

Bangladesh Independence Day Special

National objectives aim toward prosperity Business environment hopes for further exchanges

MD. ABDUL HAMID
PRESIDENT OF BANGLADESH



Today is March 26, 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. I also convey my heartfelt felicitations to the Japanese people, members of the diaspora and the diplomatic front who supported us in the liberation war and later recognized Bangladesh as a sovereign country.

On this historic day, I remember with profound respect the architect of our independent Bangladesh, father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I pay my deep homage to the millions of martyrs who made the supreme sacrifice in the war of liberation. I also recall with deep reverence our four national leaders, valiant freedom fighters, organizers, supporters, our foreign friends and people from all walks of life who made immense contributions to attain our right of self-determination in the war of liberation. Their contributions to the history of our independence will be written in golden letters 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 attaining political emancipation. Keeping that in mind, the present government has been rendering untiring efforts in materializing the dream of Bangabandhu. Today, Bangladesh is moving toward the highway of development at a tremendous pace.

We have achieved enormous success in various areas of socioeconomic development, including poverty alleviation, educa-

tion, health, human resource development, women's empowerment, reduction of child and maternal mortality rates, elimination of gender discrimination and an increase in average life expectancy. The rate of poverty has dropped. High growth of gross domestic product is continuing. Per capita income has tripled over the past decade. Bangladesh has been able to surpass not only the neighboring countries of South Asia, but also many developed countries in terms of various indicators of socioeconomic development. We are dreaming of a developed Bangladesh by the year 2041 in this regard. The "Delta Plan 2100" has been formulated in order to achieve the status of a prosperous and developed country combating the long-term challenges for sustainable water, climate,

environment and land systems. With the continuation of the development process, Bangladesh will raise its position high in the world as a prosperous country by 2041, *Insha Allah* (God willing).

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, including the establishment of world peace, is also commendable. Japan is one of the pioneering countries that recognized Bangladesh on Feb. 10, 1972. Since then the relations between the two countries grew from strength to strength setting an excellent example of trusted friendship, cooperation and a development partnership. I thank

the people and the government of Japan for being with us always and I firmly believe that the friendship between the two countries will reach greater heights in the days to come.

Bangabandhu is the source of eternal inspiration for the Bangladeshi nation. This year, the government has declared "Mujib Year" to celebrate the birth centenary of Bangabandhu in a befitting manner. The golden jubilee of our independence will be observed in 2021 with great enthusiasm. Bangladesh will enter a new chapter, a new horizon. With the concerted efforts of all, let our beloved motherland be a poverty-free developed one, this is my expectation on the independence day.

Khoda hafez (God be with you), may Bangladesh live forever.

A.K. ABDUL MOMEN
FOREIGN MINISTER OF BANGLADESH



On the occasion of March 26, the Great Independence and National Day of Bangladesh, I extend my heartfelt greetings and warm felicitations to all Japanese and Bangladeshis living in Japan.

On this auspicious day, I recall with profound reverence the greatest Bangladeshi of all time, the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Under his dynamic, courageous and charismatic leadership, the people of this territory brought the red sun of independence breaking the shackles of subjugation of thousands of years. With deep respect, I recall the supreme sacrifices made by our war heroes, the 3 million martyrs and all the freedom fighters. On this historic day, my sincere gratitude to the Japanese people, members of the diaspora and the diplomatic front who supported the emergence of an independent Bangladesh.

The charismatic leadership of the father of the nation united the whole nation like a solid rock under one umbrella. Bangabandhu was not only the leader of the Bengali but also a forerunner in realizing the rights of the oppressed and deprived people of the world. The seeds of development of the country were sown under the leadership of Bangabandhu.

He took over the leadership of a war-ravaged and economically backward country and accomplished the formidable tasks of rehabilitation and rebuilding the nation in just 3.5 years. Conspirators and enemies committed the heinous crime on Aug. 15, 1975 to thwart our advancement.

This resulted in progress being stalled for a while. Nevertheless, Bangabandhu's

daughter Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is determined to build a prosperous, knowledge-based and happy country. As a result of pragmatic initiatives taken by the Awami League government, Bangladesh has been transformed into a vibrant economy. The present government continues to make significant progress in rapid economic and social development that has helped to increase the living standard of the general people.

