

SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN

THE CIVILIZED world will be shocked at the killing of the "Bangabandhu" Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the father of independent Bangladesh, in the early hours of August 15, when we were getting ready to celebrate our independence Day. After graduating from the Islamia College, Calcutta, Mujib was initiated into Muslim League politics by H. S. Suhrawardy. Though associated for a short spell with Nehaji in 1941 for the removal of the insulting monument to the "Black Hole of Calcutta", Mujib reverted to League politics and worked keenly for a separate Pakistan. Disillusionment, however, came to him when West Pakistan imposed Urdu on the Bengali-speaking East Pakistanis and began to dominate the life and economy of the latter. He was arrested for leading a group of Dacca University students against the imposition of Urdu and thus began his life in jail which was to last for a total period of ten years. After release, Mujib became a symbol of protest against the domination of West Pakistan and an emblem of equal rights for East Pakistan with West Pakistan. He was in the forefront of the struggle for equality and by sheer hard work in educating the people, his party, the Awami League, won in 1970, 169 seats out of 313 seats in the Pakistan National Assembly, including nearly 100 per cent of the seats in East Pakistan. Instead of calling on Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to form the national Government or conceding greater autonomy to East Pakistan, the dictator, Yahya Khan, ordered the detention of the leader, who had an absolute majority in the National Assembly and also a military crackdown on his followers, as "separatists". Mujib was tried and sentenced to death in secret by a military court. Like the British who built a halo round our national leaders through repression let loose in the "Quit India" movement, President Yahya Khan made Mujib the hero and the idol of Bangladesh by his harsh and repressive military action. The freedom movement



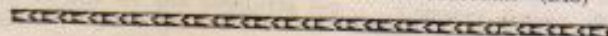
was born in East Pakistan under the name of Mukti Bahini.

Meanwhile, the atrocities committed by the Pakistani army drove thousands and thousands of refugees from East Pakistan to the Indian borders and the Government of India had to undertake the heavy burden of feeding and looking after a million refugees.

Open war broke out between the Mukti Bahini, the freedom forces, and the Indian forces, on the one side and the ruthless Pakistani army, on the other, causing untold misery to the people of East Pakistan. The war ended on 17th December 1971 and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, like many other condemned prisoners in history, marched on triumph into a free and independent Bangladesh, a dream dear to his heart. He became the first Prime Minister, promised parliamentary democracy, fundamental rights to citizens and an independent judiciary. After a short period, however, the Sheikh lost those ideals and on 25th January 1975 changed the Constitution, introduced one-party system, appointed Ministers of his own personal choice, curbed the authority of the Supreme Court



On show for the first time—at Inter Navex 75, the International Audio-Visual Aids Exhibition at Olympia in London—was this new British 201 audio-active language laboratory, a permanent installation for classroom use with up to 40 student positions. From the console of the 201, the teacher (right) can transfer simultaneously three separate programmes to groups of students and will be able to address selected groups. Provision is made for secret monitoring of, and communication with individual students whose responses may be recorded immediately the monitor button is depressed. The system of 40 positions is sub-divided into five groups of eight which are inter-connected to allow the complete range of inter-communication functions.—(BIS)



to enforce fundamental rights of citizens and in September 1975 dissolved the daily newspapers and magazines except those which were the mouthpiece of the Government. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman asserted that these changes were necessary to prevent "anarchy and lack of discipline" and also to prevent the people being reduced to a nation of beggars. The Sheikh also felt that parliamentary democracy of the Westminster type tended to delay economic development and the process of reconstruction.

History has proved, time and again, that democracy provides for a smooth change of leadership and policies which are brought about only by violence in other political systems. It is too early to say whether the new Bangla Government represents a change only of leadership or of policies, but it is unfortunate that a change, if it was necessary at all, has had to be effected by violence and killing.

PRICE TRENDS

THE INDEX of wholesale prices (base 1961-62:100) touched the peak figure of 330.4 in September, 1974. Since then it has been moving down already reaching 315.8 in January 1975; 313.5 in February; 308.4 in March and 308.6 in April. But this welcome and encouraging trend was reversed when on 31st May, 1975, the wholesale index rose again to 312* and came down only marginally on 21st June 1975 to 311.7.† As a result, the wholesale index at the end of June 1975 reverted almost to January 1975 level after dipping for three suc-

cessive months. This partially explains why the community does not feel that there is a downward trend in prices.

There is also another reason why the downward trend is not felt by the people. The prices are, by and large, higher than

satisfaction from mere statistical trends. The All-India average consumer price index for industrial workers (base: 1960:100) touched the peak figure of 335 in October 1974 and has been falling since then. The Consumer Price Index stood at 326 in January 1975, 325 in February and

TABLE A
(Index number of wholesale prices)
(1961-62—100)

January 1975	315.8	—	January 1974	271.2
February	313.5	—	February	275.0
March	308.4	—	March	283.6
April	308.6	—	April	289.9
May 31, 1975	312.0	—	May	298.9
June 21, 1975	311.7	—	June	306.0

TABLE B
(Consumer price index numbers for industrial workers)
(1960:—100)

All-India				
January 1975	326	—	January 1974	264
February	325	—	February	267
March	321	—	March	275
April	323	—	April	283
May	327	—	May	294
June	—	—	June	301
July	—	—	July	311

those prevailing at about the same time last year, and by comparison, it does not reveal that the prices have become lower. For instance, Table A above gives the index numbers of wholesale prices from January to June, 1975 with the corresponding figures for January to June, 1974. It will be noticed that the prices in 1975 have continued to be higher than the corresponding figures for the previous year. Unless reflected in the cost of living, one does not derive

321 in March. However, the index rose again to 323 in April and reached 327 in May, † thus going higher than even the January 1975 figures. In this case also, the corresponding figures for 1974 are much lower, as set out in Table B above.

In view of the reverse trend in May 1975 both in the wholesale and the consumer price indices, it is difficult to say that the price behaviour has been uniformly taking a downward trend. All that can be said now at this stage is that while the indices of wholesale prices and consumer prices have been rising month by month in 1974, they have shown a tendency to come down in 1975 and that if the trend continues, we may end the year (1975) with comparatively lower prices than those obtaining in December 1974.

HELSINKI SUMMIT . . .

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not adopted. Detente remains on probation and all that the Declaration does is to adopt certain "principles, which are all of primary significance, guiding their mutual relations."

The Declaration is an effort at regulating the cold war amidst the detente. The Congress of Vienna held in 1815 arrived at an accord on the legitimacy of the European

State system. The Helsinki Conference will do no more than record their acquiescence in it while pledging to ease its rigours. The crucial problems which can pose a threat to the order will remain. As President Ford said on August 1, the last day of the Conference: "History will judge this conference not by what we say today but what we do tomorrow—not by the promises we make but by the promises we keep."

* Financial Express, dated 6-7-1975.

† Financial Express, dated 24-7-1975.

‡ Source: Labour Bureau of India, Simla.