

BANGLADESH  
UPDATE



1,355  
New cases in 24hrs



4,90,533  
Total cases



7,052  
Deaths



4,20,896  
Recoveries

GLOBAL  
UPDATE



1,615,189  
Deaths



72,313,792  
Total cases

## It begins, at last

FROM PAGE 1  
yet to prepare the list during its three consecutive terms.

However, on November 19, the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs finally formed an 11-member committee comprising freedom fighters, liberation war researchers, and government officials to make and scrutinise the list of names.

In its first meeting yesterday, the committee decided it would primarily include 1,222 names on the list. It will also set a definition of martyred intellectuals, Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque said after the meeting.

Mozammel added they are expecting to complete the list by next year, when Bangladesh will celebrate 50 years of Independence.

Family members of the martyred intellectuals, meanwhile, voiced disappointment over the lapses in preparing the list after so many years.

"Many things related to the war are not properly and officially documented. The list of martyred intellectuals is no exception," said Asif Munier, son of martyred intellectual Prof Munier Chowdhury.

"Having no official documentation is intentional so that vested groups can create confusion. There were moves so that documentation does not take place during different regimes," he told The Daily Star.

Starting on the night of March 25, 1971, intellectuals were targeted by an army crackdown in Dhaka. Mostly university, college and school teachers, filmmakers, physicians, poets, writers, journalists and other eminent personalities, they had been deemed threats by the Pakistan army and were abducted, tortured, and killed.

Planned killings of the intellectuals reached its peak on December 14, two days before Victory Day.

LONG DELAY, EMPTY PLEDGES  
On February 6, 2014, the liberation war affairs minister had told parliament that a list of martyred intellectuals would be published by June that year.

The ministry then sent letters to the deputy commissioners of all 64 districts seeking names of martyred intellectuals, but apparently the DCs did not send names because of a lack of clarity over the definition.

Mozammel, on December 14, 2016, also said the ministry would publish a book containing the names of martyred intellectuals, but this book, too, is yet to be published.

Noted historian and researcher Prof Muntassir Mamoon said, "There is a dearth of trained people to deal with such issues in our country. Bureaucrats dominate the system and they have hardly any interest in listing martyred intellectuals and other related work."

Prof Muntassir, a former history professor at Dhaka University, is a member of the new committee.

He added, "A list is much needed so the nation can pay their respects and new generations come to know about them. It is a source of history. We are having lists of freedom fighters and razakars, then why not such a list of martyred intellectuals?"

Shahriar Kabir, president of

Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee, said that in his view, the government's top priority has been the identification of the real freedom fighters.

"Many things happened centring around the list of freedom fighters and many Jamaat men made it to the list during BNP-Jamaat rule," he said.

"The current government is putting most of its efforts and time to correct the list," added Shahriar, also a member of the new committee.

### NEW PROCESS

According to Mozammel, the committee will finalise a definition of martyred intellectuals in its next meeting, likely to be held in January. He said the committee yesterday approved 1,222 names for the primary list.

"A total of 1,070 names will be taken from names available with the ministry and 152 from postal stamps issued in the name of martyred intellectuals at various times," he added.

Shahriar Kabir said that names of martyred intellectuals were available in "Shaheed Buddhijibi Koshgrantha", a biographical encyclopaedia of martyred intellectuals by the Bangla Academy; "Bangladesh," a documentary publication of the government in 1972; "Banglapedia", and postal stamps.

The committee will consider martyred intellectuals killed between March 25, 1971 and January 31, 1972, for the list.

On January 31, 1972, the Mirpur area of Dhaka was finally freed from pro-Pakistan Biharis, he said.

Freedom fighter Nasiruddin Yousuff, a member of the committee, said they will send letters to all DCs and UNOs asking for names of martyred intellectuals in their respective areas. "We seek names but will not solely depend on bureaucrats," he said.

"We will not make a new definition of martyred intellectuals rather we will revise the existing definition available in different research books including Shaheed Buddhijibi Koshgrantha of Bangla Academy."

"Shaheed Buddhijibi Koshgrantha listed 328 martyred intellectuals," said the list was not complete," said another committee member.

The government documentary "Bangladesh" said 1,109 intellectuals were martyred.

"Banglapedia" estimated that 1,111 intellectuals were killed -- including 991 academics, 49 physicians, 42 lawyers, 13 journalists, nine litterateurs and artists, five engineers, and two others.

Many war researchers, however, said the total number of martyred intellectuals could be much higher. The members of Buddhijibi Nidhan Tathyanusandhan Committee, set up in 1972, had made a primary list of 20,000 such intellectuals killed by the Pakistanis, they pointed out.

Asif Munier, also president of Projanmo Ekattor, an organisation of the children of the martyrs, said they are ready to give assistance to the new committee preparing the list.

