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Truth about deaths in Bangladesh war

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My attention has been drawn to a recent letter from a former

deputy head of the BBC's Bengali Service Serajur Rahman ([Letters](#), 24 May) relating to casualties in the 1971 Bangladesh war of liberation and the time spent in London by Bangladesh's founding father, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Bangabandhu flew to London on 8 January 1972 after being released from a Pakistani prison. He was accompanied on the plane by Dr Kamal Hossain, his confidante, who briefed him on the situation in the then East Pakistan. Records at the Indian High Commission in London show that no one from there, neither the then high commissioner Apa Bhai Panth nor any other official, went to Heathrow to receive Bangabandhu. He was received by Foreign Office officials and Bangladeshi diplomats. A further debriefing took place at the airport and on the way to Claridge's Hotel.

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Bangabandhu was fully aware that Bangladesh had been liberated in December and that the provisional government formed during the war with him as the president was in control. He was also aware of the devastation wrought – he was briefed on the provisional government's estimate that millions of people had died in the war.

Dozens of journalists attended the press conference at Claridge's on 8 January. When one asked about the problems facing Bangladesh, Bangabandhu replied: "Millions of people died ... thousands of villages have been burnt, my economy has been destroyed..." The video is [available on](#)

YouTube, proving that Bangabandhu was clear in his mind that millions had died, even before he returned to Bangladesh.

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