



# Bangladesh News

Embassy of Bangladesh, Washington DC

Special Newsletter on Independence & National Day

## Bangladesh celebrates 53rd Independence Day and National Day



National Memorial at Savar on the outskirts of the capital.

Later, people from all walks of life, including families of Shreshthas, war-wounded freedom fighters, members of the diplomatic corps, leaders of different political parties, social, cultural and professional bodies, placed wreaths at the National Memorial.

Different political parties, including ruling Awami League, as well as socio-cultural and professional organizations took various programmes to observe the day in a befitting manner. The Bangladesh missions abroad also celebrated the day through different programmes.

Every year, the March 26 brings the most tragic reminiscence of the history's blackest episode that heralded a nine-month bloody ordeal from the night of March 25, 1971, achieving the long-cherished independence on December 16 the same year at the cost of a sea of blood.

In the wake of the military crackdown by the Pakistani military junta on the black night of March 25, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who became the undisputed leader of the then Pakistan following the massive victory of his party - Awami League - in the 1970 general elections, declared the independence of Bangladesh through the then EPR (East Pakistan Rifles) wireless at 00-30 hours on March 26 (the night following March 25) in 1971 at his historic Road-32 residence at Dhanmondi here.

The nation soon launched the War of Liberation at the call of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the first hours of March 26.

Bangladesh emerged as an independent and sovereign country on December 16, 1971 with the surrender of the Pakistani occupation forces, who killed three million innocent civilians, perpetrated atrocities on two lakh Bangalee women and burnt down lakhs of houses across the country during the nine-month bloody war.

## Declaration of Independence by Bangabandhu & Birth of Bangladesh



The landslide victory of the Awami League in the 1970 election accelerated the liberation struggle of the Bengali nation. On March 7, 1971, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman gave the final instructions to prepare for the Liberation War at a public rally at Suhrawardy Uddyan in Dhaka.

On March 23, he hoisted the map-embazoned flag of independent Bangladesh at his residence in Dhanmondi. Red-green flags were flying in the air across the country. Meanwhile, the Pakistani junta chief General Yahya left Dhaka secretly following his order to carry out genocide on the Bengali nation on March 25.

In his book titled "Witness to Surrender", Siddiq Salik writes, "The time for the crackdown was fixed at 1 am on March 26. But after the evening of March 25, a commander advised Tikka Khan to bring the crackdown time forward. Then Pakistani forces swooped on the whole city at 11:30 pm."

Bangabandhu came to know the Pakistani's plan from his own sources. On the evening of March 25, he instructed the whole country to prepare for the war by telephone call from his Dhanmondi residence at Road No 32. Regarding the incident of that day, Bangabandhu's assistant said in an interview, "Since the evening of 25 March, we started receiving information that all the tanks were being lined up in the cantonment and preparations for the attack were underway. We reported it to Bangabandhu. Then Bangabandhu's instructions were very clear. He said - the moment they [Pakistani junta] will start the invasion, we are free from that moment."

Bangabandhu declared independence directly in the early hours of March 26, shortly after the Pakistani army started the invasion. The declaration reads:

"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." - Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (March 26, 1971)

Bangabandhu's declaration of independence was broadcast on a special frequency of wireless, which was heard from the wireless of foreign ships stationed in Chattogram port and the wireless of Pakistani spies.

Just before the Pakistani army arrested Bangabandhu, his declaration of independence was transmitted to different parts of the world through several ships including MV Salivista, MV Mini La Tria, MV VV Giri and others. Butcher Tikka Khan later in an interview and Siddiq Salik in his book said that they heard Bangabandhu's declaration of independence themselves.

Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra started transmission from Chattogram soon after Bangabandhu declared independence in the early hours of March 26. Belal Mohammad, one of its organizers, said that the declaration of independence was broadcast first on March 26. MA Hannan, general secretary of Chattogram Awami League, read out the first declaration of independence on behalf of Bangabandhu on the radio. The declaration was also spread through loudspeakers in different areas since the morning of March 26. By noon, it was transcribed into Bengali and distributed as leaflets.

An analysis of the international media on March 26 and 27 in 1971 shows that newspapers of at least 25 countries across the world published the news about the declaration of Bangladesh's independence by Bangabandhu.

