



PRESIDENT
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
BANGABHABAN, DHAKA

12 Chaitra 1430
26 March 2024

Message

26th March-The Great Independence and National Day of Bangladesh. On this auspicious occasion, I extend my heartfelt greetings and warm felicitations to my fellow countrymen living at home and abroad.

On this day, I remember with profound respect the architect of our independent Bangladesh, the greatest Bangalee of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. On the fateful night of March 25, 1971, the invading forces of Pakistan unexpectedly attacked the unarmed Bangalees. In the early hours of March 26, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman officially declared the Independence of Bangladesh. We achieved an independent and sovereign Bangladesh through a nine-month long Liberation War under the able leadership of Bangabandhu. I recall with deep respect the millions of martyrs who sacrificed their lives in the War of Liberation. I recall with deep reverence our Four National Leaders, heroic freedom-fighters, organizers, supporters, foreign friends and people from all walks of life who made contributions to attain our right to self-determination and freedom movement.

Bangabandhu always cherished a dream of building a happy and prosperous country along with political freedom. The present government has been rendering untiring efforts in materializing the dream of Bangabandhu. Under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh is moving towards the highway of development at an inexorable pace. We have achieved enormous success in various areas of socio-economic development including poverty alleviation, education, health, human resource development, women empowerment, lowering child and maternal mortality rates, elimination of gender discrimination and increase in life expectancy. Rate of poverty has been dropped whereas per capita income has increased. A huge number of landless and homeless people are being rehabilitated. The Padma Bridge, constructed by our own resources, the Karnafuli tunnel and the Metro rail are having positive impact on our economy. Works of Payra Deep Sea Port, Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport's Third Terminal and Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant are also progressing uninterruptedly. Bangladesh has already been elevated from a least developed country to a developing country. With the continuation of this sustained development process, Bangladesh will turn into a developed, smart and prosperous country in the world by 2041, InshaAllah.

Government has been able to maintain the economic growth for timely and bold steps taken by Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina despite the world economy is facing negative impact due to worldwide war and geo-political crisis. The economy has turned around as a result of various socio-economic and investment projects, programs and initiatives taken by the government to ensure sustainable and inclusive development.

Huge amount of remittances sent by expatriates has made an important contribution to keep the wheel of the economy rolling during this time. To deal with this crisis, we also have to be frugal in the use of resources and follow austerity in luxury. I hope, based on the unprecedented achievements of the government in the country's overall development activities and socio-economic indicators in the past years, we will be able to face these challenges in the days to come, InshaAllah.

The government has been consistent in upholding our foreign policy "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. Despite being a densely populated country, Bangladesh has set a unique example of humanity in the world by sheltering more than one million of Rohingyas who have been tortured and forcibly deported from Myanmar. People of Bangladesh are peace loving. Bangladesh has witnessed the devastation of war and became the victim of genocide. We want no more war in the world. We condemn the genocide going on in the world including Palestine. Bangladesh believes in a peaceful solution to this problem. I call upon the United Nations and the international community to take effective measures for solution to Rohingya problem and to stop war taking place around the world including Palestine.

We must ensure people-oriented and sustainable development, good governance, social justice, transparency and accountability; in order to achieve the desired goal of Independence, Forbearance, human rights and rule of law have to be consolidated for institutionalizing democracy. It is our sacred duty to ensure a safe, happy, beautiful and prosperous Bangladesh for the new generation. By assassinating Bangabandhu on 15 August 1975, anti-liberation forces tried to erase his policy, ideology as well as to stop the trend of development and progress of the country forever. But the Bengali is a nation of heroes. Nothing could suppress the Bangalees. Bangabandhu has become the conqueror of death. Death has not dissipated him but has made him brighter and more glorious in the minds of Bangalees. Present and future generation have to understand that the way they are treading forward today is paved by our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The path shown by him will be the step of development and progress in the future as well. To expedite the progress of the country, let the nation embrace the spirit of the liberation war and the ideals of the Father of the Nation and move forward in building 'Sonar Bangla (Golden Bengal)' dreamt by Bangabandhu- this is my expectation on the great Independence Day.

Joi Bangla.
Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Md. Shahaabuddin
Mohammed Shahabuddin



26th March, The Day of Veneration
Justice A H M Shamsuddin Choudhury (Manik)

26th March is destined to be remembered through eternity for being the day Bangladesh assumed sovereign status. By his impregnable declaration, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the indubitable leader of the Bengalis, proclaimed independence of Bangladesh with impeccable authority. His declaration was in unimpeachable conformity with the principles of international law, insofar as he, as the elected leader of the people, had popular mandate to do so.

A land of hope and glory thereby emerged in the world atlas. His declaration was followed by 9 months war, fought by the Bangladeshi freedom fighters, to rout every occupying Pakistani soldier, in adherence to Bangabandhu's directives. Simultaneously, the Pakistani army of occupation unleashed a harrowing spree of genocide to thwart Bengali people's aspiration.

The grandiose that stemmed from the declaration of 26th March, could not be achieved in a day; it was the eventual and cumulative outcome of Bangabandhu's perseverant struggle of two decades to secure freedom for the people of East Bengal. The trail he followed was extremely hazardous. He was subjected to persecution and torments of various kind, was held in custody for a substantial length of time.

History gives us to believe that with commencement of the 2nd Great War, the British Raj solicited help of the Indian people. The Indians, in turn, availed the opportunity to put further weight to their demand for independence; 'Quit India' slogan, coupled with positive acts, turned out to be invincible. Although the British rulers made no commitment, it did, nevertheless, make apparent that they would leave India after the cessation of the armed hostilities. In anticipation of such an eventuality, leaders of Indian Muslim League congregated in Lahore and adopted a resolution, tabled by Sher-e-Bangla A K Fazlul Haq, demanding creation of independent states in Muslim majority provinces of India. The resolution unambiguously contemplated advent of more than one Muslim state, yet, notwithstanding the unequivocal envision, leaders in the north-western India, under the cunning leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, succeeded to crucify that fundamental stipulation which ruminated emanation of more than one independent state. Consequently, one single state, Pakistan was brought into being on 14th August 1947. Subsequent events proved that the West Pakistani leaders were steered by grotesque motives in abrogating the theme of more than one independent state with the repulsive motive of keeping East Bengal under subjugation. Their masqueraded play surfaced with unveiled posture when Govern General Muhammad Ali Jinnah explicitly declared that Urdu would be the state language of Pakistan. His announcement ignited wide spread fury. Several people, who took to the streets to denounce Jinnah's bizarre exposition, were shot dead by the rulers. The people of East Bengal had no qualm to realise that they were plunged into servitude by the leaders in the west wing. Young Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, like a guardian angel, showed up to salvage of the Bengalis. Very young though at that time, he was, nevertheless, endowed with infinity of wisdom, vision, fortitude and patriotism. He wasted no time to rise to the occasion with unhindered determination to get East Bengal out of Pakistani national yoke.