"We believe the committee members will do the work with utmost sincerity as they have credibility."

## Hasina-Modi virtual

FROM PAGE 1  
Indian Prime Minister Modi was scheduled to visit Bangladesh in March this year to attend Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's birth centenary event, but could not come because of the pandemic.

He is likely to visit Bangladesh in March next year to join the 50 years anniversary of Bangladesh's independence.

According to officials concerned, celebrations of the 50th anniversary will be a special focus during the meeting. The two premiers will launch a commemorative postal stamp and Bangabandhu-Bapu Digital Museum.

Bapu is an affectionate form of address given to Mahatma Gandhi by his near and dear ones and later became one of the sobriquets used for him along with Mahatma and Father of the Nation.

"The 3D digital museum will feature historical events in the lives of the two great leaders of India and Bangladesh," a foreign ministry official told this correspondent.

An Indian High Commission official had earlier said the museum will showcase the values that "our founding fathers bequeathed to our respective nations."

Bangabandhu-Bapu Digital Museum will be shown on TV-screens placed at different places in Bangladesh, India and some other countries, the official added.

"The summit between the two prime ministers is very significant. This is happening at a time when Bangladesh is celebrating the birth centenary of Bangabandhu and is preparing for the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh's independence," the foreign ministry official said.

"The meeting will reflect the depth of the two country's relationship."

Marking the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh's independence, India also undertook various activities throughout next year. Sometime next year, a road connecting Mujibnagar in Meherpur and Nodia of West Bengal

will also be opened.

"It was a difficult time. We declared independence. Awami League leaders and international journalists came to Mujibnagar in Meherpur on April 17 in 1971. The oath-taking ceremony of the provisional government was held there," said Foreign Minister Momen.

"They came here through the Meherpur-Nodia border. It is a historic road. On Indian side, the road is open. On our side, it is not. We want to open it. India also agreed. We would like to name it Swadhinata Sarak."

"There are beautiful sculptures in Mujibnagar. Indians can also come to visit..."

Recalling the role of then Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said her contribution must be recognised. She wrote letters to the heads of states across the world, describing the tortures on the Bangladeshis by the Pakistani military.

"She [Indira Gandhi] visited the US, Europe and Russia to highlight the tortures."

After Pakistan's attack against India in early December 1971, India declared war and recognised Bangladesh's independence and sovereignty. India also has an important role to bring back Bangabandhu from Pakistan after the liberation war. "We are grateful for this."

"Indian army personnel sacrificed their lives for Bangladesh's independence. So, we have a blood relationship with India. It is historic and time-tested. India is our all-time friend," Momen said. "India has a lot to be proud of in our victory."

The prime ministers will inaugurate the reopening of the railway route between Haldibari in West Bengal and Chilhati in Bangladesh on December 17. The railway has been defunct after rail links between India and then East Pakistan snapped in 1965.

Other issues including water sharing, border security, trade and development will also be discussed during the PM-level meeting, the minister said.



A flag-seller walks the streets of Gulshan-2 in the capital carrying Bangladesh flags of different sizes, hoping to capitalise on the patriotic fervour that takes hold in the month of victory. The photo was taken yesterday.

## Blueprint of evil

FROM PAGE 1  
journalists, doctors and artists -- towards the end of the war when Pakistan forces sensed imminent defeat.

So brutal were the killings that many of the bodies were found mutilated beyond recognition at different killing fields.

The perspective behind formation of Al-Badr and its detailed mechanism, targets and activities to exterminate the pro-liberation forces, who they termed "enemies" and "miscreants", is evident in some war-time documents retrieved by a journalist days after Independence.

In these updated and unsigned documents, purportedly classified, Mojaheed insisted that only tested workers of ICS be recruited in Al-Badr. Then acting president of the ICS in East Pakistan, he preferred to call the organisation "Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba Pakistan".

Mojaheed proposed that the force would help the Pakistan army operations in picking up and interrogating the "miscreants" and build up an intelligence network against them.

He suggested placing the Al-Badr above the ranks of Razakars and Mujahids, two other auxiliary forces of the Pakistan army.

"Over and above the Razakars and Mujahids, a new batch of volunteers can be organised mostly consisting of students. Of course, intelligent and honest youths from the non-students may also be placed under them provided they are ready to be under the unified command," the document stated.

After Independence, Mojaheed went into hiding and resurfaced after the political changeover in the country with the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. In time, his political clout would grow, and he would become a minister of the BNP-Jamaat government.

The legacy of ICS would continue through Islami Chhatra Shibir, the student wing of Jamaat in Bangladesh.

In 2013, the International Crimes Tribunal convicted Mojaheed for his role in crimes against humanity, including the mass extermination of intellectuals. He was executed two years later.

