**An Article marking the month of mourning—August**

**‘…I’ll Come Back Again’**

Ajoy Dasgupta

The poorly paid employees of Dhaka University started demonstration at the beginning of 1949 demanding the increase of some benefits including salary. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, admitted to the Department Of Law of Dhaka University after receiving B A degree From Kolkata, already formed the East Pakistan Muslim League by that time. In addition to Chatra League, Chatra Federation influenced by the Communist Party lent support to this movement. A strike called by the students in support of the employees was going on. On March 26, 1949, the enraged authorities of Dhaka University took punitive actions against 27 students including Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Some students were straight ousted and some were fined. A number of students including Sheikh Mujibur Rahman were penalized with a fine of Taka 15 each. They had been asked they might be pardoned if they would sign an undertaking of good manners by 17 April. Most of the student leaders signed the bond complying with the directives of the authorities. But Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, a second year student of Law Department of the university disagreed to sign the undertaking or bond. He was arrested on April 19 and sent to the Dhaka Central Jail. With this, he was imprisoned for the second time since the establishment of Pakistan. Earlier, he had to go to jail for the first time one year back, on March 11 during picketing in a hartal which was called demanding the declaration of Bangla as the state language.

Kazi Ahmed Kamal, the writer of the book *‘Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman O Bangladesher Janmo’ (*Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Birth of Bangladesh) stayed with Bangabandhu in the Bekar Hostel during the student life in Kolkata. He wrote, ‘ on being frustrated at the behaviour of the university administration, he (Bangabandhu) left the university, saying at the departure, I ’ll come back again, even might not be possible as a student.’

Fazlul Quader Choudhury of Chattogram, who came in contact with and became close to Bangabandhu during the students’ movement in Kolkata, approached him in the Central Jail. As stated in the first volume of ‘Secret Documents of Intelligence Branch on Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’, Fazlul Quader Choudhury met Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, a student of the Department of Law of Dhaka University and also a Muslim Chatra League leader at the Dhaka Central Jail on the 9th of May (1949). During the meet, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman turned down a proposal given to him to compromise with the university authorities. He even did not agree to seek apology. He argued, the students had not committed such an offence for which they should beg pardon. Despite that, as Fazlul Quader Choudhury continued to insist on negotiation, Sheikh Mujib raised four conditions which were- withdrawal of punishments imposed on all the students, release of all the students arrested in the incident, not to harass anybody further and lifting embargo on publishing news in newspapers.

His formal student life came to an end as he did not compromise with the injustice. But the lesson of life he learnt from the immense love and responsibility for the motherland and its people made him pledge-bound. As he was adamant to fulfill his pledge, the mission of coming back was materialized.

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He was freed from jail on June 26. The East Pakistan Awami Muslim League was launched just three days ahead of his release. Issues like democracy, establishing Bangla as the state language, protecting economic interests of ‘Purbo Bangla’ (East Bengal), autonomy were emphasized. An idea of non-communal organization also came up. Bangabandhu elected Joint General Secretary though he was in jail under the security law. Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, President of the party, leading a huge procession with band troupe came to the jail gate at Nazimuddin Road on the day he was released from jail. The young leader freed from jail, escorted by procession, was brought to Dhaka University from where he was expelled unlawfully. The political analysts right at that time started to predict that Awami League had cordially received its Grand Leader.

No student-identity, no formal academic life. But Dhaka University remained in the centre of his activities. He was again arrested on the last day of 1949. He was even in jail during the stringing of that very immortal ballad with the blood-shed of Rafiq-Salam-Barkat on the 21st February of 1952. He contributed to build up this great movement. Intelligence reports during that time repeatedly stated-- Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, kept in Dhaka Medical College Hospital for treatment, ‘misusing’ this opportunity held secret meetings one after another with the leaders of Political parties and students’ organizations. He decided to start hunger strike keeping a liaison with the hartal programme of the 21st February. The success of the Language Movement led to his release. He came out from jail on February 27. Just after two months, on April 26, the responsibility of Acting General Secretary of the steadily popularity gaining party, Awami Muslim League was bestowed on him. We can learn from the intelligence reports, the procession brought out from Dhaka University marking the observance of the first 21st February in 1953 was led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Ataur Rahman Khan.