West Pakistani foray were not confined only to linguistic and cultural arena of the Bengali people; their colonial paws were expanded over the economic threshold of East Bengal. Those were the days when Pakistani economy devolved round the money earned by exporting jute, produced in East Bengal, demand for which spiralled during and after the Korean war, allowing Pakistani exchequer to hit the roof. Yet, most of the money were spent to construct massive dams, create cities, set up industries, medical and educational facilities in the western wing. A handful of West Pakistani tycoons reduced most of the Bengali people to virtual serfdom. They were in exclusive ownership of the banks and other financial institutions. The central bank was governed by them. Large part of the country's budget went to the defence forces, where presence of the Bengalis were trivial. Colonial stature of the West Pakistani rulers became more conspicuous when the country was brought under military rule in 1958: army rule was synonymous with rule by the West Pakistanis. Ignominious passivity of the Pakistani authorities in the wake of a devastating cyclone, described by Henry Kissinger, as "the greatest disaster of the century" (Source: White House Years, by Henry Kissinger), which pushed the People of East Bengal to a state of cataclysm in November 1970, unveiled the colonial character of the Pakistanis. Media, throughout the world, castigated Pakistani leaders for failing to mitigate the affliction of the Bengali people by providing accommodation, supplying food, medications and rendering essential services they desperately needed. The betrayed people of East Bengal, in utter despair, felt that enough was enough, and voted for the party of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the ensuing election in 1970, crediting him with a landslide

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Bangabandhu's Boundless Insight on Education
AAMS Arefin Siddique

Humanity was at the core of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's educational philosophy. Throughout his life, he preached the message of being initiated into the education of loving humanity. Endowed and enhanced by the deep faith in the inherent love and compassion of human consciousness, Bangabandhu believed the most magnificent artistic form in the world existed in the act of cherishing humanity itself. In his speech broadcasted on radio and television, marking the first anniversary of Bangladesh's independence, he urged the students who had valiantly contributed to the liberation struggle to persist in their endeavors towards achieving the objectives of our revolution. He further added, "To achieve a revolution in our education system, I am going to establish an Education Commission tasked with formulating a strategic plan." (Ittefaq, March 27, 1972).

The initial five chapters of the report from the Dr. Kudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission, established on July 26, 1972, contain an exposition of Bangabandhu's educational philosophy. Bangabandhu shared his thoughts on the education system in detail with Dr. Muhammad Kudrat-e-Khuda and other members of the commission and advised them to prepare a report in light of the four national principles enshrined in our constitution.

In the first section of the commission report, in paragraph 1.5, it is stated that, "In order to achieve rapid transformation and progress in a society plagued by prolonged oppression and deprivation, education must be utilized as a special tool. In the interest of creating a socialist democratic society, it is necessary to ensure the proper use of national talent by establishing parity of opportunity and facilities for education according to the aptitude and talent of all citizens. Simultaneously, there's a need to cultivate diverse vocational skills essential for constructing a progressive and democratic society. It's imperative to foster a scientific, idealistic, and socially progressive mindset conducive to eradicating superstitions, malpractices, and corruption. To achieve this, it's crucial to ensure that every citizen of the country has the opportunity to attain a basic standard of education." (The Report of Kudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission, p.4)

In all of Bangabandhu's speeches, delivered both at home and abroad, we find direct educational content, or the entire speech becomes a necessary subject of study for us. In fact, all of Bangabandhu's speeches serve as educational resources for the new generation. Bangabandhu's constant stream of thoughts on education reminds us of Rabindranath Tagore's verse written fourteen years ago, "I will go on proclaiming victory. This is my salutation." In the same vein as Bangabandhu guided us to triumph in our significant Liberation War with the rallying cry "Joy Bangla," he also directed his efforts towards the noble goal of fostering an educated and cultured nation. Through various means, he addressed his views on the education system of newly independent Bangladesh, offered guidance, and endeavored to shape the trajectory of education until his death.

In the sky of Bengal, the rise of the luminary political star, the father of the nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, a beacon of justice, intellect, wisdom, and foresight, resulted in the birth of an independent, sovereign, democratic state of Bangladesh. The struggle for liberation led by Bangabandhu was fundamentally an educational movement.

The depth of Bangabandhu's contemplation on education can be discerned from the speech he delivered to the nation on October 28, 1970, during the Pakistan election campaign, broadcasted through radio and television. On that day he told, "There can be no better investment for a country than investing in education to build a sound social system. The statistics on the decline in the number of primary schools in Bangladesh since 1947 are a frightening truth. 80% of our population is illiterate. More than 1 million illiterate people are increasing every year. More than half of the children of the nation is being deprived of primary education. Only 18% of boys and 6% of girls are receiving primary education. We believe that at least 4% of the national income should be spent on education. The salaries of teachers in colleges and schools, especially primary schools, need to be increased significantly. Illiteracy must be eradicated."

"A crash course program should be started to provide compulsory, non-formal primary education to five-year-old children. The door to secondary education should be kept open for all classes. New universities, including medical and technical universities, should be established quickly. Attention should be paid to ensuring that poverty does not become a curse for meritorious students to pursue higher education. Effective measures should be taken immediately so that Bangla and Urdu can take the place of English in all spheres of life. We need to create an atmosphere of encouragement for the development and advancement of regional languages." (Now-defunct The Daily Azad, October 29, 1970). It is noteworthy that when referring to primary schools after the year of Pakistan's establishment in 1947, Bangabandhu referred to this region as Bangladesh. On December 5, 1969, Bangabandhu declared that "from now on, the name of the eastern province of Pakistan will be Bangladesh, replacing East Pakistan." (Ittefaq, December 6, 1969).