War-time journalist Ahmed Shafi Uddin recovered the cyclostyled copy of Mojaheed's proposal along with a letter of Pakistan's martial law administration from an abandoned headquarters of Al-Badr's sub-divisional unit in Rajshahi.

The proposal begins with description of ICS' allegiance for Pakistan and its army, according to the documents, copies of which have been obtained by this newspaper.

On the other hand, the martial law administration's letter, labelled "secret", outlined the formation of Al-Badr and its goals like assisting the government/army and forming commando type of bands for carrying out sabotage activities.

THE PROPOSAL  
It was a two-page letter where Mojaheed addressed the deputy sub martial law administrator with the subject titled "Razakar, Al Badr wing". The proposal carried his name at its end.

He suggested preparing the force as strong and bold that it does not even

spare their closest relatives if they stand against Pakistan's integrity and for Bangladesh's freedom.

"On the one hand we are not ready to spare even our nearest relative if he is an active enemy to the integrity and solidarity of the nation and on the other hand we do not like to disturb the peace loving as well as innocent fraction of the mass rather we like to create confidence in them and dispel all sorts of misunderstandings that have been imposed on them."

Mojaheed in his letter mentioned ICS students were facing troubles in adjusting with non-student Razakars and Mujahids.

"... our practical observation is that in many places some selfish and opportune seeking fellows have crept into the Razakars who have become a great problem for our honest and bold activities."

"Nevertheless, we are ready to work unitedly with any Pakistani, but we feel victimised if someone gets into such an organisation with motives other than that helping the nation."

He wrote that the "problems" were placed to the Deputy Martial Law Administrator of Zone B.

Under the martial law administration, Pakistan was divided into two zones -- West Pakistan being the Zone A and the East Pakistan Zone B. Pakistani General Tikka Khan headed the Zone B.

Mojaheed explained why the ICS workers should be enrolled as Al-Badr men, saying it was the only organisation that maintained its separate identity as an all Pakistan based student body and no inter party clash would occur in the proposed outfit.

"We are not working for any political motive or party interest; rather we like to utilise our full strength in the best possible manner in meeting 'the national crisis'."

The letter pointed out that the deputy martial law administrator of Zone B had considered the proposals and ICS was instructed to organise Al-Badr throughout the East Pakistan province with "immediate effect".

PRINCIPLES AND PROGRAMMES  
Mojaheed's letter described the principles of the force -- the first one was to recruit only tested activists who worked for the integrity of Pakistan.

It said Al-Badr will have three groups -- "One will try to restore confidence among the public. The second one will work as an intelligence branch, whereas the third will have armed training and work as a fighting group."

The force will chalk out its own plan and programme and obtain approval from the local army officers before execution, said the letter.

Mojaheed in the letter proposed the force's several activities including brainwashing people and picking up the country's pro-liberation people who he called "miscreants".

The Al-Badr programmes included "mobilisation of public opinion and the restoration of normalcy through mass contact, public meetings and village to village campaigns. Special emphasis will be given to indoctrinate the minds of the students".

It will bridge the gap between the locals and non-locals (Bangalees and Biharis), the letter shows.

Establishing a network of intelligence for keeping a constant eye

on the activities of the "miscreants" was one of the programmes.

Another programme was "helping the army in operations in picking up and interrogating the miscreants and in the maintenance of law and order in the public meetings and in educational institutions".

The last programme described in the letter was "to give information to the martial law authorities regarding the anti-state elements in the government, autonomous and non-government services and if need be to help substitute loyal Pakistanis for these elements".

### PAKISTAN ARMY'S LETTER

The document labelled "secret" proclaims the formation of Al-Badr volunteer force and explains its activities. Some words were coded in military terms.

At the beginning, it mentions the pattern of "Battle of Badr" for formation of the volunteer force and says the militia will have two main goals.

One is to assist the government/army in the restoration of law and order and to form spec cdo (special command duty officer) type of bands for carrying out sabotage activities across the border.

Al-Badr will be an organisation at district/sub divisional level, it said, adding, "Each sub div [sub division] will have 313 student volunteers from schools, colleges and madrasas."

"These students will attend their regular classes in school/colleges and also carry out various duties as assigned to them by their executive committee."

### PERKS FOR AL-BADR

In the letter, Mojaheed sought from the Pakistani army camp accommodation for trainees in the fighting group and office facilities with necessary equipment for all other groups.

They wanted ration and allowance for the trainees, transport for operation as well as publicity and information collection activities or "to pay conveyance needed and arms and ammunition".

"I pray and hope that your authority would be kind enough to allow our local workers of Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba to organise Al Badr throughout your area," he concluded.

### HOW THE DOCUMENTS WERE FOUND?

Shafi was the chief reporter of Weekly Sonar Desh, founded in 1970 by AHM Qamaruzzaman, one of the country's four national leaders, and edited by the language movement veteran Sayeed Uddin Ahmed.

