

Bangladesh independence day

For a prosperous nation with effective democracy

Abdul Hamid
ACTING PRESIDENT OF BANGLADESH

March 26 is our great independence and National Day. On the eve of the day, I convey my heartfelt greetings and felicitations to the fellow countrymen living at home and abroad.

The historic Independence Day is a glorious day in our national life. We achieved our long-cherished independence through a nine-month-long armed struggle and supreme sacrifices of millions of people. On this solemn day, I pay my deep homage to the martyrs who laid down their lives in the War of Liberation in 1971. I pray to the Almighty for the salvation of those departed souls.

On this very memorable day, I recall with profound respect The Father of The Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who proclaimed country's independence at the early hours on March 26, 1971. Responding

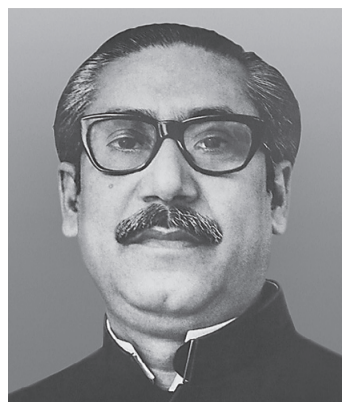


to his clarion call, the people from all walks of life participated in the War of Liberation and achieved victory through armed struggle. I also recall with deep respect our four national leaders; valiant freedom-fighters and organizers who rendered their dedicated efforts and enthusiastic support that accelerated the achievement of our victory. I also remember with deep respect the contributions of late Sher-e-Bangla A. K. Fazlul Haque, Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy and Moulana Ab-

dul Hamid Khan Bhasani, who inspired our people at various stages for attaining the country's self-sovereignty. The contributions of those valiant sons of the soil would be ever written in the history of our independence.

One of the prime objectives of our hard-earned independence was to build a happy and prosperous Bangladesh. Keeping that in mind, the government is rendering untiring efforts in materializing the objectives of independence. With the span of time, we have achieved some significant progress in the fields of agriculture, education, health, rural infrastructure, communications, information and communications technology (ICT), small and medium-size enterprises (SME), youth and sports, women and children, women's empowerment, etc. At the same time, we have also attained notable advancement in the corporate sector including the areas of ready-made garments, pharmaceuticals, ceramics and the shipbuilding industry. The government is also very sincere to establish the rule of law, human rights in the country. Our achievement in the international arena is also praiseworthy. Yet, we have to go a long way for achieving the desired goals of independence and building a happy and prosperous Bangladesh. I believe concerted efforts from all strata irrespective of party affiliation are imperative in this regard.

The people of our country are democracy-loving. Without the institutionalization of democracy, the overall development is hard to attain. Tolerance, for-



Father of the Nation
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

titude and respect for others' opinions are the pre-conditions for a flourishing democracy. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to maintain patience, forbearance at all levels and to be respectful to others' opinions in a democratic pluralism. Let us make our Jatiya Sangsad a center of excellence in solving our national issues through discussion. I am confident that everybody irrespective of party affiliation would play responsible roles in fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of our common people.

The present government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, has declared "Vision-2021" with a view to attaining the "Golden Bangla" dreamed by Bangabandhu. I believe people from all strata of life would contribute to build an IT-based, happy and prosperous Bangladesh by materializing the "Vision" in the golden jubilee of independence in 2021.

On this Independence Day, I urge all, living at home and abroad, to work imbued with the spirit of the War of Liberation to expedite economic self-reliance and democratic advancement of the country.

May the Almighty be with us.
Khoda Hafez, may Bangladesh live forever.

Dedication from all to achieve our vision

Sheikh Hasina
PRIME MINISTER OF BANGLADESH

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

March 26 is a glorious day in our national life. On this great day, I pay my deep homage to the 3 million martyrs and 200,000 women who lost their innocence in the War of Liberation in 1971.

I recall with deep gratitude the greatest Bangalee of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, under whose dynamic leadership we earned our great independence.

