

Bangladesh Independence Day

A nation working together Toward development and democracy

ABDUL HAMID
PRESIDENT OF BANGLADESH



March 26 marks the Independence Day of Bangladesh. On the occasion of our great Independence and National Day, I extend my heartfelt greetings and warm felicitations to my fellow countrymen

living at home and abroad.

On this historic day, I recall with profound respect father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who proclaimed independence on March 26, 1971. Under his able leadership, we achieved our independence through a nine-month long armed struggle. Today, I pay my deep tributes to the martyrs and valiant sons of the soil, who made the supreme sacrifices in the war of liberation. I also recall with deep reverence our four national leaders, valiant freedom-fighters, organizers, supporters and people from all walks of life for their unmatched valor, immense contributions and courageous role that accelerated the achievement of our victory. I remember with deep respect our foreign friends who extended their wholehearted support



Mongol Shobhajatra, a procession held in the Bangla new year. EMBASSY OF BANGLADESH



The father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

directly and indirectly in our war of liberation in 1971. They sheltered millions of refugees who fled from our country during war. The contributions of all would be written in golden letters in the history of our independence forever.

We have achieved our hard-earned independence through huge sacrifices. Bangabandhu always cherished a dream of building a happy and prosperous country along with achieving political independence. Keeping that in mind, the present government has been rendering untiring efforts in materializing the dream of Bangabandhu. The growth rate of gross domestic product is increasing constantly. Per capita income is increasing and the rate of poverty is decreasing. Our country has attained food-sufficiency owing to the huge development in agriculture. The pace of advancement in the sector of empowerment of women, the social safety net and more is going on. Now the Padma Bridge is not a dream, it is a reality. The Bangabandhu Satellite-1 is waiting to be launched into space. Bangladesh is elevated from least-developed country to the developing nation in context of three indices of being a developing country. As a nation, it is a great achievement for us. Bangladesh

is now being branded as a role model of development in the outside world. In pursuing our diplomatic objectives, the government has been consistent in upholding the principle of "friendship to all, malice towards none" as enunciated by the father of the nation. Our achievement in the international arena is also commendable. Our expatriate Bangladeshis have also been making significant contributions to our national economy through sending their hard-earned remittances. Nevertheless, we have to go a long way for achieving the desired goals of independence. We must ensure good governance, social justice, transparency and accountability to make the development people oriented and sustainable.

Self-restraint and showing respect to others' opinion are important for thriving and institutionalization of democracy. Therefore, we have to maintain patience, self-restraint and forbearance in our national life. We must show respect to others' opinion. National parliament would be the center of hopes and aspirations of the people. For this, the ruling party as well as the opposition would have to play constructive role. People of Bangladesh are always peace loving. They do not support any type of violence, including militancy and terrorism. Father of the nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman dreamed of transforming Bangladesh into *Sonar Bangla* (Golden Bangladesh). The present government has set Vision 2021 and Vision 2041 to materialize Bangabandhu's dream into reality. Concerted efforts are imperative from all to implement those initiatives.

Imbued with the spirit of war of liberation and democratic values, let us work together irrespective of caste, creed and party opinion to make our hard-earned independence more meaningful. Let this be the pledge of our independence and national day.

Khoda Hafez, may Bangladesh live forever.

SHEIKH HASINA
PRIME MINISTER OF BANGLADESH



I convey my heartiest greetings and congratulations to my countrymen as well as all expatriate Bangladeshis on the occasion of the great Independence and National Day of Bangladesh.

March 26 is the day of earning self-identity of our nation. It's the day of breaking the shackles of subjugation. On the eve of the independence day, I recall with deep gratitude the greatest Bangalee of all time, father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, under whose undisputed leadership we earned our beloved independence. I pay my deep homage to the 3 million martyrs and 200,000 women who lost their innocence in the war of liberation. I also pay my tributes to four national leaders who led the war of liberation. My homage goes to the valiant freedom fighters, including the wounded ones. I extend my sympathies to those who had lost their near and dear ones, and were subjected to brutal torture during the war. I recall with gratitude our foreign friends who had extended their whole-hearted support and cooperation for the cause of our liberation.

The Bangalee nation had fought against Pakistani rulers' oppression and deprivation for 23 long years under the leadership of Bangabandhu. They were compelled to hold general elections in 1970. Bangladesh Awami League led by Bangabandhu won an overwhelming majority in the elections. But the Pakistani rulers instead of handing over the power to the majority party in a democratic way, they launched repressive measures against them. Bangabandhu in his March 7 historic address at the then-Racecourse Maiden declared, "The struggle of this time is for freedom, the struggle for this time for our independence." He instructed the Bangalee



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe shake hands at the G-7 Ise-Shima summit outreach program in Mie Prefecture in May 2016. EMBASSY OF BANGLADESH

nation to resist the enemies.

