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OUR STRUGGLE MUST GO ON

**Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Pre-election
Speech**





The following is the text of speech of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, President of the Pakistan Awami League, released jointly by Radio Pakistan and the Pakistan Television Corporation on November 28, 1970:

My dear fellow citizens, brothers and sisters,
Assalam O Alaikum:

I must begin by offering monajat for those heroic martyrs who shed their blood and laid down their lives for the cause of the people. It is their sacrifices and that of countless thousands who have defied tyranny in movement after movement leading up to last year's historic mass upsurge, that has carried the people's struggle forward. Indeed, even the fact that I am able to speak to you over the national radio and television network may be counted as one of the initial gains of the people's struggle, since uptill this time this privilege was monopolised by those in power.

OUR STRUGGLE MUST GO ON

Our struggle must go on. For the real goal lies ahead. Power has to be won by the people. The exploitation of man by man and of region by region must be brought to an end. The powerful coteries, which have ruled Pakistan for 22 years, will do everything possible to prevent transfer of power to the people. It is they who are actively conspiring to frustrate the holding of the general elections, and even after elections, they will continue to obstruct every effort to end ex-

ploitation. They have money; they have influence; they have the capacity to use force against the people. History, however, testifies that a determined people can successfully resist and overcome such forces of oppression.

DIE FOR FREEDOM

The most solemn pledge that Awami League can make to the people of Pakistan is that it shall stand by their side and indeed lead them in resisting the forces of oppression and exploitation. No people have secured freedom and justice unless they have been geared to die for it. We, therefore, serve notice upon the forces of reaction in our society that we, along with the people of Pakistan, will confront them and if democratic processes are obstructed, we shall resist them by every means possible.

BORN IN ADVERSITY

Awami League was born in adversity and has grown in adversity. Under our great leader, the late Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, we came into existence to defy the attempt of the ruling party to form a one party State. We thus began the struggle to establish democracy in Pakistan. The struggle continues till this day. Our party has faced onslaught after onslaught from the ruling group. Our leadership and our workers have spent the better part of their lives in jails. We have faced and overcome every form of repression. It is this that gives us the courage and confidence today to commit ourselves to the task of confronting the anti-democratic forces.

To overcome the crisis that engulfs the nation, we must resolve those issues which are its cause. The first is the deprivation of political freedom. The second is the sense of economic injustice felt by the overwhelming multitudes of our people. The third is the deep sense of injustice created by widening economic disparity between the regions. It is this that underlines the anguish and the anger of the Bengali people. The same sentiment is also reflected among the down-trodden people of the neglected areas of West Pakistan.

MANIFESTO

Our manifesto sets out a comprehensive strategy for resolving these fundamental issues. A real living democracy must be established, in which all the fundamental freedoms shall be constitutionally guaranteed. Our manifesto outlines a framework for the healthy growth of political parties, trade unions and local self-government. We do pledge to restore complete freedom of the press and academic freedom and to eradicate corruption which has grown like cancer in our society.

The present economic system, which has established an intolerable structure of injustice, must be radically altered.

TWO DOZEN FAMILIES

Today, barely two dozen families have acquired control over 60 per cent of the nation's industrial assets; 80 per cent of its banking assets and 75 per cent of its insurance assets; 82 per cent of the total bank advances are concentrated in only 3 per cent of the total accounts.

The tax structure in existence is one of the most regressive in the world. Only 2 per cent of the GNP is being realised as direct taxes as against 6 per cent in other developing countries, while oppressive indirect taxes are imposed on such essential commodities as salt.

Protected markets, tax holidays, huge subsidies in the form of bonus vouchers, credits and grants of foreign exchange at the artificially-low official rate have created specially favourable conditions for the growth of monopolies and cartels.

Despite nominal land reforms, feudal lords have retained princely estates. They enjoy vast privileges and their prosperity increases, while the lot of the poor peasants becomes more and more desperate. In a bid for survival, there is movement of people from the villages to the cities. According to official estimates, 1/5th of the total labour force or about 90 lacs people are unemployed. This alarming figure continues to grow. The industrial workers are suffering the full impact of the sharp rise in the cost of living. The cost of living is increasing more rapidly than the increase in money wages. The impact of the unending rise in the cost of living is also acutely felt by school and college teachers, low paid officers and employees, particularly the 4th grade employees of Government.

APPALING ECONOMIC DISPARITY

To turn now to the appalling record of economic disparity, it is seen that during the last 20 years, out of the total revenue expenditure of the Government, only about Rs. 1,500 crores (that is only one fifth of the total) was spent in Bengal, as against over Rs. 5000

crores in West Pakistan. Of the total development expenditure during the same period, Rs. 3,000 crores (that is only one-third of the total) was spent in Bengal, as against over Rs. 6,000 crores in West Pakistan. Over 20 years, West Pakistan has imported goods worth more than Rs. 3,000 crores as against its own foreign exchange earnings of barely Rs. 1,300 crores. Imports into West Pakistan have been three times the value of the imports into Bengal.

