

National Day of Bangladesh

THE JAPAN NEWS
BY THE YOMIURI SHIMBUN

PUBLICITY



Celebrating the 53rd Anniversary of Independence



Mohammed Shahabuddin
President of Bangladesh

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 mar-

tyrs 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 Metrorail 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 geopolitical 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.

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Sheikh Hasina
Prime Minister of Bangladesh

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 Bangladeshi 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 coun-

tries, 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. Pakistanis' social, economic, and political discriminatory attitudes became clear day by day. Sheikh Mujib remained steadfast in defending the rights and dignity of the Bangladeshi 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 Bangladeshi. 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 Bangladeshi 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 Bangladeshi 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.

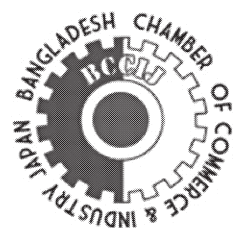
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