

**Bangladesh Liberation War Honour**  
**Conferring on**  
**HE Shri Pranab Mukherjee, President, Republic of India**

Speech by  
**HE Sheikh Hasina**  
Prime Minister

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Bangabhaban, Monday, 20 Falgun 1419, 04 March 2013

---

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Your Excellency Mr. Zillur Rahman, President of Bangladesh,  
Your Excellency Shri Pranab Mukherjee, President of India,  
Madam Shuvra Mukherjee,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Assalamu Alaikum and a very good evening to you all.

It is with great pleasure that we welcome His Excellency Shri Pranab Mukherjee, the Hon'ble President of the Republic of India, to receive the "Bangladesh Liberation War Honour" in the Bengali month of Falgun. It is a month of scarlet blossoms of Shimul, Palash and Khrishnachura that are in full bloom reminding us in solemnity of the sacred blood of the martyrs of our language movement and our Liberation War.

The auspicious occasion inspires me to pay deep homage to the Greatest Bangalee of all time, the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. It also inspires me to pay my profound respect to all those valiant martyrs who had sacrificed their precious lives for the liberation of our beloved motherland. I also recall with deep gratitude the former Prime Minister of India Shrimati Indira Gandhi for her seminal contribution to the independence of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

In the liberation war of 1971 against the Pakistani occupation forces, it may be recalled that over ten million uprooted Bangalees took refuge in India. The Indian government and its people embraced them with open arms and gave all possible humanitarian aid in terms of food, clothes, medicines and shelter as well as political, diplomatic, military and moral support. They also launched undeterred effort to secure the release of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from the captivity in Pakistani jail. The Indian endeavours indeed accelerated the independence of Bangladesh. Thus, we recall with deep and humble gratitude the sacrifice and cooperation of the Indian people and the government.

In those difficult and trying times of 1971, a personality who boldly rose and contributed enormously to fulfill our aspirations and eventual independence was President Shri Pranab Mukherjee of India. From the very outset of our war of liberation that began with the clarion call of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Shri Pranab Mukherjee had taken a firm and resolute stand for our cause against strong opposition from certain quarters. He was also instrumental in mobilising strong international opinion in support of our ardent desire for self-determination and independence.

Therefore, today, we are proud to honour our true friend in distress and need, a friend whose contribution helped in the independence of our country, Bangladesh, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, with the "Bangladesh Liberation War Honour." It is indeed with all sincerity that I, on behalf of the people of Bangladesh, and on my behalf, express to him our deep gratitude.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All the nation states of the South Asian sub-continent are bound together by a common destiny and future. Our progress and prosperity depends on how strongly we hold our hands and how generously we open our hearts in establishing peace, and friendship. To achieve these goals, I

believe in sincere commitment in our collaboration to achieve total connectivity, growing trade, eliminating terrorism and militancy, ending women, children and arms trafficking, and importantly, encouraging free interaction of our peoples.

I also firmly believe that the present visit of President Shri Pranab Mukherjee will further strengthen our two countries' friendship and move us forward in the direction of those aspired goals. I, therefore, also thank him and Madam Shuvra Mukherjee for their important visit to Bangladesh.

Let me conclude by wishing His Excellency President Shri Pranab Mukherjee and Madam Shuvra Mukherjee, good health, long life and happiness, and the warm neighbourly people of the Republic of India, peace, progress and prosperity.

I would also like to thank our most revered and respected Hon'ble President, His Excellency Mr. Md. Zillur Rahman and all the distinguished guests present here this evening for their kind presence on this momentous occasion.

Khoda Hafez.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu

May Bangladesh Live Forever

Long Live Bangladesh-India Friendship.