I also pay my humble tributes to four national leaders and the valiant freedom fighters, who had fought against the Pakistani occupation forces to free our beloved motherland. I extend my sympathies to those who had lost their near and dear ones, and were subjected to brutal torture and subjugation 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 Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman proclaimed the independence of Bangladesh at the first hour of March 26, 1971, after the occupation forces launched a sudden attack on innocent and unarmed Bangladeshis on the black night of March 25, 1971. Bangabandhu's proclamation was spread all over the country through telegrams, tele-printers and EPR wireless. At each and every district and subdivision, Awami League leaders and work-



ers publicized the declaration widely through mikes. The international media also had circulated Bangabandhu's proclamation of independence. Under the brave and dauntless leadership of Bangabandhu, we earned the ultimate victory on Dec. 16, 1971, after a nine-month, bloody war. The independence earned through huge bloodbath and sacrifice is our people's greatest achievement. To ensure that this achievement remains meaningful, the spirit of our great libera-

tion war should be reached to every nook and corner of the country. Cherishing the true history of the liberation war close to our hearts, we would have to go ahead in achieving the objectives of the Charter of Change by building a Bangladesh free from corruption, mal-governance, terrorism, hunger and poverty.

The present Awami League government has been implementing huge development programs in all sectors, including agriculture, education, health, law and order, information technology, energy and power and communications. The defeated anti-liberation, communal and identity-reactionary forces are trying to undermine democracy and the development process of our beloved country at a time when our government had executed the verdict of Bangabandhu's assassination case, and is holding the trial of the war criminals.

On this auspicious day of our independence, I urge the countrymen to remain united to foil the ill-designed plots of the anti-democratic and anti-liberation forces against the government and the people.

We have been striving hard to establish Bangladesh as a poverty- hunger- and illiteracy-free modern Digital Bangladesh by the golden jubilee year of our independence through implementing "Vision-2021." I hope that all citizens of our country would engage themselves with their utmost sincerity, honesty and dedication to build Bangladesh as a prosperous and prestigious country in the comity of nations.

I am confident that Insha-Allah, with our united efforts, we would surely achieve our golden Bangladesh as envisioned by the Father of the Nation.

Joy Bangla, Joy Bangladesh, May Bangladesh live forever.

Visualizing a digital knowledge-based country

Dr. Dipu Moni
FOREIGN MINISTER OF BANGLADESH

Today, Bangladesh celebrates the 42nd anniversary of her glorious Independence Day. As we celebrate the day, I convey my heartfelt greetings and felicitations to my compatriots living at home and abroad. I recall with profound respect the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who proclaimed the country's independence in the early hours on March 26, 1971. I also pay my deep homage to the martyrs who laid down their lives in the War of Liberation in 1971 and the hundreds of thousands of women who were raped by the occupation Pakistani armed forces and their local collaborators.

It all began with the assertion of a national identity in the face of systematic denial, discrimination and deprivation of that identity rooted in a millennia-old heritage of language, culture and customs. It evolved through the shaping of political demands for inclusion and equal access to opportunities, against marginalization of the Bangalee people and their cultural essence. The landslide victory for the Awami League in the first ever general elections in

1970 and the refusal to hand over power by the Pakistani authorities led to the non-cooperation movement, culminating in the declaration of independence by Bangabandhu when the genocide began. We achieved our long-cherished independence through a nine-month-long armed struggle and supreme sacrifices of millions of people.

We have made giant strides to achieve the objectives of the Charter of Change that will lead to Bangabandhu's "Sonar Bangla" — the Golden Bengal. We can visualize a middle-income, digital knowledge-based Bangladesh in 2021. We are deeply involved in the process of multilateralism through global and regional commitments in line with the policy of "friendship to all and malice toward none" enunciated by Bangabandhu.