This is how he came back to Dhaka University.

He was the planner of the strong students’ movements waged against the martial law rule of Field Marshal Ayub Khan at the beginning of sixties. He discussed strategy of movements with the leaders of Communist Party and NAP. Maintaining regular communication with the leaders of the students’ organizations, he used to advise them. As the movement was going on, he was arrested on February 7, 1962 and detained for four months. Like the agitation of ’62, the focal point of the students’ upsurge of 1964 demanding solution to the problems prevailing in education was the University of Dhaka. He was not coming to Amtola for delivering speech; but it was known to the masses who was behind. More clear it was to the Pakistani rulers who were always active to hit on the interests of the Bengali. And on that very ground, he was sent to jail.

To protect interests of the Bengali, he raised the historic 6-point programme at the beginning of February in 1966. The infamous Agartola Conspiracy Case was filed to resist this movement. The University of Dhaka went on upsurge again. A tough students’ movement led by Dhaka University Central Students’ Union (DUCSU) with 11-point demands began. The students and the masses of the whole country became violent demanding the release of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman . Piles of conspiracies were wiped out. After release on February 22, 1969, as proposed by DUCSU Vice President Tofail Ahmed, he was greeted with the title ‘Bangabandhu’ at a reception at the Race Course Maidan on the following day.

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He came back to this Dhaka University with a unique stature on March 2, 1971. The movement for establishing Bangladesh was then on peak. There was a huge gathering of students and common people convened by DUCSU and Chatra League at the Botthala, adjacent to the Arts Building. A red-green-golden coloured flag, recognized as the national flag by the elected people’s representatives of Bangladesh was hoisted there. The recognition of ‘ *amar sonar bangla, ami tomay bhalobhashi………..(*My golden Bengla, I love you………) as national anthem was also formally proposed by various students’ organizations including DUCSU.

After the Independence of Bangladesh, he was accorded the life membership of DUCSU at a rally on the university play ground on May 7,1972. On that day, a copy of the unfair order expelling him from the university in 1949 was handed over to him. This expulsion order, however, was formally withdrawn after a long time on August 14, 2010. And thus a blatant fault was averted.

Bangabanhu had to come to Dhaka University once again on July 20, 1972 to amend a major deviation of students’ movement. Some students cordoned the Vice Chancellor’s Office with an illogical demand of having academic certificates without sitting for examinations. Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, keeping cabinet meeting postponed, rushed to the Registrar Building of Dhaka University and freed the Vice-Chancellor. He rebuked those who raised such suicidal demand.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was brutally assassinated on August 15, 1975. As the President and Chancellor, he was scheduled to visit Dhaka University to attend a function on that day. The University of Dhaka did not forget its own responsibility. Voices protesting the assassination of the Father of the Nation were raised from this very institution. Slogans --- Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu and *EK Mujiber rakta theke lokkho Mujib Jonmo Nebe* (with the assassination of an entity of Mujib, hundred thousand Mujibs would come up). On November 4, 1975, beginning from Botthola, a mourning procession carrying banners inscribed *‘Kadho Bangalee Kadho’* (Cry Bengali Cry) marched to the residential building number 677 at Dhanmondi 32. In the afternoon, the senate meeting took a unanimous motion expressing condolence at the assassination of Bangabandhu and demanding trial of the killers. The three student- representatives of senate—DUCSU General Secretary Mahbubuzzaman, student leaders Ismat Qadir Ghama and Ajay Dasgupta took initiative in this regard. Hartal was observed the following day.

On August 15, 1976, on the first anniversary of Bangabandhu killing, a milad mahfil was arranged in the Dhaka University Mosque. The students, ignoring the ruthless obstacle of the martial law rule, paid homage by offering flowers at the Bangabandhu’s residence all the day.

And thus Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman comes back again and again to his heart rendering institution Dhaka University.

(Translated by Md. Saifullah, Senior Deputy Principal Information Officer, Press Information Department)

**PID Feature**