PRIME MINISTER
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH

12 Chaitra 1430
26 March 2024

Message

Today is the great Independence and National Day. On this auspicious occasion, I extend my sincere greetings and congratulations to all the Bangladeshi citizens living in the country and abroad.

I remember with the most profound respect the Greatest Bangali of all time, Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, under whose firm and far-sighted leadership we achieved independent- sovereign Bangladesh. I remember the four national leaders, three million martyrs of the liberation war and the self- sacrifice of two hundred thousand mothers and sisters. I pay my deep homage to all the fearless freedom fighters, including the war-wounded. I am grateful to all the friendly countries, organizations, institutions, and individuals, particularly the then Prime Minister of India, Shrimati Indira Gandhi, for their generous support during the War.

Young student leader Sheikh Mujib, who was studying in the Department of Law at Dhaka University, had dreamt of establishing a sovereign state in this land since the creation of Pakistan in 1947. Pakistan's social, economic, and political discriminatory attitudes became clear day by day. Sheikh Mujib remained steadfast in defending the rights and dignity of the Bangali in return for any sacrifice. The two organizations of his far-reaching thoughts are the Chhatra League and the Awami League, where he was deeply involved from the beginning until the end of his life. From the language movement of 1952 to the victory of the United Front election of 1954, the anti- Ayub movement of 1962, six points of 1966, and the mass upsurge of 1969, these two organizations had an immense role in the struggles. In the face of public outrage, Ayub Khan was forced to repeal the Agartala conspiracy case. Sheikh Mujib became 'Bangabandhu'- the hope and aspiration of Bangali. On 5 December 1969, on the death anniversary of Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib declared, "From today, the name of this eastern part of Pakistan will be solely Bangladesh, instead of East Pakistan."

The Awami League, led by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib, won a single majority in the National Assembly in the elections of 1970. However, the Pak-military junta started procrastinating without transferring power. Sheikh Mujib called for a non-cooperation movement and, in his historic speech on March 7, gave a clear outline of the goal of liberation from the long 23 years of rule and exploitation. On 23 March, the flag emblazoned with the map of Bangladesh was hoisted all over the country. At midnight on 25 March, Pakistani troops started killing unarmed Bangali in the name of 'Operation Search Light'. Pak junta arrested Sheikh Mujib at an early hour on 26 March. He made the official declaration of independence before he was arrested. The Bangali leader of the people was imprisoned in the Mianwali jail in Pakistan and subjected to inhumane torture. At the call of the Father of the Nation, the freedom-loving people of Bengal, inspired by the slogan 'Joy Bangla', started fighting, taking up arms for the liberation of the motherland. On 17 April, the Mujibnagar government swore in designating Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as President. Syed Nazrul Islam as Vice President, Tajuddin Ahmad as Prime Minister, Captain M Mansur Ali, and AHM Kamaruzzaman as Ministers. After a long 9-month armed struggle, independent sovereign Bangladesh was liberated on 16 December 1971 with the help of the allied forces.

Father of the Bangali Nation, President Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was released from Pakistan, returned to his beloved independent motherland on 10 January 1972, and devoted himself to rebuild the war-ravaged country. With the help of allies, though there was an empty treasury, he rehabilitated the displaced people, restored and developed the infrastructure, and put the production sector and the economy on a solid foundation. He approved a constitution within 9 months of independence. The GDP growth rate surpassed 9% during Bangabandhu's tenure. Bangladesh gained recognition from 123 countries and membership in 27 international organizations through his diplomatic efforts. But our misfortune is that the defeated anti-independence clique of 1971 continues to conspire against him. Incumbent President Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was martyred along with his most of the family members on 15 August 1975 by the brutal bullet of the assassins. The murderous Mostaq-Zia and their successors illegally seized power and established a dictatorship in the country.

After long 21 years, the Bangladesh Awami League won the people's mandate and got the responsibility of running the government in 1996. We took on the mission of uplifting the living standard of the poor by introducing social safety-net programs; turning the country into self-sufficient in food production; setting up community clinics to provide primary health care to marginalized people; building houses for homeless people by taking shelter projects; and making mobile phones and computer technology readily available. Our government signed a 30-year Ganges water-sharing agreement with India. To establish peace in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, we signed the historic peace agreement and repatriated the refugees who had taken refuge in India to Bangladesh. We strengthened the local government system and announced the woman development policy. The Awami League government provided approval for launching privately-owned television channels. We started the trial for killing the Father of the Nation by repealing the Indemnity Ordinance; established the independence of the judiciary, the rule of law, and human rights; and re-established the liberation war values in the country by preventing distortion of history. Our government's 1996-2001 term was a journey towards a brighter future of golden chapter breaking the shackle of backwardness, underdevelopment, and poverty.

The Bangladesh Awami League has been running the government since 2009 with the people's unwavering support in all the national elections. 'Digital Bangladesh' is now reality. We have already transformed Bangladesh into a developing country by implementing Vision-2021. Our government opened the door to the blue economy by establishing sovereignty over the vast sea area. Implementing the land boundary agreement with India ended the enclaves' long-standing misery. We inaugurated 100 bridges and 100 roads and highways in a single day. We brought 100 percent of people under electricity coverage. We have constructed the Padma Bridge with our own fund. Bangabandhu satellite-1 into space, Metro rail, Matarbari Power Project, Rooppur Nuclear Power Station, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel under Karnaphuli river, Elevated Expressway are some examples of our capacity. We have formulated the 'Bangladesh Delta Plan-2100' for our future generation. To build 'Smart Bangladesh', we are implementing the Second Perspective Plan 'Vision-2041' for the next 20 years.

We established the rule of law in the country by enforcing the verdict on trial against the killers of the Father of the Nation and the war criminals against humanity. We published the Records of Proceedings of 'Agartala Conspiracy Case' (4 Volumes) filed by Pakistani rulers against Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib in 1968 and the 'Secret Documents of Intelligence Branch on Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman' (14 Volumes) including 'The Unfinished Memories', 'The Prison Diaries', and 'New China 1952'. I believe that by reading these books, the new generation will clearly understand the firm footprints of the Father of the Nation in the history of independence.

The Awami League government believes in the philosophy of upgrading the fate of the people. We are running our government through immediate, short, medium, and long-term plans to uplift the living standard of ordinary people and develop the country. Moreover, we regularly monitor the implementation progress of our election manifesto. Due to these reasons, people's trust and strong support for Awami League continues.