The occupation forces unleashed a sudden attack and started killing innocent and unarmed Bangladeshis on the black night of March 25, 1971. They killed thousands of people in cities and towns, including Dhaka. The father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman officially proclaimed the independence of Bangladesh at the first hour of March 26, 1971. Bangabandhu's proclamation was spread all over the country through telegrams, tele-printers and EPR wireless. The international media also had circulated Bangabandhu's proclamation of independence. Under the brave and dauntless leadership of Bangabandhu, we earned the ultimate victory of Dec. 16, 1971, after a nine-month bloody war.

The independence earned through supreme sacrifices of millions of people is the greatest achievement of the Bangalee nation. To ensure that this achievement remains meaningful, all have to know the history of our great liberation war and retain the spirit of independence. The history has to be passed on to generation to generations.

Being imbued with the spirit of the freedom struggle, the Awami League government has been working relentlessly to develop the country. During the last nine years, we have implemented expected development programs in all sectors. As a result, Bangladesh has emerged as a role model of socioeconomic development. The world is now

acclaiming Bangladesh for attaining remarkable progress on socioeconomic fronts. We will turn Bangladesh into a middle-income country by 2021 and a developed one by 2041. Insha Allah.

The historic March 7 speech of the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has been included in the international Memory of the World Register as world documentary heritage by UNESCO. This recognition of the March 7 speech has made the whole nation proud once again.

We have executed the verdict of the killing case of Bangabandhu and most of his family members. The verdicts of cases against those who committed crimes against humanity are also being executed. Our government is maintaining zero tolerance policy to tackle militancy and terrorism. We have stopped to take over power in an undemocratic way through the 15th amendment of constitution. On this auspicious day, I urge the countrymen to foil any plot of the anti-liberation, communal forces and anti-development and anti-democracy forces together.

Being imbued with the spirit of our great liberation war, let us work together to advance our country's development and democracy and build a non-communal, hunger and poverty-free and happy prosperous *Sonar Bangladesh* as dreamed by the father of the nation. On the historic day, this is our commitment.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Congratulations

on the 47th Anniversary of the Independence of the People's Republic of Bangladesh



Himu Uddin
President



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Bangladesh Independence Day

An exploitation-free society

ABUL HASSAN MAHMOOD ALI
FOREIGN MINISTER OF BANGLADESH



Today is March 26, the 48th Independence and National Day of Bangladesh. Forty-seven years ago on this day, our great leader, the greatest Bengali of all times and the father on the nation

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman proclaimed the independence of Bangladesh. Bangabandhu steered the freedom-seeking nation to independence through his visionary and charismatic leadership. His historic March 7 speech was a great inspiration for our liberation war. We celebrate our independence day this year at a time when his historic March 7 speech has been recognized as part of the Memory of the World Register of UNESCO. At the same time Bangladesh has been graduated from the least-developed country group to developing

country category. This milestone feat of the country has been officially confirmed by the United Nations on the eve of the 98th birth anniversary of the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

On this auspicious day, I take this opportunity to pay my sincere tribute to 3 million martyrs of our glorious war of independence, who made supreme sacrifices for the independence of our beloved motherland. I also pay homage to all valiant freedom fighters, and 200,000 mothers and sisters who sacrificed their honor during our liberation war. I recall with gratitude the invaluable contribution of the members of our diplomatic front who played a crucial and courageous role in garnering moral and material support from the international community during our war of independence. I also convey my heartiest greetings and felicitations to Bengali brothers and sisters at home and abroad as well as to all our foreign friends and partners across the globe.

The present government under the visionary leadership of our beloved leader Bangabandhu's daughter Prime Minister Sheikh

Hasina has been working hard to realize Bangabandhu's dream of building a *Sonar Bangla* (Golden Bengal) with a view to achieving people's socioeconomic emancipation and building poverty and hunger-free society. Bangladesh is now a role-model for success in all socioeconomic sectors like education, health, gender equity and women empowerment. After successful attainment of most of the U.N.'s Millennium Development Goals, we are confident of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals on time through appropriate plans and initiatives.

Due to our intense diplomatic efforts and extensive engagement with the international community, Bangladesh's relationship with other countries and international organizations has reached a new height in recent years, both in terms of depth and dimension. We have been able to garner widespread support from the international community on the Rohingya issue and significant progress has been made so far in this regard. Today, Bangladesh stands out in the comity of nations with its own hard earned reputation, development achievements and self-esteem.

On this historic day, I wish to thank all the members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and our missions abroad for their committed efforts in advancing our foreign policy objectives and development goals, and promoting our national interests on the world stage. I also congratulate Bangladesh diaspora in every corner of the world who are immensely contributing to our development endeavors and enhancing Bangladesh's image abroad. On this glorious day, being imbued with the spirit of our great liberation war and with a view to building Bangabandhu's dream of *Sonar Bangla*, let us take a fresh vow to devote ourselves to work from our respective positions in advancing the ongoing development efforts of the present government to strengthen the hands of the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and build a better world for our future generations.

Joy Bangla, joy Bangabandhu.