Even the spot report of the United States' Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) mentioned the declaration of Bangladesh's independence by Bangabandhu at midnight on March 25, 1971. According to the report, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared the eastern part of Pakistan as the independent People's Republic of Bangladesh.

On March 27 in 1971, the New York Times reported that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was arrested shortly after he had declared independence. According to the Associated Press, Yahya Khan re-imposed martial law in East Pakistan and Awami League leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared independence. One of the noted British dailies, The Guardian reported Mujib declared independence for his countrymen before his arrest.

Source: Bangladesh Awami League website

## Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina hands over Independence Award



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has handed over "Swadhinata Padak" (Independence Award) to nine individuals and one institution in recognition of their outstanding contributions to their respective fields at the national level.

The programme to distribute the highest civilian award was held at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in Dhaka on March 23.

Valiant Freedom Fighters Colonel (ret'd) Shamsul Alam, late Lieutenant AG Mohammad Khurshid (posthumous), martyr Khwaza Nizamuddin Bhuiyan (posthumous) and Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury (Maya) Bir Bikram got the award in the 'Independence and Liberation War' category.

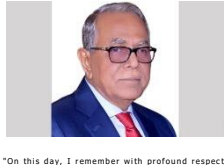
Late Dr Mohammad Mainuddin Ahmed (Selim Al Deen) (posthumous) received the award in the 'Literature' category, while Pabitra Mohan Dey and ASM Rakibul Hasan got the award in 'Cultural' and 'Sports' categories respectively.

Department of Fire Service and Civil Defence got the award in the 'Social Services/Public Services' category and Begum Nadira Jahan (Surma Jahid) and Dr Ferdousi Kadri received the award in the 'Research and Training' category.

The Cabinet Division earlier on March 9 announced the names of the Independence Award recipients. Each award recipient received a gold medal, a certificate and a cheque of honorarium.

Bangladesh honours individuals and institutions with the award every year ahead of Independence Day that is celebrated on March 26. The award was introduced in 1977.

## President Abdul Hamid calls for pro-people, sustainable development to attain goal of independence



President Md Abdul Hamid has laid emphasis on ensuring people-oriented and sustainable development, good governance, social justice, transparency and accountability in the country to achieve the desired goal of Independence.

"In order to achieve the desired goal of Independence, we must ensure people-oriented and sustainable development, good governance, social justice, transparency and accountability," he said in a message on the occasion of Great Independence and National Day.

President Abdul Hamid said 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," he said.

He extended his heartfelt greetings and warm felicitations to the 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 suddenly attacked the unarmed Bangalees," he said.

The President said in the early hours of March 26, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman officially declared the Independence of Bangladesh. b" We achieved an independent and sovereign Bangladesh through a nine-month long Liberation War under the able leadership of Bangabandhu," he said.

President Abdul Hamid said by assassinating Bangabandhu on August 15, 1975, the 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 defeated him but has made him brighter and more glorious in the minds of Bangladeshis," he said.

The Head of the State said to speed up the progress of the nation, let the nation embrace the spirit of the liberation war and the ideals of the Father of the Nation and move forward on the path of building 'Golden Bangla' dreamt by Bangabandhu - this is my expectation on the great Independence Day.

## Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for nurturing Liberation War spirit in building 'Golden Bangladesh'



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has called upon all Bangladeshis to nurture the spirit and ideals of the Great Liberation War and participate in building the hunger-poverty-free, self-confident, and self-respecting 'Golden Bangladesh' of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's dream.

She made the call in a message on the occasion of the Great Independence and National Day on March 26.

She said March 26 is the great Independence and National Day and Bangladesh entered its 52nd year after the golden jubilee of independence. "On this auspicious occasion, I extend my sincere greetings and congratulations to all the Bangladeshis citizens living in the country and abroad," the Premier said.

She remembered with the most profound respect the greatest Bengali of all time, the great architect of Bangladesh, the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, under whose firm and farsighted leadership the Bengal nation got an independent country.

The debt of the blood of 3 million martyrs of the liberation war and the self-sacrifice of two hundred thousand mothers and sisters will never be repaid, she said and paid her deep respects to all the fearless freedom fighters, including the war-wounded.

At midnight on March 25, she said, Pakistani troops started killing unarmed Bengalis in the name of 'Operation Search Light'.