On this very occasion of Independence Day and National Day, being imbued with the spirit of our great Liberation War, let us take the oath to build developed-prosperous non-communal smart 'Sonar Bangla' as dreamt by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.
Sheikh Hasina
Sheikh Hasina

Strong, with a smile, intense at heart

His pledge to be human sets him apart. "

The poem's two additional lines, "One must embody true humanity while being human" and "If you embody 'humanity', then the country will prosper," essentially call for self-purification. This aligns perfectly with the core principle of Bangabandhu's educational philosophy.

The dream of creating Bangabandhu's Golden People is an unimaginable inspiration for us. When Bangabandhu was sworn in on January 3, 1971, beneath the open sky at the Racecourse Maidan in Ramna, alongside the elected members of the National and Provincial Assemblies of Pakistan, he perhaps had anticipated that they would not have the opportunity to take their oaths on the floor of the National Assembly. Even amid those challenging circumstances, Bangabandhu, addressing the unprecedented crowd, emphasized the paramount importance of education. He announced that the Awami League would ensure arrangements for teachers and low-paid employees to lead dignified lives. In the context of his pledge to prioritize a people-centric education system, Bangabandhu asserted, "Any educational system that does not serve the welfare of the people must be abolished." He vehemently called for the repeal of the Dhaka University Ordinance. (Ittefaq, January 4, 1970)

There was a total of six universities in Bangladesh. With a population of over seventy million people, the number of universities in the country was merely inadequate. Bangabandhu always had concerns about higher education in the country, and autonomous governance of universities was close to his heart.

On the first Victory Day of the country, standing amidst a massive crowd at Suhrawardy Udyan, Bangabandhu proclaimed the enactment of Bangladesh's constitution, effective from December 16, 1972. On that historic day, he announced within the thunderous applause that all colonial laws, including the notorious ordinances created by Pakistan, were abolished with immediate effect (December 16, 1972). Addressing the gathering, Bangabandhu further stated, "No other country in history has been able to draft a constitution in such a short time after independence. The Awami League government, within just 10 months, has adopted a new constitution, creating a new history" On February 15, 1973, Bangabandhu's administration issued the Dhaka University Ordinance, 1973, granting full autonomy to the oldest university in Bangladesh and allowing it to operate in a democratic manner. Similarly, Rajshahi, Chittagong, and Jahangirnagar University were also included in this democratic order."

The directive, comprising sixty-one fundamental principles, offers comprehensive guidance on various facets including administration, education, research, sports, cultural dialogue, residential amenities, library services, and more, mirroring Bangabandhu's democratic educational ideology. It has ensured that every university has an uninterrupted opportunity to evolve into a hub of enlightened discourse.

The Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was also careful to ensure that the teachers and students of the six universities at that time did not face any bureaucratic or administrative complications or financial crisis. On February 15, 1973, another gazette published an order to establish the University Grants Commission.

Bangabandhu appointed academics as the chairman and members of the newly formed commission. He also chose teachers to be the first and second education ministers and education secretary of the Bangladesh government. He had expressed his desire to appoint Professor Anisujjaman as the third education secretary, but before Professor Anisujjaman could return from abroad and meet with Bangabandhu, Bangabandhu and his family were assassinated on the cursed 15th of August of 1975.

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26th March, The Day of Veneration

victory, and thereby bestowing upon him, unassailable mandate to steer East Bengal to secure emancipation from Pakistani imperial domination. Result of the election was, quite cogently, taken as a referendum in favour of independent Bangladesh. Despite a sweeping electoral victory by the party led by Bangabandhu, the Pakistanis, led by Yahya Khan and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, bluntly declined to hand over power to the designated leader of the Bengalis. Agitations under Bangabandhu, kept mounting. The month of March in 1971, from the very beginning, turned out to be a month of unrest. People in East Bengal embarked on a perennial course of non-co operation under their coveted leader, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib. People crowned him with de-facto regal status. Several lacs of people assembled themselves in a momentous meeting on the 7th day of March that year, with sticks and Bangladesh flags, to hear their leader. Through an 18 minute unwritten deliberation, he told the mammoth gathering, "We shall give more blood. God willing, we shall free the people of this land. Struggle this time is a struggle for emancipation, the struggle this time is struggle for independence." He asked people to fortify every home and fight with whatever they have in their possession. His articulation was universally acclaimed as a masterpiece. Media in the United States termed him as 'a poet of politics'. They found deeply entrenched philosophy in every word he uttered. His oration was finally glorified with distinctive recitance by the United Nations Organisation in 2017, when the same was credited as a part of the heritage of the world. Although, Bangabandhu's speech did not amount to proclamation of independence as per the strict application vocabulary, it was, nonetheless, overwhelmingly admitted that he did not leave anything untold either. The world media described the same as virtual declaration of independence in a scrupulous way. It was not been difficult to reckon that the flying Pakistani armed choppers, and heavily armed troops all around, would kill all of the assembled people in the race course, the venue of the speech, in the same way thousands were killed in Jallianwala bagh. had Bangabandhu declared independence, Most significantly, he asked everyone to be ready for the liberation war. Lots of people took to street to fight Pakistani soldiers after the 7th March speech. It would not be incongruous to say that 7th March speech was a precursor to the eventual declaration of independence, pronounced by Bangabandhu at the first hour of 26th March. In the pretext of negotiation with Bangabandhu, Yahya made a dash to Dhaka on 15th March, followed by a similar sojourn by Bhutto, ostensibly to chalk out a plan for perpetrating genocide on the Bengalis, through the newly appointed military governor for East Bengal, General Tikka Khan. Generals Rao Farman Ali and Mitha Khan were also called in for the diabolic purpose. General Mitha, the patriarch of the Special Security Force of Pakistan army, chosen for his expertise in the relevant field, was sent to Dhaka in early March, '71 with the special assignment to help Tikka Khan in drawing the blue print for genocide, under the code name, 'operation searchlight'. (Although General Mitha did not explicitly admit his role in the preparation of the genocide blue print, it is not difficult to detect his role from the account he furnished in his book, 'Unlikely Beginning: A soldier's Life'. A write up published in 'Dawn' of Pakistan on 2nd August 2009, about Mitha Khan also supports this introspection). Around the same time soldiers were transported from West Pakistan to Dhaka without intermission. All international flights of Pakistan International Airlines were brought to a halt to pave way to transport military personnel to Dhaka. On 25th March Yahya surreptitiously left Dhaka after instructing his generals to kick off the spree of genocide and apprehend Bangabandhu at the midnight. Hell was let loose, an ominous reign of terror turned the whole of Bangladesh into an ocean of blood. Bangabandhu turned down requests to flee, saying that such a move would lead Pakistani soldiers to turn the whole of Bangladesh into a mass crematorium. He did not, however, forget to prepare and circulate the exquisite declaration of independence of Bangladesh. Throughout the day he made arrangements with wireless experts for airing his declaration through the EPR wireless device, which was done shortly after the midnight, before he was rounded up. He told the people, "This may be my last message; from today Bangladesh is independent. I call upon the people of Bangladesh wherever you might be and with whatever you have, to resist the army of occupation to the last. Your fight must go on until the last soldier of the Pakistan occupation army is expelled from the soil of Bangladesh and final victory is achieved." It is this sacrosanct declaration that showers immortality to 26th March. The declaration, transmitted through EPR wireless, was heard by plethora of people. A media officer of Pakistan army, named Siddiq Salik, who was amongst the Pakistani Prisoners War, wrote in his book, 'Witness to surrender', 'When the first shot had been fired the voice of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman came faintly through on a wave length close to that of official Pakistan radio....sounded like a pre recorded message, Sheikh Mujib proclaimed East Pakistan to be the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh.' David Loshak, the South Asian correspondent of London based Daily Telegraph also wrote that Sheikh Mujib's voice was heard faintly. People like Abdul Hannan, Abul Kashem Sandip and others who heard Bangabandhu's unambiguous declaration, relayed the same by resorting to wireless technology, and later from the radio station at Kalurghat. Bangabandhu's directive was adhered to by the entire nation in totality. Fight to eliminate all Pakistani soldiers took off. There were people who took part in the war by assisting armed freedom fighters by providing food, shelter and information. Even very young people belonged to that category. Elderly parents, being devoid of their ability to fight, participated by pushing their able bodied offspring to the war front. Artists of various discipline, people in the world of sports also had their part to play. Bengalis resident abroad organised themselves to demand recognition of independent Bangladesh. Scores of Bengalis posted in Pakistani missions in various countries came forward to express their allegiance to Bangladesh.