We remain pledge-bound to bring the perpetrators of atrocities committed during the War of Liberation in 1971 to justice. The

defeated anti-liberation, communal and identified reactionary forces are trying to destabilize the country and derail the democratic and development process. They are out to portray a negative image of the country outside Bangladesh. I urge the international community to add their voice to the overwhelming popular demand emanating from the people of Bangladesh and join in their condemnation of those found guilty of crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes.

On this very special day, I take the opportunity to thank all our officials and staff at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and our missions abroad who have devoted themselves to achieve our foreign policy objectives. I also congratulate the Bangladesh diaspora who have been contributing to the buoyancy of the economy of their country of origin as well as of their host countries.

Joy Bangla, Joy Bangladesh.

Further deepening our friendly ties

Taro Aso
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-BANGLADESH PARLIAMENTARIANS' LEAGUE

On behalf of the Japan-Bangladesh Parliamentarians' League, I would like to extend my heartiest congratulations to the government and people of the People's Republic of Bangladesh on the auspicious occasion of the country's Independence Day.

Ever since Bangladesh's independence in 1971, Japan and Bangladesh have consistently built close, friendly relations. Both countries share a strong and stable bond based on mutual interest, confidence and spirit of cooperation.

I myself paid an official visit to Bangladesh in July 2006 as then foreign minister, and since 2008, I have sought to promote the friendship between Japan and Bangladesh as the president of the Japan-Bangladesh Parliamentarians' League.

Especially last year, in which Japan and Bangladesh celebrated 40 years of diplomatic relations, the active exchanges in various fields further strengthened the bilateral friendship, with which I am extremely pleased. The Japan-Bangladesh Parliamentarians' League celebrated 40 years of our diplomatic relations through the welcoming of the foreign and finance ministers of Bangladesh as well as sending our delegation to Dacca last year. We are very happy now that the Japan Mint has won its order to produce 500 million 2-taka coins for Bangladesh using Japanese technology. I expect this will be the new cooperation between the two countries.

Bangladesh's economy, which is continuing to progress at a high annual rate of 6 percent, is attractive for countries looking to invest. Japanese companies, which have made an advance into Bangladesh, are increasing their presence and exports from Bangladesh to Japan are increasing, too. I am glad that investment and trade between the two countries are being promoted and the bilateral economic relations are steadily developing.

Bangladesh, which calls Japan "a true friend," is an important country for Japan. The Japan-Bangladesh Parliamentarians' League will continue to contribute in deepening the amicable bilateral relations.

In conclusion, I would like to extend my best wishes to the people of Bangladesh for their health and prosperity.



Testament to our ever-evolving bilateral relations

Masud Bin Momen
AMBASSADOR OF BANGLADESH

On the auspicious occasion of the 42nd Independence and National Day of Bangladesh, I, on behalf of the people and the government of Bangladesh, take this opportunity to convey our deepest reverence to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko and our warm wishes to H.E. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. On this day, I greatly recall with solemn fervor, the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for his visionary leadership and gal-

lant statesmanship that eventually led to the culmination of an independent Bangladesh. I also recall with due respect the other great leaders who struggled to bring about justice and emancipation to the Bangalee people. I also pay my deep homage to the sacrifices of our valiant freedom fighters, 3 million martyrs as well as the affected 300,000 women and children.

During our liberation war, Japanese politicians led by Takashi Hayakawa and intelligentsia led by Tsuyoshi Nara created ardent public opinion in support of the independence of Bangladesh as well as appeal for contributing relief and rehabilitation of the millions of Bangalee refugees. In recognition of the Japanese support to our war of liberation, the present govern-

ment of Bangladesh has conferred Friends of Liberation War Honour, the highest state award given by the government of Bangladesh to six distinguished Japanese nationals for their invaluable support during our liberation war in 1971. The government of Japan recognized Bangladesh as a sovereign state immediately after our liberation on Feb. 4, 1972, bearing a testament and nourishment in our ever-evolving bilateral relations.

Finally, we would like to recognize the contributions of our expatriates to both countries.



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On Their Independence Day

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