After March 25, 1971, the Pakistan occupation forces vandalised the weekly's office in Ranibazar area of Rajshahi town and announced death warrants for its journalists, forcing them to flee into rural hideouts.

"On my return to Rajshahi town after Independence, I decided to collect the evidence of the war from different spots. In one such visit to the house Mohini Niketon, I saw a bag floating in a well," Shafi, who later became an official of Rajshahi University, told The Daily Star.

With the help of his cousin Amjad Ali, he pulled out the bag which had documents of over 2,000 pages left by Al-Badr leaders. He gave documents to local freedom fighters, and kept some that had multiple copies.

## He knew

FROM PAGE 1  
enforcement agencies in Teknaf between August 2018 and 2020.

"Pradeep planned to kill Sinha before he could expose anything to the higher authorities," said Billah, while addressing the press conference.

He said they came to this conclusion based on confessional statements made by 12 of the arrested accused in the murder case, and upon analysing some digital contents, which were in the possession of Sinha and his associates Shipra Debnath and Shahedul Sifat.

While talking to this correspondent, Lt Col Billah added that the electronic devices were in the possession of the police for a considerable amount of time after the murder. When Rab officials finally got hold of them, the memory cards were found to be corrupt.

The devices were under Ramu Police Station's custody from the day of the murder till August 19, when a district court ordered that they be handed to Rab.

Yesterday, Senior ASP of Rab Mohammad Khairul Islam, investigation officer (IO) of the case, submitted the charge sheet to Judge Tamanna Farah of Cox's Bazar Senior Judicial Magistrate Court-4 through the court inspector around 10:10am.

The charge sheet was filed after four months and 10 days of investigation.

"The conspiracy [of murder] was plotted by OC Pradeep, Inspector Liaquat, and local police sources Nurul Amin, Mohammad Aiyas and Nizamuddin," said Lt Col Billah.

Liaquat, SI Nandadul Rakshit and three APBn members then executed the plan, he said. The APBn members are SI Mohammad Shahjahan and constables Md Rajib and Mohammad Abdullah.

"In addition, other policemen from a nearby camp, namely SI Liton Miah and constables Safanur Karim, Kamal Hossain Azad, Abdullah Al Mamun ensured that a wounded Sinha held to death as they assisted in the murder," he said.

"Constables Sagar Deb and Rubel Sharma staged an act of recovering narcotics from Sinha's vehicle. Both of them are on the run," Billah said.

The charge sheet named 83 people as witnesses.

A total of 14 people were arrested between August and September in the case. Twelve of them gave confessional statements to court.

OC Pradeep and constable Rubel Sharma were yet to confess.

In addition to murder charges, the accused are being charged for hatching a criminal conspiracy, evidence tampering and perjury.

Shipra and Sifat have already been cleared of narcotics charges, which were brought against them after Sinha's murder.

Meanwhile, a Cox's Bazar court yesterday dismissed a revision petition filed by Liaquat Ali, suspended inspector of Baharchhara Investigation Centre, challenging the legality of the murder case filed by the victim's sister, Sharmen Shahria Ferdush.

After holding a full hearing on the petition, Mohammad Ismail, judge of Cox's Bazar District and Session judge's court, passed the order, our Cox's Bazar correspondent reported, quoting Public Prosecutor of the court Faridul Alam as saying.

On October 4, Liaquat Ali filed the revision petition with the Cox's Bazar court, saying the murder case was illegal.

Sinha was killed at an APBn checkpoint on the Cox's-Teknaf highway on July 31. Local police said Inspector Liaquat's team had taken over the checkpoint from the three APBn officers before the incident.

Sinha was shooting videos for his YouTube channel at the village of Marishbunia right before he was shot. He had been residing in the area for a month for filming.

The law enforcers claimed that they tried to search the vehicle of Sinha Md Rashed Khan, but the former army official aimed his pistol at them, prompting them to shoot in self-defence.

They also claimed that they found drugs in Sinha's car.

Witnesses, however, gave different accounts of the incident. They said Sinha got down from his car, put his hands over his head, and then the police members shot him.

Sinha's family termed the incident a cold-blooded murder and launched the legal battle seeking justice.

Later, the case's investigation was handed to Rab.

## Iran summons

## German, France envoys over criticism of journalist's execution

REUTERS

Iran yesterday summoned the envoys of Germany, current holder of the European Union's rotating presidency, and of France over criticism of the execution of an Iranian journalist, Iranian media reported.

The Foreign Ministry voiced Iran's protest to the two ambassadors over French and EU criticism of the execution on Saturday of dissident journalist Ruhollah Zam, who had been based in Paris before he was captured in Iraq and taken to Iran.

Zam was convicted of fomenting violence during anti-government protests in 2017. His Amadnews feed had more than 1 million followers.