It is made possible for West Pakistan to import goods worth Rs. 2,000 crores in excess of its export earnings by allocating to it Rs. 500 crores of the foreign exchange earnings of Bengal and allowing it to utilise over 80 per cent of all foreign aid.

The record in the field of government services is just as deplorable. After 21 years Bengalis account for barely 15 per cent in central government services and less than 10 per cent in the defence services.

The total economic impact of such discrimination has been that the economy of Bengal is today in a state of imminent collapse. Near famine conditions are prevailing in the majority of the villages. Some 15 lac tons of rice has had to be imported only to save the people from starvation.

INFLATION

While inflation has been mounting, those who are worst hit are the poor people of Bengal. The price of essential commodities has been 5 per cent to 1 per cent higher in Bengal than in West Pakistan. The average price of coarse rice in Bengal is Rs. 45 to 50 per maund

as against Rs. 20 to 25 per maund in West Pakistan, and that of wheat is Rs. 30 to 35 per maund in Bengal as against Rs. 15 to 20 per maund in West Pakistan. Mustard oil sells in Bengal at Rs. 5 per seer as against Rs. 2.50 per seer in West Pakistan. The gold price is Rs. 135 to 140 per tola in Karachi as against Rs. 160 to 165 per tola at Dacca. Even a Customs barrier has been imposed against carrying gold from West Pakistan to Bengal.

This injustice is the product of the management of the economy for 22 years by the Central Government. The Central Government is incapable of redressing such injustices. This is borne out by the Fourth Five-Year Plan. The Fourth Plan allocations are a confession of the failure of the Central Government, however powerful it might be, to redress past injustices.

The Awami League's Six Point programme, which is embodied in the 11-point programme, presents a rational solution to this problem of regional injustice. With a central bureaucracy in which Bengalis account for barely 15 per cent and with the nature of the power structure being what it is, to expect justice from a centralised system of economic management would be to expect the impossible. Attempts to secure larger allocations by political representatives of Bengal and other under-developed areas would only aggravate regional tensions and threaten the viability of the Federal Government. The only feasible solution is the re-ordering of the constitutional structure by giving full regional autonomy to the federating units on the basis of our Six Point formula. Such autonomy in order to be effective must include the power of managing the economy. This is why we insist upon federating units

having control over monetary and fiscal policy and foreign exchange earnings and other powers to negotiate foreign trade and aid. By giving to the federating units full control over its economic destiny, while entrusting to the Federal Government responsibility over foreign affairs and defence, and subject to certain safeguards, currency, we believe a just federal balance will be attained.

Our federal scheme envisages the abolition of all Pakistan services and its replacement by federal services in which persons shall be recruited on the basis of population for all parts of Pakistan.

We also believe that the maintenance of a militia or a para-military force by the federating units will effectively contribute towards national security. This federal scheme by removing the sources of doubt, distrust and discrimination will ensure a strong Pakistan.

This scheme will understandably be opposed by those in one region who would like to treat another region as a colony or a market. We believe, however, that this scheme will have the full support of the common people of Bengal and West Pakistan. Within this constitutional framework, we believe, it will be possible to bring about a social revolution through the democratic process and to create a socialist economic order, free from exploitation.

Rapid economic growth is an imperative necessity in order to meet the needs of our growing population. To achieve it, enormous effort and sacrifices are required of our people. Our people can be expected to respond to our call for making a big collective effort

only if we can assure them that the burden of sacrifices as well as the fruits of economic prosperity shall be equitably shared among all sections of the people and all regions of the country. To ensure this, certain radical changes must be made in the structure of our economy.

We believe that it is imperative to place key areas of the economy, including banking and insurance, under public ownership through nationalisation. Future development in these areas should take place in the public sector. In the new order, workers should share in the equity capital and management of industrial enterprises.

ELIMINATE MONOPOLIES

The private sector also, in its own sphere, must make their full contribution to the economy. Monopolies and cartels must be totally eliminated. The tax structure must be made truly progressive and drastic restrictions must be imposed on the consumption of luxuries.

Extensive support and encouragement must be extended to small-scale and cottage industries. Such support should include ensuring regular supply of raw materials, such as yarn and dyestuffs to handloom weavers at reasonable prices. Marketing and credit facilities must also be made available to them.