Partners in development, trade

RABAB FATIMA
AMBASSADOR OF BANGLADESH



I extend my warmest greetings to the readers of The Japan Times on the 47th Anniversary of the Independence and National Day of Bangladesh.

On this auspicious occasion, I pay deep homage to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the father of the nation who led us in our movement for independence. It is a matter of great honor for us that the father of the nation's historic call for independence on March 7, 1971 was recognized by UNESCO, in October, as part of the Memory of World Register.

I convey my profound respect to Their Imperial Majesties, Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, and convey our greetings to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, and to the government and friendly people of

Japan. I congratulate and extend warmest felicitations to my fellow Bangladeshis in Japan.

Celebration of our national day this year assumes special significance and cause for celebration as Bangladesh recently qualified for graduation from a least developed country to a developing country. We acknowledge Japan's contribution in this achievement. Japan has been one of our most important development partners since our independence. Today, this strong relationship stands firm on the foundations of a comprehensive partnership. Two-way bilateral trade is nearly \$3 billion and is expanding at a steady pace. We are encouraged to see the growing number of Japanese companies in Bangladesh, with over 250 of them now in the country. The Japan Bank for International Cooperation in its latest report recognized Bangladesh as a "promising country for overseas business over the medium term" for small and medium enterprises, based on a survey of over 600 Japanese companies.

Bangladesh has one of the friendliest foreign investment and trade environment

in the region. We are blessed with a large pool of skilled labor. The World Economic Forum's Development Index ranks Bangladesh at 34th position among emerging economies, and one of the best performers in South Asia. Our gross domestic product growth has remained steady at over 6 percent for the last decade, crossing 7 percent the last two years, and is expected to be 7.48 percent this year. Foreign direct investment to Bangladesh is expanding significantly. One hundred special economic zones are being developed in Bangladesh, including one exclusively for Japanese investors. I invite Japanese investors to be a part of this exciting time in Bangladesh and to take advantage of the special incentives being provided.

Our industrial sector is also witnessing rapid expansion. Bangladesh is the second-largest ready-made garments producer in the world and Japan is our No. 1 destination of apparel products among our non-traditional markets. Top priority has been placed on expanding internet connectivity and digitization and a "Digital Bangladesh" is now within sight. Bangladesh is now a leading information and communications technology (ICT) outsourcing destination, with annual export earnings in the ICT sector expected to be over \$1 billion this year.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's development and growth road maps, Vision 2021 and Vision 2041, place an inclusive and participatory development model at the center of all national development efforts. This has resulted in notable strides in poverty eradication, public health, education and women's advancement.

As a leading contributor to U.N. peace-keeping globally, Bangladesh remains committed to promoting international peace and security. We will continue to work closely with Japan to achieve our shared vision and commitment to peace, stability and sustainable development in our region and globally.

Long live Japan-Bangladesh friendship.



Bangladesh is the world's second-largest ready-made garment exporter. EMBASSY OF BANGLADESH



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Congratulations on the 47th Anniversary of the Independence of the People's Republic of Bangladesh



SAKURA SABER
PRESIDENT

SALIMULLAH KAJOL
GENERAL SECRETARY

BANGLADESH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY IN JAPAN (BCCIJ)
1-6-4 Nishionuma Minami-ku Sagami-hara-shi Kanagawa
CELL: 090-3476-8139

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from

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President of Japan Remit Finance Co., Ltd.
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HEAD OFFICE

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Bangladesh Independence Day

A long-lasting bilateral friendship

TARO ASO
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-BANGLADESH
PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE



On behalf of the Japan-Bangladesh Parliamentary Friendship League, I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations to the government and citizens of People's Republic of Bangla-

des on the country's Independence Day. Japan and Bangladesh have helped each other as friends and have maintained a good relationship on the basis of shared values since establishing diplomatic rela-

tions in 1972. I made an official visit to Bangladesh as foreign minister in July 2006 and have been working to promote friendship between Japan and Bangladesh as chairman of the Japan-Bangladesh Parliamentary Friendship League since 2008.

I highly appreciate the extensive humanitarian response of the government of Bangladesh to displaced persons from Rakhine, Myanmar. Japan's government has contributed approximately \$50 million to support repatriation efforts. The Parliamentary Friendship League will continue to support Bangladesh and hopes for steady implementation based on the agreement with Myanmar for the return of displaced persons.

The economy of Bangladesh, with a stable growth rate of over 6 percent, is

highly attractive to Japan; more than 250 Japanese companies are currently doing business there. In January, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the Matarbari ultra-supercritical coal-fired thermal power plant. This project symbolizes the rapid development and expansion of our countries' relationship and we would like to extend our congratulations. Moreover, Japanese companies were awarded the responsibility of the project and Japanese technology will support sustainable economic growth in Bangladesh. I am looking forward to the successful completion of the project.

Last but not least, I would like to conclude by wishing further prosperity upon the people of Bangladesh.



Lush nature and cultural heritage come together in Bangladesh.
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