Bangabandhu's Boundless Insight on Education

How much Bangabandhu respected and loved teachers can be understood when on July 20, 1972, he rushed from Sugandha office to the Registrar's Office of Dhaka University to free the then Vice-Chancellor Professor Muzaffar Ahmed Chowdhury from the students' siege. When he got the news in his office that the students of the university and affiliated colleges had surrounded the Vice-Chancellor in his office demanding automatic promotion, he immediately left for the university and rescued the Vice-Chancellor and other senior teachers from the siege and quickly returned to his office. Geeta Dasgupta, Sheikh Russel's home tutor at Bangabandhu's residence, recounted an anecdote where Bangabandhu would occasionally enter the study room to inquire about Russel's studies, prompting her to naturally stand up. Despite this, Bangabandhu repeatedly insisted, "You are Russel's teacher, and you are also my teacher. I truly do not want you to ever stand up." This exemplified Bangabandhu's profound respect for educators. Geeta, who taught home tuition while pursuing her studies at Dhaka University, tearfully expressed in a meeting, "I am not even a fully-fledged teacher; I teach home tuition to support a student's expenses. However, the respect that Bangabandhu has bestowed upon me is the greatest achievement of my life."

A month after issuing the Dhaka University order, Bangabandhu inaugurated the week-long festival organized on the occasion of the first convocation of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology on March 15.

There, he said, "We need such a people-oriented education system in our country that will enable us to build a new nation through the creation of true human beings and establish socialism in an independent and sovereign Bangladesh." The Prime Minister expressed the hope that only a scientific and technical education system can help in the rapid development of the country. Prime Minister Sheikh Mujib said, "The two hundred years of British rule and twenty-five years of Pakistani rule have not produced anything more than clerical education in this country." In this context, he mentioned that if there is no radical change in the education system, if we cannot break down the current education system and rebuild it anew, then it will not be possible to transform this country into Sonar Bangla.

In this context, the Prime Minister referenced the Education Commission, expressing hope that considering the real situation of the country and taking into account the needs and demands of the nation, the Commission would draft a report that would pave the way for progress and prosperity through the establishment of socialism. He expressed further hope that the Commission would spare no effort in expediting the preparation of this report. (Now-defunct Banglar Bani, March 16, 1973)

The chairman of the Education Commission, Dr. Kudrat-e-Khuda (1900-1977), handed over the final report to Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on June 7, 1974. Bangabandhu appreciated the tireless efforts of the Commission in preparing an important report for the correct direction of national education and cultural development. Bangabandhu further said that he is aware of the various difficulties and complex situations that the Commission faced in preparing this report.

Following the submission of the report, the chairman of the commission, Dr. Kudrat-e-Khuda, briefed the awaiting journalists at Ganabhaban. He stated that the report recommended the incorporation of vocational training in areas such as teacher training, nursing, agriculture, bamboo, and cane. As per the recommendations, it was proposed to introduce primary education from grades 1 to 8 and a four-year duration for secondary education from grades 9 to 12. Dr. Khuda added that the report included significant suggestions for restructuring the examination system to curb malpractices and various forms of corruption in examinations.

According to reliable sources, the Education Commission report suggested allocating 65% of the education budget for primary education, 20% for secondary education, and 15% for higher education.

The report, consisting of 36 chapters and spanning approximately 450 pages, encompasses 250 noteworthy recommendations. It is noteworthy that the government constituted this 23-member Education Commission in July 1972, with Dr. Kudrat-e-Khuda, a distinguished scientist and educator of the country, at its helm. The Commission submitted an interim report in May 1973. (Defunct Dainik Bangla, June 8, 1974) We now recognise the foresight in establishing the University Grants Commission and granting autonomy to universities within two months of the implementation of the Constitution of the Republic on December 16, 1972, in accordance with the directives of the Constitution.