The Prime Minister said Pak junta arrested Sheikh Mujib at an early hour on March 26. He made the official declaration of independence before he was arrested. The Bengali 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, she said.

After a long nine-month armed struggle, independent sovereign Bangladesh was liberated on December 16 with the help of the allied forces, she said.

She said the Father of the Bengali Nation, President Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was released from Pakistan, returned to his beloved independent motherland on January 10, 1972, and devoted himself to rebuilding the war-torn country.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said Bangabandhu approved a constitution within nine months of independence and he made the country the Least Developed Country (LDC) in just three and a half years; the UN endorsed that.

She said Bangladesh gained recognition from 123 countries and membership in 27 international organizations through his diplomatic efforts, she said. "But our misfortune is that the defeated anti-independence clique of 71 continues to conspire against him," the Premier said.

She said incumbent President Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was martyred along with his family members on August 15, 1975, by the brutal bullet of the assassin. The murderous Mostaq-Zia and their successors illegally seized power and established a dictatorship in the country, she said.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the BNP tarnished the proud history of the Bengali nation by placing the perpetrators of the infernal massacre on March 25, criminals against humanity, war criminals, and killers of the Father of the Nation, in the government.

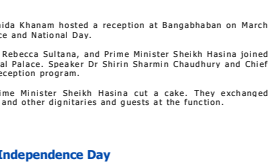
Bangladesh Awami League, after a long 21 years, in 1996, won the people's mandate and got the responsibility of running the government, she said. "Our government's 1996-2001 term was a journey towards a brighter future, breaking the shackles of backwardness, underdevelopment, and poverty," she said.

The Head of the Government said Bangladesh Awami League has been running the government since 2009 with the people's unwavering support in all the national elections. "We transformed Bangladesh into a developing country by implementing Vision 2021, created a digital Bangladesh, and brought 100 percent of people under electricity coverage," she said.

She said 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 make life easier for 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," added the Premier.

## President Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina pay homage to Liberation War martyrs on 53rd Independence Day

President M Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid rich tributes to the Liberation War martyrs by placing wreaths at the National Memorial at Savar on the outskirts of the capital, marking the 53rd Independence and National Day on March 26.



The President first placed the wreath at the altar of the memorial followed by the Prime Minister.

After laying the wreaths, the President and the Premier stood in solemn silence for some time as a mark of profound respect to the memories of the martyrs of the Great War of Liberation in 1971.

A smartly turned-out contingent drawn from Bangladesh Army, Navy and Air Force presented a state salute at that time while the bugles played the last post.

The Head of the State and the Head of the Government also signed the visitors' book kept on the memorial premises.

Flanked by her party leaders, Sheikh Hasina, also the President of Bangladesh Awami League, paid glowing tributes to the Liberation War martyrs by placing another wreath at the National Memorial on behalf of her party.

## President Abdul Hamid hosts Independence Day reception



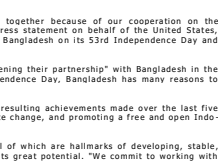
President M Abdul Hamid and his wife Rashida Khanam hosted a reception at Bangabhaban on March 26, marking the country's 53rd Independence and National Day.

President-elect Md Sahabuddin, his wife Dr Rebecca Sultana, and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina joined the reception on the lawn of the Presidential Palace. Speaker Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury and Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique attended the reception program.

On the occasion, President Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina cut a cake. They exchanged greetings with the injured freedom fighters and other dignitaries and guests at the function.

## US President Joe Biden greets Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Independence Day

US President Joe Biden has greeted Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the people on the Independence Day and National Day, saying that the South Asian nation understand deeply the value of freedom and independence as it fought courageously in 1971 to choose their own fate.



"On behalf of the United States, I wish you (Sheikh Hasina) and the people of Bangladesh a happy Independence Day. The Bangladeshis people understand deeply the value of freedom and independence as they fought courageously in 1971 to choose their own fate and to speak their own language," the US President wrote in a letter to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

President Biden said during the over 50 years of diplomatic relations, the United States and Bangladesh has achieved a lot together. He wrote the past half a century of bilateral ties yielded advancing economic development, strengthening people-to-people ties, addressing global health and climate issues, partnering on the humanitarian response to Rohingya refugees, and committing to a prosperous, secure, democratic, and independent Bangladesh.