Poverty alleviation, sustainable growth, protection of the environment, women empowerment and human resources development are some of the key features of Bangladesh's development strategy. Today, the country is often cited by the international community as a role model for development. I hope that the Bangladeshi expatriates will participate and support the ongoing advancement of the government.

Bangladesh offers the friendliest business environment in the region and as a result, it has become one of the important investment hubs for foreign countries, including Japan. We have developed 100 economic zones, including one exclusively for Japanese investors. I am pleased to note that around 300 Japanese companies are operating their businesses in Bangladesh and the bilateral trade between the two countries has surpassed \$3 billion. The growing trade relations between the two countries are reflected in the fact that Japan is our largest export destination and the No. 1 destination for apparel products among non-traditional markets. I urge Japanese investors and businesses to invest more in Bangladesh and avail themselves of the incentives that our government is providing them.

On this historic day of independence, let us all vow to transform Bangladesh into a prosperous, technology based and developed *Sonar Bangla* (Golden Bengal).

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu.
May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Bilateral relations elevate via mutual interests

MD. SHAHRIAR ALAM
STATE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF BANGLADESH



Today is March 26, our great Independence and National Day. On this auspicious day, I convey my heartfelt greetings and felicitations to all Japanese and Bangladeshis living in Japan.

On this very day, I pay profound reverence to the great leader of the War of Independence, the architect of great independence, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who led his people from the front in various movements and struggles starting from 1952 language movement to the 1971 liberation war that resulted in the greatest achievement of Bengali Nationalism-independent Bangladesh. With profound love and respect, I recall the supreme sacrifices made by our war heroes, the 3 mil-

lion martyrs and all the freedom fighters. Pakistani occupation forces committed one of the worst genocides indiscriminately on March 25, 1971. Bangabandhu, the architect of Bangladesh, declared the independence of Bangladesh in the wee hours of March 26, 1971. Bangladesh made its place on the world map as an independent and sovereign state with self-esteem through the nine-month-long liberation war. Bangabandhu is the name of a legend who dreamed of a hunger and poverty-free, secular and prosperous country. Under the visionary leadership of his capable daughter Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the government has been working relentlessly to transform Bangladesh into a middle income country by 2021 and a developed country by 2041. Along with economic growth, Bangladesh has become a role model in poverty alleviation, female empowerment, climate change combat and a decreased infant mortality rate. We have planned to set up 100 special economic zones, including one for Japanese investors. Along with a large source of the skilled and semi-skilled labor

force and a large domestic market, various incentives are offered to foreign investors, so that they can take advantage and invest more in Bangladesh. On this day, I recall with great admiration and gratitude the contribution the Japanese people and politicians made in our war of liberation and their support in building our war ravaged nation. The strong foundation of bilateral relations between the two countries was laid by Bangabandhu during his historic visit to Japan in October 1973. It is very heartening to see that the bond that was forged by this great leader has strengthened manifold over the years and we have elevated our bilateral relationship to a level of comprehensive partnership to achieve common goals. In this happy moment, I congratulate the Japanese people and the Bangladeshi diaspora in Japan for their support in the development of Bangladesh, as well as for their contribution to enhance people-to-people contact between the two countries. *Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu.* May Bangladesh live forever. May Bangladesh-Japan relationship live forever.

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

100th Birth Year Celebration

Mujib Borosho of the Father of the Nation of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to be celebrated with due respect from March 17, 2020, to March 26, 2021, through yearlong various programmes nationally & globally.

建国の父、バンガバンドゥ・シェイク・ムジブル・ラーマンの生誕100年
The dream and vision of "Golden Bengal" born by the father of the nation is being realizing just now.
建国の父によって生まれた「黄金のベンガル」の夢と構想は今まさに実現のものになろうとしている。



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Bangladesh Independence Day Special

Development continues to move forward

SHEIKH HASINA
PRIME MINISTER OF BANGLADESH



I extend my heartiest greetings to the countrymen and expatriate Bangladeshis on the occasion of the great Independence and National Day of Bangladesh.