One of the primary reasons why Bangabandhu accorded top priority to education alongside food, clothing, shelter, and healthcare for the seven and a half crore people of war-torn Bangladesh was his belief that education forms the cornerstone of democracy. Bangabandhu believed that without the socio-material development of people, it is not possible to construct an egalitarian and scientifically-oriented nation. He strived to ensure that education remained impartial, drawing inspiration from the insightful words of the poet laureate Rabindranath Tagore, who emphasized that "The cultivation of humanity is the fundamental objective of education."

Bangabandhu's life serves as an exemplary model for all of us. Each of his speeches and actions serves as a valuable educational resource for people of all ages, offering guidance and inspiration. When Bangabandhu declared on March 7, 1971, "This time the struggle is for our emancipation, the struggle this time is for our independence," we realize that without education, human emancipation is not possible. It is necessary to have a free state for Bengalis to create the right environment for education, where there will be an opportunity to nurture their own culture and language in a free environment. Just as Bangabandhu advocated for the nation's liberation in 1971, he was first imprisoned in the newly established Pakistan on March 11, 1948, for advocating the freedom of the mother tongue, Bangla. Through the language movement, Bangabandhu gradually called for a war to liberate the nation from colonial rule.

We are inspired to learn from every step of Bangabandhu. Here is an excerpt from a letter he wrote to a relative from Dhaka Central Jail on May 26, 1950:

"I have lost my energy but you should know, to the man who lives for an idea, for his country, for the good of humanity, life has an extensive meaning, and to that extent pain becomes less important to him. I know, world is a comedy to those that think, a tragedy to those who feel."

Bangabandhu's sky high popularity became immaculately known to the Pakistanis during the early months in 1969, when the people succeeded to secure his release from Ayub Khan's custody during the proceeding of the case, known as Agartala Conspiracy case. Ayub Khan was inundated with irrefutable fatuity by failing to measure Bangabandhu's popularity. (Srimoti Indira Gandhi told the teachers and students at the Colombia University in November 1971 that Sheikh Mujib marshalled greater popularity in East Bengal than she herself did in India.) On 16th February 1969 thousands of irate people set on fire the place of abode of the presiding judge of the case, compelling the latter to flee through the rear exit. Realising the absurdity of controlling the Bengalis, Ayub opted to release Bangabandhu. Reception accorded to Bangabandhu could only be equated with the same given to Algerian leader Ben Bella after his release from custody in France.

Bangabandhu's glorious declaration on 26th March made immediate impact throughout the country. Awami League leaders in Chittagong made immediate efforts to relay the declaration, initially through wireless device and, then by using the radio station at Kalurghat. At that time a ship named 'Swat' arrived at Chittagong port with a huge consignment of Pakistani arms. Major Ziaur Rahman, a Bengali officer, was assigned to unload the arms for the Pakistanis. Conceivably he was chosen to do so at a time after Bangabandhu proclaimed independence, because of his proven allegiance to Pakistan. Major Zia's Pakistan appeasing endeavour infuriated everybody, some of whom successfully obstructed his way, forcing him to abandon his despicable mission. Major Zia's serpentine move had been elaborated by an astute freedom fighter, Major Rafiqul Islam, Bir Uttam, in his memoir. Another valiant freedom



Fighter, Abdul Kader Siddique, Bir Uttam, in the book, titled Shadinota 71, published in 1981 when he was in Kolkata, stated that Zia remained loyal to Pakistan even at the early hours on 26th March (ie after Bangabandhu proclaimed independence), that when his subordinate, named Captain (then) Oli Ahmad, stood on Zia's way to prevent him before Zia could reach Swat ship, Zia insisted that he was bound to unload Pakistani arsenal as directed by a Pakistani brigadier. Kader Siddique's narrative reveals that Zia was forced eventually to give in to Captain Oli's threat when the said Captain pointed his revolver at Zia, with threat to kill him. Kader Siddique further stated that at the time in question local Awami League leaders set up a radio station for independent Bangladesh at Kalurghat and that leaders like Jahur Ahmed Chowdhury, M R Siddiqui, Abdul Hannan, M A Mann and others read Bangabandhu's declaration through that radio station, that some Ansar adjutants, a former DIG of police also followed, yet it was construed that reading by an army officer would cause wider proliferation and hence they requested Zia to read Bangabandhu's declaration, but to every ones dismay, Zia refused to accede to their repeated demand, although at the end he finally agreed, very reluctantly though, to read Bangabandhu's declaration.

Bengalis employed in East Pakistan Rifles, the police, the army, navy and the air force, by and large, began fighting with whatever they had in their possession. The police were trained and equipped only to disperse mob, not to fight wars. Functionaries at the East Pakistan Rifles were poorly armed. Yet, they had no hesitation to chase highly trained Pakistani soldiers, who had most sophisticated weapons in their arsenal. Despite inadequacy of weapons and training, they stood up as formidable fighters.

Just after the clock struck 12 at night on 25th March, Pakistani soldiers, commanded by General Tikka Khan, nick named 'Butcher of Baluchistan', set on motion the frenzied massacre under the code name, 'Operation Search Light.' At the very inception, they apprehended Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib from his residence. Pakistani soldiers targeted the police forces at Rajarbagh, the personnel of the East Pakistan Rifles. Despite being scantily armed and barely trained, they did, nevertheless fight back valiantly with whatever they had, by following Bangabandhu's ordain to that effect. Pakistani forces simultaneously attacked unarmed students residing at Iqbal Hall, Jagannath Hall, Rokeya Hall and inflicted reprehensible excruciation on them. Female students at Rokeya Hall were subjected to sexual atrocities of horrendous proportion. Yahya's monsters indiscriminately killed every one on sight at all parts of the city. Rickshaw and manual van pullers, street beggars, were not spared. Homicidal hysteria proliferated to other parts of Bangladesh in no time, whereby the whole of Bangladesh was brought within their unbridled truculence. Tikka Khan, chosen for his ability to kill thousands of Baluch freedom fighters, vowed to annihilate all the Bengalis, as he was interested in the land only. The ferocity was so dreadful that even Henry Kissinger described the same as 'brutal military repression', 'in which thousands of civilians were killed.' The US ambassador in Delhi, terming Pakistani savagery as deplorable, reported to Washington that he was 'deeply shocked at the massacre.' (Source: White House Years by Henry Kissinger). Archer Blood the US Consul General in Dhaka sent a telegram to Washington stating that the Pakistani authorities have indulged on virtual genocide. Well acclaimed overseas journalists like Simon Dring, Peter Hazelhurst and Pakistani journalist, Tony Mascarenhas' reporting, with un-assailable evidence, agonised every conscientious heart in the world. According to the dossiers transmitted by several overseas journalists, some 25 thousand people were done to death in Dhaka city alone during the 24 hours period after the Pakistani war machines roared in at the midnight on 25th March 1971.

