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## Message

Today is the historic 10 January, the Homecoming Day of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. On this day in 1972, Father of the Nation returned independent and sovereign Bangladesh after 9 month and 14 days of imprisonment in Mianwali Jail in Pakistan. Though we achieved ultimate victory on 16 December in 1971 through armed struggle but the true essence of victory came into being upon returning home of Father of the Nation. On this memorable day, I pay my profound homage to Father of the Nation and pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

This year the Homecoming day is more significant than any other time as the people of the country have cast their votes for Sheikh Hasina, the daughter of Bangabandhu to run the country for the three consecutive terms and materialize the dream of Bangabandhu through the 11<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary Election. I believe that this is the true reflection of deep trust and confidence in Bangabandhu and the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The contribution of Father of the Nation to the struggle for our independence was incomparable. This visionary leader led the nation in every movement including the All Party State Language Movement Council in 1948, Language Movement in 1952, Jukta-Front Election in 1954, movement against Martial Law being proclaimed by Gen. Ayub Khan in 1958, Movement against Education Commission in 1962, Six-Point Movement in 1966, Mass Upsurge in 1969 and the General Election in 1970 where Awami League won landslide victory. Though the Awami League had won absolute majority in the General Election of 1970, the Pakistani rulers were reluctant to hand over power and therefore, the freedom loving people of the country started Non-cooperation movement under the leadership of Bangabandhu. On March 07, 1971 Bangabandhu delivered a historic speech at Race Course Maidan which was indirectly indicated the declaration of our independence. At the mammoth gathering he uttered in his thunderous voice, "The struggle this time is a struggle for emancipation. The struggle this time is a struggle for independence".

On 25 March 1971, the invading army of Pakistan as part of their blueprint committed genocide by launching "Operation Searchlight" with a view to destroying Bangalees. Against this backdrop, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared country's independence at the early hours on 26 March and called upon the countrymen to take part in the war of liberation and fight until the last soldier of the occupation army is expelled from the soil of Bangladesh. Immediately after the declaration of independence, the Pakistani Junta arrested Bangabandhu from his Dhanmondi residence of road no.32 and confined him in Mianwali Jail in Pakistan. In absence of Bangabandhu, the liberation war was being conducted under his leadership. On 16 December, 1971 the Bangalee nation achieved ultimate victory.

Stepping into the soil of newborn independent Bangladesh on January 10 in 1972, Bangabandhu was overwhelmed by feelings of emotion. In front of hundreds of thousands people, gathered at the Race Course Maidan, he said, "The dream of my life has been fulfilled today. My Sonar Bangla is now free and a sovereign State has been emerged". He was sentenced to death during his imprisonment in Pakistan Jail but Bangabandhu told, "I will say, while going to the gallows, I am Bangali, Bangla is my country and Bangla is my language. Joy Bangla". Such an example of profound love for country and people is rare in the world.

The anti-liberation forces wanted to wipe out the ideal and principle of Bangabandhu and tried to tarnish the image of sovereign Bangladesh through the assassination of Bangabandhu and his family members on 15 August 1975. But the Bangalee is a nation of intrepidity. As long as Bangladesh and the Bangalees exist, Bangabandhu will remain as the eternal source of our inspiration.

The present government under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the illustrious daughter of Bangabandhu, has been making untiring efforts for the progress and development of the country. Bangladesh, in the meantime, is now being considered worldwide as a 'role model' for its development in various sectors including education, health, agriculture, information technology, empowerment of women etc. I am confident that with this pace of development, Bangladesh will be a developed country by 2041, *inshallah*.

On the Homecoming day of Bangabandhu, let us take the pledge to continue the advancement of our country by implementing the unfinished tasks of this great leader imbued with the spirit of war of liberation.

Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Md. Abdul Hamid