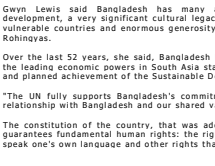
The US President highly acclaimed Bangladesh Prime Minister as Bangladesh has opened its arms and welcomed nearly one million Rohingya refugees. "You set an example for the world of empathy and generosity in practice. We share a commitment to finding long-term solutions to the Rohingya refugee crisis and holding perpetrators of atrocities accountable," said Biden.

He applauded Bangladesh's demonstrated commitment to protecting the most vulnerable as the largest contributor to peacekeeping operations. "We thank Bangladesh for co-hosting the Global Action Plan ministerial that significantly elevated the political commitment to end the global pandemic," Joe Biden added.

The US President said: "As Bangladesh approaches its next election, I am reminded of the deep value both of our nations' people place on democracy, equality, respect for human rights, and free and fair elections."

"On the day of celebration, please accept my sincere wishes to you and the people of Bangladesh. Joy Bangla," the US President concluded.

## Bangladesh quickly becoming a regional leader: Antony Blinken



US Secretary of State Antony J Blinken has said Bangladesh is 'quickly becoming a regional leader' with a rapidly growing economy, an increasingly well-educated workforce, and a dynamic youth demographic.

"Americans and Bangladeshis are stronger together because of our cooperation on the defining issues of this era," he said in a press statement on behalf of the United States, conveying his best wishes to the people of Bangladesh on its 53rd Independence Day and National Day on March 26.

Mr. Blinken said he looks forward to "deepening their partnership" with Bangladesh in the years ahead. "As you celebrate your Independence Day, Bangladesh has many reasons to be proud," he said.

Antony Blinken said the United States is proud of its partnership with Bangladesh and of the resulting achievements made over the last five decades. "Most recently, we have made real strides together battling COVID-19, tackling climate change, and promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific region," he said.

By committing to democratic norms, good governance, human rights, and media freedom - all of which are hallmarks of developing, stable, and prospering societies - the US Secretary of State said he believes Bangladesh will achieve its great potential. "We commit to working with you in support of free and fair elections, open to all," he said.

Mr. Blinken said by generously welcoming Rohingya fleeing genocide, Bangladesh has demonstrated its humanitarian commitment to sheltering vulnerable refugees. He said Bangladesh has shown leadership in protecting the environment and strengthening climate resilience by developing adaptations strategies to the climate crisis.

## UN reiterates support to Bangladesh on Independence Day

The United Nations has reiterated its support to Bangladesh's commitments to economic and sustainable development on the occasion of the country's 52nd anniversary of independence.



"On behalf of the United Nations, I warmly congratulate the people of Bangladesh on the 52nd anniversary of independence," UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh Gwyn Lewis said in a press statement on the occasion of the country's 53rd Independence and National Day.

Gwyn Lewis said Bangladesh has many accomplishments: extraordinary economic development, a very significant cultural legacy, leadership on a global stage for climate vulnerable countries and enormous generosity in welcoming and hosting nearly a million Rohingya.

Over the last 52 years, she said, Bangladesh has made impressive and remarkable achievements: evolving from a war-torn country to one of the leading economic powers in South Asia standing at the threshold of upcoming graduation from Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in 2026, and planned achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2030.

"The UN fully supports Bangladesh's commitments to economic and sustainable development and appreciates the strong and long-lasting relationship with Bangladesh and our shared value," Gwyn Lewis added.

The constitution of the country, that was adopted even before Bangladesh had formally become a member of the United Nations in 1974, guarantees fundamental human rights: the right to freedom of speech, religion, the right to freedom of movement and assembly, the right to speak one's own language and other rights that are in line with the UN charter, said the statement.

## US Congress introduces resolution commending Bangladesh, its socioeconomic progress



On the occasion of the 52nd anniversary of Independence of Bangladesh, the United States Congress introduced a resolution on March 29 recognizing and commending Bangladesh and its remarkable socioeconomic progress under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Republican Congressman Joe Wilson of South Carolina introduced the resolution at the Congress as the co-chair of the Congressional Bangladesh Caucus.