Small-scale industries must be developed through co-operatives and dispersed throughout the countryside, reaching into the depths of the rural areas, so that desperately needed employment opportunities are extended to our rural masses.

Jute has suffered from criminal neglect. A discriminatory exchange rate and parasitic middlemen have denied to the jute growers a fair price. Nationalisation of the jute trade, and much greater emphasis on jute research aimed at improving quality and yield per acre, will enable jute to make its rightful contribution to our economy.

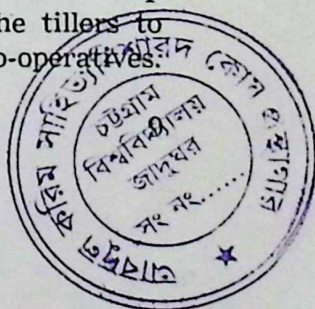
Cotton needs similar attention, and therefore, we believe that cotton trade should also be nationalised and measures adopted to improve quality and yield. Our major cash crops, tea, sugar cane and tobacco still suffer from appallingly low yields due to neglect of previous Governments.

In a resource-poor country every effort must be made to ensure rapid increase in productivity. A fair and stable price to the growers should also be ensured.

AGRICULTURE

Indeed our entire agricultural sector needs to be revolutionised. The Jagirdari, Zamindari and Sardari systems in West Pakistan must be abolished. The entire land system has to undergo a radical reorientation in the interest of the actual tillers of land. Ceilings must be imposed on land holdings. Land above such ceilings and government Khas lands must be re-distributed to landless cultivators.

Agriculture must be modernised. The obstacle presented by the fragmentation and sub-division of land-holdings must be overcome. An immediate step in the right direction would be to induce the tillers to group their holdings under multipurpose co-operatives.



Government could provide effective inducement for this purpose by funnelling through such co-operatives vital inputs such as irrigation, embankment, drainage, deep tubewells, power pumps, fertilisers, improved seeds, agricultural implements and machinery, credit and instruction in modern agricultural techniques.

As a measure of immediate relief to our peasants, who are groaning under the burden of land revenue, we would abolish land revenue in respect of holdings upto 25 bighas and write-off all arrears in respect of such holdings. Ultimately, we aim to abolish the present system of land revenue.

Three vital areas which form part of the infrastructure of the economy must be accorded the highest priority. The first is flood control. A comprehensive flood control programme must be implemented on an emergency basis. Measures to prevent water-logging and salinity in West Pakistan must also be implemented at an accelerated pace.

ELECTRIFICATION

The next vital area is that of power. There must be massive expansion in power generation and distribution.

An extensive rural electrification programme must be launched to take electricity to the villages, so as to make it possible for small-scale industries to be established. We aim to attain power generation capacity of 2500 megawatts in Bengal within 5 years. Every source of power must be harnessed to maximise power generation capacity. The Rooppur Nuclear Power Project

and Jamalganj Coal Project must be immediately implemented. Natural gas must also be fully utilised.

The third vital area is that of transport and communications. The highest priority is accorded by us to the construction of a bridge over the river Jamuna to enable direct communications to and from North Bengal. Bridges should also be built over different points on the river Indus in Sind and the Punjab and over Buriganga, Sitalakhya and Karanaphuli.

The development of ports, both seaports and inland river ports, as also roads and railways must be accorded the highest priority.

EDUCATION

No investment is as vital for the healthy development of our society than investment in education. It is an alarming fact that the number of primary schools in Bengal has declined since 1947. Only 18 per cent of our population has attained literacy and the number of illiterates is increasing by over one million person per year. Primary education is denied to more than half of the nation's children. Only 18 per cent of our boys and 6 per cent of our girls complete the first five years of elementary school. We believe that at least 4 per cent of the Gross National Product should be committed to education. The salary of college and school teachers, and in particular school teachers, must be substantially increased. Illiteracy must be eradicated by adoption of extraordinary methods.

A crash programme must be launched to extend free compulsory primary education to all children within

5 years. Secondary education should be made readily accessible to all sections of our people. New universities, including medical and technical universities, must be rapidly established. Poverty should not be allowed to deprive meritorious boys and girls of the opportunity to pursue higher education. Immediate steps should be taken to ensure that Bengali and Urdu should replace English in all walks of life, while every effort should be made to encourage the development of regional languages.

Turning to the problem of the cities, we find low income groups living in sub-human conditions. The so-called improvement trusts have been busy developing luxurious residential areas for the wealthy, while the poor have been left to fend for themselves. Future urban development must concentrate on providing for the needs of the poor majority of city dwellers. Low cost urban housing must be accorded the highest priority.