On 27th March 1971, Mr. Yan Southerland, head of South Asian desk at the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, told Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury that he had received harrowing information from the British Deputy High Commissioner in Dhaka, that the Deputy High Commissioner went through a dreadful sleepless night on 25th March and that his attempt to go out of the house, had to be abandoned finding piles of corpses all over the streets. Mr.

"You, also asked me to give bond. I cannot understand how you can dare to write this very word 'bond' to me. I do not know how to bow down head to any man except Allah the almighty."

"Ministers think too much of themselves but the wheel of change moves on, those who are down go up and those who are up go down. Nothing in the world that is alive remains unchanged. I am definite that in the long war between falsehood and truth, falsehood always wins the first battle but truth the last." The letter was confiscated by the then Pakistan government. (Secret Documents Vol. 1, p. XXII-XXIII)

Just as Bangabandhu realised the need for organization for the welfare of the people during his student life, he was always outspoken and determined to speak the truth. In his book "Unfinished Autobiography," Bangabandhu writes about Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazul Huq's Krishak Sramik Party and the Muslim League, saying, "Although neither party had any organization, everyone relied on personal popularity. The Muslim League was then only on paper." We get a detailed account of the extraordinary role he played as a student in the founding of the East Pakistan Students League in Bangabandhu's own book "Unfinished Autobiography".

Bangabandhu's concern for the needs of the poor can be understood by reading his book "Unfinished Autobiography". In the context of the movement of fourth-class employees of Dhaka University, he writes, "I told them, first get organized, then put forward your demands, otherwise the authorities will not listen. They formed a union, and a student became their president. I didn't know anything else. I was touring the districts. When I came to Dhaka and heard that they had gone on strike, I realized that the authorities had refused to accept their demands. But even then, they should not have gone on strike so soon. Because, they don't have any fund. They have just formed the organization a few days ago. But what to do, there is no other way now." (Unfinished Autobiography, p. 112)

We know that Bangabandhu was expelled from the university on March 26, 1949, for expressing solidarity with the movement of low-paid employees. He refused to sign the university's prescribed affidavit or pay the fine to regain his studentship, as he



would not compromise with injustice. Furthermore, he did not attempt to have the expulsion order rescinded through agitation for his own benefit. Such was Bangabandhu—a life devoted to others, willing to sacrifice even his studentship for the people. What a strange coincidence of history. The man who lost his studentship on March 26, 1949, due to the unjust decision of the university authorities in support of the low-paid employees of Dhaka University, fought and struggled for the freedom of Bengalis for 24 long years. It was he who declared the independence of Bangladesh on March 26, 1971.

Bangabandhu's remarks regarding the employees' union's 'lack of funds' indicate his profound recognition of the necessity for meticulous planning to ensure the effective operation of trade unions and to provide the minimum financial support required for employees' families during strikes. The proposal for establishing a fund for the employees' union vividly illustrates the progressive nature of Bangabandhu's ideology.

The renowned American anti-establishment intellectual Noam Chomsky said about the freedom of expression of people, "If we don't believe in freedom of expression for people we despise, we don't believe in it at all". Bangabandhu writes in his "Unfinished Autobiography", "A few days after Jinnah's death, there was a public meeting in front of Fazul Huque Hall. A student gave a speech there, I can't remember his name now. He said, "We have to accept what Jinnah has said. When he declared Urdu as the state language, then Urdu will be." I spoke out in protest about that. Even today, I can remember my statement. I said, "People have the every right to protest and clarify their leader when asked to do something unjust. For instance, general citizens once questioned Hazrat Umar (RA) about his long attire. Given that 66% of the population speaking Bangla as their mother tongue, and as Pakistan is a democratic state, the demands of the majority should be acknowledged. We will continue our struggle until Bangla is declared the state language. Whatever happens, we are ready for that." (Unfinished Autobiography, p. 100). These memories of Bangabandhu's life are the guiding lights on our path to self-development.

It is our responsibility to ensure that the words spoken by Bangabandhu to the Bengali nation in a short time have a lasting impact. On March 30, 1972, at an intellectual gathering in Chittagong, Bangabandhu said, "Our education system has, thus far, not nurtured individuals; it has merely produced bureaucrats. Mentioning the need to spread the light of education among the masses, Bangabandhu said, "To spread education among the rural population, our teachers and students should spend a certain time every year in the countryside."

Bangabandhu urged the teaching community not to seek refuge in student politics for personal gain. Addressing the teachers, he emphasized, "Do not misunderstand me, I am speaking in this way only because I have come through a long path of movement and struggle."

Joy Bangla

Rabindra Gope

Some nights I see father in my dreams
He walks far into the depths of darkness
The demons come forward raising their paw
He utters 'Joy Bangla' – Victory to our Bangla
Fearful, they start fleeing, they continue to flee,
They return to their den of deep darkness by fleeing.

In the depth of my dream, I see that sacred face
Blossoming before me like the Tuberosa flower
From deep darkness emerges like a sun
The face of my father
I then say 'Joy Bangla' in the midst of a sacred dream
Bangladesh then wakes up.

Laks of boatmen then pull their oars
Sprinkling water on bow while hoisting sail, saying 'Badar Badar'
The boats race toward an infinite journey
Far, far away after crossing the Padma and Meghna.

From deep darkness emerges the mantra of freedom
Joy Bangla – Victory to Bangla is articulated
The blessings from the sacred soul of a father
Fall on this wide, wide world like petals of rose
The soil becomes fragrant overnight.

On some nights I see the father in dream
He descends from a staircase on moonlight
But goes back on seeing Bangla in distress
He feels great pain by seeing his Bangla
Shrouded by the invisible shadow of assassin.

My sleep sometimes gets broken
Wet with the blood of martyrs – the roads beckon
I sometimes see my father in my dreams.
I hear: "If another bullet is fired..."
After that there is pain as my heart aches
Those memorable days of finger-on-trigger return.