Joe Wilson Sr. (born July 31, 1947) has been serving as the U.S. representative for South Carolina's 2nd congressional district since 2001. He earlier served as the South Carolina state senator from the 23rd district from 1985 to 2001.

While placing the resolution, Congressman Wilson recalled that 51 years ago on April 4, 1972, the United States recognized Bangladesh's independence from Pakistan.

During the nine-month-long Bangladesh Liberation War, members of the Pakistan Armed Forces and pro-Pakistani militias killed hundreds of thousands of people and injured many more. The war for independence was a struggle for democracy and freedom led by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the resolution said.

It said Bangladesh has made enormous strides in the last five decades from one of the poorest nations to having one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, with their GDP per capita increasing to \$2,457 in 2021 according to the World Bank which now exceeds that of its regional neighbors.

The resolution mentioned since its independence in 1971, Bangladesh's economy has grown from \$9 billion to \$450 billion, life expectancy has risen from 47 years to 73 years, and the adult literacy rate has risen to more than 75 percent.

Bangladesh, through the leadership of current Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, has made substantial socioeconomic progress in food production, disaster resilience, poverty reduction, improved health, education, and women's empowerment, it noted.

The resolution said Bangladesh has successfully maintained a moderate Muslim society and curbed extremism in the country, and its people have sought to maintain support for democracy and rule of law rather than descending into authoritarian rule of law.

The resolution said the United States and Bangladesh have extensive cooperation on matters of regional and global security, counterterrorism, and climate change. The U.S. is the largest export market for Bangladesh and one of the largest sources of foreign direct investment, it said, adding the nation of Bangladesh has also contributed to the U.S. economy through bilateral trade and international security cooperation in return.

The resolution said the American people appreciate the generous and indispensable role that Bangladesh performs in accepting and sheltering more than 1 million Rohingya people from a genocide perpetrated by its neighbor, Burma. The United States has contributed the largest amount of humanitarian aid to address this crisis, totaling more than \$2 billion.

It said the American people welcome that Bangladesh is one of the world's largest contributors to United Nations peacekeeping efforts globally. Both countries seek to enhance their people-to-people and government-to-government relationship for shared prosperity.

The resolution mentioned that Bangladesh has expressed their gratitude to the United States for contributing more than 100 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to the people of Bangladesh.

It said the American people recognize and commend the Nation and people of Bangladesh as they celebrate 51 years of independence. The United States extends its sincere determination to remain a constructive partner of Bangladesh in achieving mutual economic, social and national security objectives now and into the future, the resolution concluded.

## Bangladesh serves as a model for rest of the world: US Assistant Secretary of State Julieta Noyes; Bangladesh considers USA an important partner: Ambassador Imran



The US Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, Ambassador Julieta Valls Noyes, has said rebuilding the country after the 1971 war, and now forging the path toward economic growth, inclusion and development, Bangladesh serves as a model in many ways for the rest of the world.

Ambassador Julieta Noyes applauded Bangladeshi leadership and generosity as a host over one million Rohingya refugees. In 2017, hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas fled genocide in Burma, and Bangladesh opened its doors and the people of the country opened their arms and hearts for the refugees, she said.

US Assistant Secretary of State Julieta Valls Noyes was addressing as the "Guest of Honour" a reception hosted by Bangladesh Embassy in Washington DC on Thursday (March 30) evening on the occasion of the 53rd Independence and National Day.

Bangladesh Ambassador to the USA Muhammad Imran gave the welcome address at the function held at the Bangabandhu Auditorium of the Embassy.

Ambassador Julieta Valls Noyes said more than half a century of friendship, Bangladesh and the United States have strengthened cooperation across broad range sectors. The two countries have built close trade and investment ties fueled by vibrant diaspora community and strong business links, she said.

She mentioned that Bangladesh and the USA are deepening defense and development partnership to build the safer and more prosperous future now and for generations to come.

Ambassador Julieta Noyes said she is proud that the US is the single largest donors to the Rohingya crisis. The USA is eager to continue and expand their collaboration with Bangladesh to address the host communities' needs and advance durable solutions for Rohingya refugees, she said.

On behalf of the USA and its government, the US Assistant Secretary of State congratulated the people of Bangladesh on the occasion of their Independence and National Day.

Bangladesh Ambassador Muhammad Imran, in his speech, paid deep homage to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and three million martyrs of the Great War of Liberation.