March 26 is the day of establishing self-identity for our nation. It's the day of breaking the shackles of subjugation.

On this 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 have earned our coveted independence.

I pay my tributes to four national leaders who steered the war of liberation in the absence of Bangabandhu. I also pay my deep homage to the 3 million martyrs and 200,000 women of the war of liberation. My homage goes to all the valiant freedom fighters, including those wounded.

I extend my sympathies to those who had lost their near and dear ones, and were subjected to brutal torture during the war of liberation. I recall with gratitude our foreign friends who had extended their whole-hearted support and cooperation for the cause of our liberation.

Marking the birth centenary of the father of the nation, "Mujib Year" is being celebrated from March 2020 to March 2021. Bangabandhu's birth centenary celebration has started on March 17. Along with Bangladesh, Mujib Year is being celebrated globally in conjunction with UNESCO.

The Bangalee nation had fought against oppression and deprivation of Pakistani

rulers for 23 years under the leadership of Bangabandhu.

They were compelled to hold general elections in 1970. The Bangladesh Awami League, led by Bangabandhu, won absolute majority in the elections. But the Pakistani rulers adopted repressive measures instead of handing over power to the majority party in a democratic way.

Calling for independence on March 7, 1971, Bangabandhu declared, "The struggle this time is the struggle for our emancipation; the struggle this time is the struggle for independence, *Joi Bangla*." He instructed the Bangalee nation to resist the enemies.

The Pakistani occupation forces unleashed a sudden attack and started killing innocent and unarmed Bangalees on the night of March 25, 1971. They killed thousands of people in cities and towns including Dhaka. Bangabandhu formally proclaimed the independence of Bangladesh at the first hour of March 26, 1971.

Bangabandhu's proclamation was spread all over the country through telegrams, teleprinters and EPR wireless. The international media also had circulated Bangabandhu's proclamation of independence. Under the brave and dauntless leadership of Bangabandhu, the ultimate victory was attained on Dec. 16, 1971 after a nine-month bloody war.

The independence earned through the 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 true history of our great war of liberation and retain the spirit of independence. The spirit of the war of liberation has to be passed on from generation to generation.

Imbued with the spirit of the freedom struggle, the Awami League government has relentlessly been working to develop the

country since 2009.

We have been accomplishing the unfinished tasks of the father of the nation. Bangladesh has achieved outstanding socio-economic progress in the last 11 years.

It has fulfilled the requirements for graduating from an underdeveloped country to a developing one. Our government is maintaining a "zero tolerance" policy to tackle militancy, terrorism and the drug menace. For the first time in the world, we have formulated a 100-year plan named "Delta Plan 2100."

Bangladesh is one of the top five countries in the world in terms of economic development. Ninety percent of development work is financed by our own resources. We have executed the verdicts of the trial of the killers of Bangabandhu by establishing the rule of law.

As per our pledges to our people, the trials of war criminals are continuing, and verdicts are being executed. People are now seeing the benefits of development as the Awami League government has continuously been in power for the third consecutive term.

Bangladesh is moving forward and it will go on. Today we have become a self-respecting country in the world, holding our heads high.

By implementing our "Vision 2021," "Vision 2041" and Delta Plan 2100, we have been working relentlessly to build a hunger-, poverty-free; developed and prosperous Bangladesh as envisioned by the father of the nation.

Let us unite in the spirit of the war of liberation and maintain the continuation of development and democracy by facing any sort of conspiracy.

Let us transform Bangladesh into a safe and peaceful home for our next generation — this should be our firm commitment on the independence day.

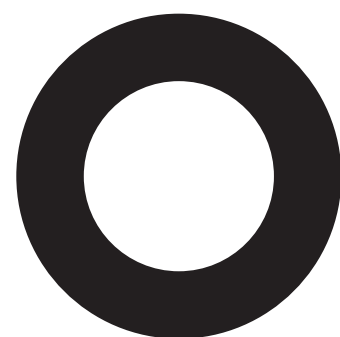
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu. May Bangladesh Live Forever.

This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.

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