HEALTH

In the field of health, even a minimum measure of medical relief is denied to over 90 per cent of our population. Immediate measures should be undertaken to establish a rural medical centre at every union, and a hospital at every thana headquarters. National service in the rural areas should be introduced for medical graduates, and para-medical personnel must be trained in large numbers to staff the rural health centres.

Industrial workers play as vital a role in the economy as in the people's struggle. Their basic rights to form trade unions to bargain collectively and to strike must be guaranteed. A living wage and the basic

amenities such as housing, education and medical care for themselves and their children must be assured. All labour laws which restrict the basic rights of workers must be repealed. By ensuring that workers are given a stake in the industry, they can be expected to make their full contribution towards increasing industrial productivity. Productivity in all sections of the economy must be increased to the maximum extent possible if we are to meet the needs of our society.

The wage structure in all sectors of the economy must be altered in keeping with the dictates of justice. Price stabilisation measures must be adopted to protect the real wages of the workers and low paid employees against spiralling inflation.

EQUALITY

We firmly believe in the equality of all citizens. The members of the minority community should know that we have always stood against every form of communalism. They shall enjoy equal rights with all other citizens and shall enjoy equal protection of the laws. Every effort must be made to develop our tribal areas so that these areas can be fully integrated with other areas and the tribal people are able to enjoy equal opportunities with other citizens in all walks of life. Our brothers in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, in the off shore islands and the coastal areas, require special assistance to develop their latent resources, in order to enable them to play their rightful part in our national life.

... Mohajirs should be integrated into the national life so that they may become assimilated with the local people and thus enjoy equal rights and opportunities with them in all walks of life.

I must repudiate once and for all the false propaganda that Islam is endangered by the 6-Point formula of our economic programme. Nothing which promotes justice between region and region and man and man can be opposed to Islam. We have affirmed our commitment to the constitutional principle that no law should be enacted or imposed in Pakistan which is repugnant to the injunctions of Islam as contained in the Holy Quran and Sunnah.

FOREIGN POLICY

To turn to the important area of foreign policy, we believe that it is imperative for us to avoid involvement in global power conflicts. We must, therefore, pursue a truly independent non-aligned foreign policy. We are committed to the immediate withdrawal from SEATO, CENTO and all other military pacts, and to avoid any such involvements in the future. We support the struggle of the oppressed people of the world against imperialism, colonialism and apartheid. In keeping with the principle 'friendship for all and malice towards none', we believe in peaceful co-existence with all States and in particular with our neighbours.

We believe that normalisation of our relations with our neighbours would be to the best advantage of our peoples. We, therefore, attach the highest importance to the settlement of our outstanding disputes. We have emphasized the importance of a just settlement of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with United Nations' resolutions. The threat of grave and permanent damage to the economy of Bengal posed by the completion of Farakka Barrage must be immediately met. Every effort

must be made for a just solution of this problem without further delay.

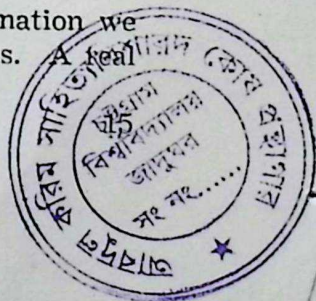
But these programmes and policies can only be implemented if power is won by the people. Elections will serve as a referendum on basic national issues, particularly that of autonomy on the basis of the Six-Point formula.

The elected representatives of the people alone can give to this country a constitution which will be a durable basis for living together. It is for this reason that we have repeatedly pointed out that restrictions sought to be imposed on the constitution-making powers of the elected representatives of the people are not legitimate. We would once again urge upon the President to repeal the restrictive provisions of the Legal Framework Order. It would also help to create conditions congenial for restoration of democracy if all pending cases and warrants against political workers, students and labourers arising out of political activities and out of last year's mass upsurge, are withdrawn, and all sentences imposed in such cases are commuted. All political prisoners detained without trial should also be released.

WE SHALL FACE THE CHALLENGE

It is imperative for the security of the nation that our armed forces should not have to carry the burden of civil administration or to have to involve itself in politics. These highly trained professionals should be left free to devote themselves exclusively to the vital task of defending the nation's frontiers.

I would like to end by saying that as a nation we must prove equal to the challenge that faces us.



living democracy must be established. The different people who make up Pakistan can only live together within a democratic framework.

Any attempt to destroy democracy would in the process destroy Pakistan. Justice between region and region must be ensured by granting full regional autonomy to the federating units on the basis of our Six-Point formula. Within such a federal democratic framework, radical economic programmes must be implemented to bring about a social revolution.

The Awami League has resolved to face this great challenge. We believe that with the support and confidence of the people, which our party enjoys, we shall, Inshaallah, be able successfully to meet the challenge.

Pakistan Zindabad.



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