He said Bangladesh considers the USA an important and valuable partner in its journey towards emerging as a peaceful and prosperous nation and looks forward to working closely with the United States for stronger economic ties.

Ambassador Imran said Bangladesh attaches high importance to its long-standing partnership with the United States. He said Bangladesh was encouraged by the words of encouragement and appreciations in the messages of President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken on its Independence and National Day.

Regarding the Rohingya issue, the Ambassador extended Bangladesh's sincere thanks to the United States for its steadfast support and commitment to a durable solution of the Rohingya crisis.

Mr. J Chapman Petersen, State Senator from Virginia, Dr. Ahmad Kaikaus, Alternate Executive Director in World Bank, Ms Afreen Akhter, US Deputy Assistant Secretary, the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, the US Department of State, President of US Chapter Awami League Dr. Siddiqur Rahman, ambassadors and diplomats of differing countries, senior officials of the US government and members of the Bangladeshi diaspora were present on the occasion.

Later, Bangladesh Ambassador Muhammad Imran and Guest of Honour Ambassador Julieta Noyes and other guests cut a cake marking the Independence and National Day. Counsellor (Political-III) of Bangladesh Embassy Ms Shamima Yeasmin Smrite conducted the function.

## Bangladesh Embassy in Washington DC celebrates 53rd Independence and National Day



The Bangladesh Embassy in Washington DC on March 26 celebrated the 53rd Independence and National Day on March 26 with a fresh vow to materialize the dreams of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the martyrs of the great Liberation War.

To celebrate the day, the Embassy arranged elaborate programs that included hoisting of the National Flag, placing a floral wreath at the bust of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, screening of a documentary and discussion session.

The day's programs began in the morning with ceremonially hoisting of the National Flag by Bangladesh Ambassador to the United States Muhammad Imran on the Chancery premises. Officials and employees of the Mission were present on the occasion.

Later, the Ambassador placed a floral wreath at the bust of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the presence of the officials of the Embassy.

The messages issued on the occasion by President Md. Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister Dr A. K. Abdul Momen, and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam were read out.

Deputy Chief of Mission Ferdousi Shahriar, Minister (Consular) Mohammad Habibur Rahman, Counsellor (Public Diplomacy) Arifa Rahman Ruma and Counsellor and Head of Chancery Mohammad Moniruzzaman read out the messages.

Later, a discussion session highlighting the significance of the Independence and National Day was held at the Bangabandhu Auditorium of the Embassy.

Taking part in the discussion session, Ambassador Imran termed the great Independence and National Day as the most glorious and memorable day of Bangladesh and extended his heartfelt greetings to all Bangalees across the USA on the occasion.

He also paid deep homage to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and three million martyrs who sacrificed their life for the cause of independence.

Ambassador Imran said in the wake of the Pakistani army's barbaric attack on the unarmed Bangalees in Dhaka on the night of 25th March in 1971, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman formally declared the independence of Bangladesh at the first hour of 26th March.

The nation, he said, soon launched the War of Liberation at the call of the Father of the Nation, and under his fearless leadership, Bangladesh achieved long-cherished independence on December 16 in 1971 after the nine-month bloody war against Pakistan.

The Ambassador said Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman fought throughout his life for transforming Bangladesh into a developed and prosperous 'Sonar Banla' (Golden Bengal).

But Bangabandhu could not materialize his cherished dream as he was brutally assassinated by the anti-liberation elements on the black night of 15th August in 1975, Ambassador Imran continued.

He called upon all to work unitedly to materialize the dreams of Bangabandhu and martyrs of the War of Liberation by turning Bangladesh into a hunger-and-poverty-free developed and prosperous country.

Ambassador Imran also requested the expatriate Bangladeshis to project the country's tremendous achievements and progress abroad that took place in the last 14 years under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Defense Attaché Brigadier General Md. Shahedul Islam also took part in the discussion and highlighted the significance of the Independence and National Day. He also discussed in detail the important contribution of the members of the Armed Forces to the War of Liberation in 1971.

After the discussion, a special prayer was offered seeking eternal peace of the departed souls of the Father of the Nation and the martyrs of the Liberation War. First Secretary Md Aatur Rahman conducted the programs.