Translation: Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed

Southerland further stated that a First Secretary of the mission, who somehow managed to make his way through to Dhaka University area, observed that Iqbal Hall was swamped with human blood. The First Secretary also learnt that the slain teachers and students were dumped together en-mass. (Source: স্বদেশে মুক্তিকের দিনকণি, authored by Justice Abu Sayed Chowdhury).

Genocide, that was unleashed at the midnight on 25th March, continued unabated till the day Pakistani soldiers surrendered on 16th December, 1971. At least three million people were martyred, thousands of women were sexually tyrannised. Yet the determination of the Bengali people to eject the last Pakistani soldier, as exigently commanded by the father of the nation, never waned. They fought with crash training, given by the Indian soldiers, were in meagre possession of arms as against highly trained Pakistani soldiers, equipped with loads of most sophisticated deadly weapons. Yet they succeeded to fight valiantly with relentless support of the Indian soldiers.

The ecstatic declaration by the father of the nation, which on 26th March 1971 profusely elated the people of Bangladesh, paid off at the end of the day, when Pakistani occupying soldiers were forced to surrender to the joint command, comprising Bangladeshi freedom fighters and the Indian soldiers. It is Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the patriarch of the nation, the architect of Sonar Bangla, the towering stalwart, who deserves overriding homage for immortalising 26th March and bringing to animation, pageantry and jubilation, his accentuated declaration. □

Author : Retired Justice of the Appellate Division

Bangabandhu repeatedly emphasized the importance of drawing lessons from the lives of those who sacrificed for our independence and those who endured abuse, as they traded their present for our future. During a public meeting in Nagarbaari on February 26, 1972, Bangabandhu emphasized the significance of recognising the importance and responsibility towards women who had suffered at the hands of the brutal Pakistani invading forces. He remarked that the sole fault of these tortured women was their Bengali identity and deep love for their motherland. Bangabandhu advocated for compiling a list of young men willing to marry these women. (Source: Sangbad, February 28, 1972)

Here is a statement of the American Department of Education regarding the goal of education, "The purpose of education is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering education excellence and ensuring equal access."

Bangabandhu envisioned education as a means to foster social justice and morality. On November 4, 1972, the day the Constitution of Bangladesh was adopted by the Constituent Assembly, Bangabandhu explained, "The Constitution has been formulated upon four principles aimed at ensuring equal rights for the seven and a half crores people under the law." The Constitution's second segment, concerning governance principles, encompasses provisions for a free, compulsory, universal, and uniform primary education system. Additionally, the third segment guarantees citizens 22 fundamental rights.

Numerous lessons can be gleaned from Bangabandhu's life. Can anyone fathom the depth of compassion and empathy did Bangabandhu possess? One such example is his compassionate act during his visit to Bogra on May 8, 1972. It is reported that Bangabandhu encountered Akhtar, a student from Bogra Women's College, who was unconscious. Without hesitation, he personally took her to the Circuit House, promptly arranged for medical assistance, and halted all official proceedings until the girl regained consciousness and safely returned home. This incident reflects Bangabandhu's profound empathy and commitment to the welfare of individuals. (Source: Defunct Daily Bangla, May 9, 1972)

Could anyone conceive that, upon Kulman Singh's request, he dispatched medicine to the elderly farmer from a distant village in India? (Defunct Banglar Bani, June 2, 1972)

Due to space limitations, it is not feasible to delve into the detailed accounts of the aforementioned incidents, both of which exemplify Bangabandhu's sincerity. However, Bangabandhu's life is replete with numerous such examples that, if incorporated into the curriculum, would cultivate tolerance, liberalism, compassion, dedication, and humanity among the new generation.

The theme of last year's (2023) International Education Day was "To invest in people, prioritize education," echoing the sentiment articulated by Bangabandhu in his radio-television address to the nation on October 28, 1970, during the 1970 election campaign: "There can be no better investment than investment in education." This sentiment has already been highlighted earlier in this article.

Since the decision adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 3, 2018, International Education Day has been commemorated annually on January 24th. Education has been acknowledged as a crucial component in all 17 areas outlined by the United Nations to attain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Agenda 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals states: "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030". In this context, a quote from Mahatma Gandhi comes to mind- "Live as if you were to die tomorrow, learn as if you were to live forever". The Dr. Kudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission, under the guidance and counsel of Bangabandhu, also underscored the importance of lifelong education.

"Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman graced the premises of Bangla Academy on February 14, 1974, to inaugurate the week-long National Literary Conference. Towards the conclusion of his inaugural address, he turned to the audience and expressed, "Just as development is imperative in various domains such as art, agriculture, and communication systems, there is an equal need for a revolutionary transformation in the realms of thought and consciousness. I consistently advocate that if we aspire to build a golden Bengal, we must cultivate golden individuals. Such individuals will not materialize from thin air nor sprout from the soil; rather, they must be nurtured from among the seven and a half crores people of Bengal. It is only through the cultivation of new perspectives, consciousness, and values that we can bring forth such exemplary individuals. The artisans of the human soul—writers, artists, educators, intellectuals, and cultural figures—are tasked with this noble endeavor. Today, I implore you, at this literary conference, to dedicate yourselves to the noble cause of fostering these golden people." (Uttaraadhikar, Literary Conference Issue-1974, pp. 7-9, Bangla Academy, Dhaka)

At the heart of Bangabandhu's educational philosophy, dedicated to the advancement of the Bengali community, rested an educational paradigm with multifaceted objectives. It aimed to foster greatness and integrity in individuals while cultivating a cadre of skilled and competent citizens. Furthermore, it sought to empower individuals to exert influence in all directions, instill a forward-thinking mindset, and enhance mindfulness and awareness. Above all, the core objective was to elevate individuals to the highest moral standards and cultivate a conscientious national identity.

Bangabandhu believed in "No legacy is so rich as honest" (Shakespeare). The three lines "Chant truth, truth, truth / Let all intelligence be immersed in truth" and "Purify the mind", composed by Rabindranath Tagore in the Bengali year 1317, can offer crucial guidance to our education system. They will serve as beacons lighting the path of education.

This auspicious day of Independence, let us unite and strive to embody the golden ideals envisioned by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. □

(Translated by Parikshit Chowdhury)