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Message

For all those who cherish freedom and democracy, 5 August is a day of joy, a day of victory and a day of the restoration of democratic political rights. Exactly two years ago today, on 5 August 2024, the heroic students and people of this country secured a historic victory by bringing to an end more than one and a half decades of fascist rule.

In the face of the mass uprising, the fascist government was forced to flee the country. Bangladesh was freed from its grip. This blood-soaked day of the heroic students and people is being observed nationally as 'July Mass Uprising Day'.

For more than one and a half decades, in the struggle against fascism and for the restoration of the people's right to vote and their democratic rights, the BNP, other anti-fascist political parties, and the people of differing views had to endure limitless persecution and repression.

Countless people became victims of enforced disappearance, murder, abduction, assaults, false cases, torture and oppression. In leading this movement, the uncompromising leader of the nation, former Prime Minister late Begum Khaleda Zia, was also forced to spend years in the prison of the oppressors on false charges.

To silence the voices of those who stood for democracy, the fugitive autocrat, on its orders, established hundreds of secret detention centres across the country - known as 'Aynaghar'. In the dark cells of these secret facilities, countless people were held in a state of endless uncertainty for months and even years. Many were disappeared forever. The whereabouts of many leaders and activists, including former BNP MP Ilias Ali and Commissioner Chowdhury Alam, remain unknown to this day.

The judiciary, the Election Commission and other constitutional and statutory institutions of the country had been rendered ineffective. The Constitution was disregarded, the people's voting rights were taken away, and elections were reduced to a farce. The country's politics, economy, education and healthcare systems were devastated, and Bangladesh was turned into a subservient state.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



PRIME MINISTER
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH

The banking sector was pushed to the brink of collapse, while irregularities, corruption, plunder and money laundering were normalised. A personality cult was established. Yet, in the end, it could not survive.

People from every walk of life - the heroic students, farmers, workers, rickshaw-pullers, day-labourers, garment workers, hotel and restaurant employees, transport workers, journalists, intellectuals, cultural activists, homemakers, women, children, and people from all sections of society - united and took to the streets during the July–August Mass Uprising of 2024.

Desperate to crush the uprising, the fascist government opened fire on pro-democracy citizens, killing people as though they were birds. It even fired upon the people from helicopters. Not even infants in their mothers' arms were spared from the reckless gunfire of the autocrats.

Standing before the guns of the autocrats, the outstretched chest of brave martyr Abu Sayed of Rangpur, martyr Wasim Akram of Chattogram, martyr Mugdho of Dhaka, and countless other courageous sons of this soil became enduring sources of inspiration for all who stood for democracy.

During the July-August Mass Uprising alone, thousands of people were martyred. At least 30,000 people were injured. Hundreds lost limbs and were permanently disabled, while many lost their eyesight for life.

The sacrifice of thousands of lives did not go in vain. Through the united movement of the pro-democracy people, the fascists fled Ganabhaban on 5 August. The so-called members of parliament fled the Jatiya Sangsad (National Parliament). The Chief Justice fled the Supreme Court. The Chief Khatib fled Baitul Mukarram. Ministers fled the Cabinet. The collaborators of fascism went into hiding. What happened in Bangladesh on 5 August was not only unprecedented in the history of Bangladesh, but also in the history of the world.

From 1971 to the present day, millions have made sacrifices at every turning point in the struggle for the country's independence and its defence, in movements against autocracy and fascism, and in the fight to restore democracy.

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PRIME MINISTER
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On this historic day, I remember with profound respect all the martyrs. By sacrificing their lives for the freedom, rights and dignity of the country and its people, they have left us in their debt. Bangladesh owes an enduring debt to every martyr's family. Now it is our turn to repay that debt.

Let our pledge be to honour that debt through our sincere efforts to build a just, self-reliant, democratic and humane Bangladesh by ensuring the political and economic empowerment of people and by establishing equality, human dignity and social justice.

An unprecedented national unity has been forged on the blood-soaked streets sanctified by the sacrifice of thousands of martyrs. It is our duty to preserve this unity at all costs. We will have differences of opinion on many issues and that is the beauty of democracy. But we must all remain vigilant to ensure that differences of thought and opinion never descend into hostility. Every political party, individual and group that stands on the side of democracy shares this responsibility.

Never again shall autocracy, fascism, extremism, or militancy take root in Bangladesh. Never again shall this country be allowed to become a subservient state. The national unity established on these fundamental principles remains unshaken and, Allah willing, shall endure.

The year 1971 was the war to achieve independence, while 2024 was the struggle to defend the freedom of the country and its people. Bangladesh has never forgotten the martyrs of the Liberation War of 1971 and it will never forget the martyrs of the Mass Uprising of 2024.

Tarique Rahman