his assumption to the stewardship in the reconstruction of the newly independent war-ravaged country was much awaited in the universal perception. So, on January 10, the people of Bangladesh felt the true taste of ultimate victory when they got back their beloved leader.

The Father of the Nation struggled for 24 long years to unfetter the Bengali nation from the shackles of subjugation. He led on all fronts from the language movement to the war of freedom. Endured prison-torture, always made far-sighted decisions, and organized the party well beyond personal interests. Bangladesh Awami League won an absolute majority in the 1970 elections under his leadership. He became the undisputed leader of Bengal. But the Pakistani military junta ignored the verdict of the people and started a farce. Unarmed people of Bengal were shot and killed indiscriminately. To achieve the ultimate independence, Father of the Nation declared in a crowd of a million at the 'racecourse maidan' on March 7, 1971, '...turn every house into fortress.....The struggle this time is a struggle for emancipation. The struggle this time is a struggle for independence'. The Pakistani occupation forces launched a brutal killing mission on the innocent Bengalis in the deep dark of the 25th March in 1971. Bangabandhu proclaimed the Independence of Bangladesh in the first hour of the 26th of March.

Soon after the declaration of independence, the Pakistani forces arrested the Father of the Nation and sent him to a solitary prison in Pakistan, where he was subjected to inhuman torture. He rejoiced in the spirit of Bengalis while counting the moments of execution as a convict in the ridiculous trial. He was the flame of life to the freedom fighters. Under his unwavering leadership, the Bengali nation fought to the death and snatched victory. The defeated Pakistani rulers were compelled to free Bangabandhu in the early hours of January 7, 1972. He landed in London at 0636hrs on the same day. There he immediately agreed to accept Bangladesh's membership to the Commonwealth at the proposal of its Secretary-General, met the British Prime Minister, and held a press conference. The Father of the Nation kissed the ground of Bangladesh on January 10, 1972, at 1340hrs with a short break in Delhi in the morning. In a speech to an ocean of crowd at the racecourse that day, he described the brutal torture of the Pakistani military junta and called on the United Nations to bring the Pakistani army to justice for committing heinous crimes and genocide during the Great War of Liberation.

On 12 January 1972, the Father of the Nation assumed as the Prime Minister and deployed all efforts to rebuild war-torn Bangladesh. Due to his strong move, the Indian allied forces left Bangladesh on 15 March 1972. On 14 December 1972, he signed the first constitution of Bangladesh. In response to his call, various international organizations and friendly countries, including the United Nations, quickly recognized Bangladesh. Under the charismatic leadership of Bangabandhu, Bangladesh was uplifted as a prominent country in the world within a very short time and emerged as a least developed country in just three and a half years from a mass of war-devastation.

On 15 August 1975, the anti-independence and war criminal faction brutally killed the Father of the Nation including his family members and introduced the politics of killing, coup, and conspiracy in this country. They obstructed the way for the trial of Bangabandhu's assassination by issuing an indemnity ordinance on September 26, 1975. The Mostaq-Zia gang rewarded the killers with diplomatic status in Bangladesh embassies and also established them politically. Ruined democracy by declaring Martial Law. Distorted the glorious history of our independence. Defaced the constitution and choked press freedom. The BNP-Jamaat government continued the trend.

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After 21 years of a long struggle and many sacrifices, Bangladesh Awami League formed the government in 1996. On 12 November of the same year, the Parliament passed the 'Indemnity Ordinance Repeal Act, 1996'. Through this, all obstacles to the trial of Bangabandhu's assassination were removed. We won a landslide victory in the 2008 election by declaring a 'charter of change' in our manifesto and also were elected by popular vote three times in a row. We have executed the verdict of the murderers of the Father of the Nation. We have tried war criminals through the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal. We have ensured the right of the people to vote through the fifteenth amendment to the constitution, thus stopped the illegal seizure of power.

In the last twelve years, we have made unprecedented progress in all indicators of development. We are ranked among the top 5 countries in the world in terms of economic growth. We have brought the poverty rate below 20.5 percent. We have raised the per capita income to 2,064 US dollars. The average life expectancy of our people is now 72.6 years. We are providing electricity facility to 99 percent of people. With the installation of all the spans of the Padma Bridge, the two banks of one of the fastest flowing rivers in the world are now connected. Construction of metro rail and expressways in the capital and tunnels under the Karnaphuli River is progressing rapidly. We have modernized the road, rail, and air connectivity. The benefits of digital Bangladesh are at the doorsteps today. The number of internet users has exceeded 11 crores. We have created immense employment opportunities based on information technology. We have established sovereignty over the vast maritime zone of the Bay of Bengal. The door is now open for the blue-economy. With the successful implementation of the first 'Bangladesh Perspective Plan', the achievement of Vision-2021 is almost over. In the Mujib year, we have promised that no one will be left homeless. We will extend all the facilities of the city to remote rural areas. We are working on the principle of 'Zero Tolerance' to eradicate militancy, terrorism, and drugs. We have formulated the Second Perspective Plan to achieve the 'Sustainable Development Goals' by 2030 and to build a developed and prosperous Bangladesh free from hunger and poverty by 2041. We have adopted a master plan called 'Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100'.

To celebrate the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation with due dignity, we have declared the year 2020-2021 as the 'Mujib Year'. We will celebrate the golden jubilee of independence on 26 March 2021. However, in the meantime, the hostile COVID-19 coronavirus has spread like a pandemic in the world. Keeping the pre-scheduled plan digitally limited, we have started fights for life intending to get rid of this superbug. I have given 31 point instructions, appointed doctors-nurses-technicians for tackling the situation. To stand by the poor and helpless people, to keep the wheels of the economy in motion, and to continue the development works on the track, we have disbursed incentives amounting to Tk. 1 lakh 21 thousand 353 crores under 21 packages. Despite the corona pandemic, we have achieved 5.24 percent GDP growth.

On this auspicious occasion of Father of the Nation's Home-Return Day, let us pledge that we will uphold the spirit of our liberation achieved at the cost of the life of 3 million martyrs and honor of 200,000 abused mothers and sisters, even in exchange for any further supreme sacrifices if necessary. The Father of the Nation dreamed of building a non-communal, hunger-free and prosperous Bangladesh, resisting all imminent conspiracies, and inspired by the spirit of the Great Liberation War, we will fulfill that dream unitedly, Insha Allah.

I pray for eternal peace of the departed soul of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on the occasion of his Home-Return Day.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Sheikh Hasina