



# The Daily Star

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It is here in Golahat on Saidpur-Chilahati rail line where at least 448 people, mostly Marwari Hindus, were taken off a train and brutally killed by the Pakistani army and razzakars led by Biharis on June 13, 1971.

PHOTO: STAR

## A TRAIN TO MASSACRE

The 1971 Golahat mass killing in Saidpur remains a lesser known part of Liberation War history

PINAKI ROY and EAM ASADUZZAMAN

It was past midnight at Saidpur Rail Station.

In the dim light, mostly Hindu Marwaris and some Bangalees from all walks of life could be seen standing beside the platform. Tense, even those who knew each other

were not talking.

They were all anxiously waiting for the train that would leave for Jalpaiguri in West Bengal through the Chilahati border.

More than 450 Marwaris boarded that train, but little did they know that it would take them just 2km from the railway station.

On that fateful night, they were betrayed and subjected to a pre-planned massacre by Pakistani army troops and armed razzakars led by two Bihari men -- Qaiyum Khan and Izahar Ahmed -- and their associates, who were lying in wait near Golahat point.

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## Sixty-one more recognised as Biranganas

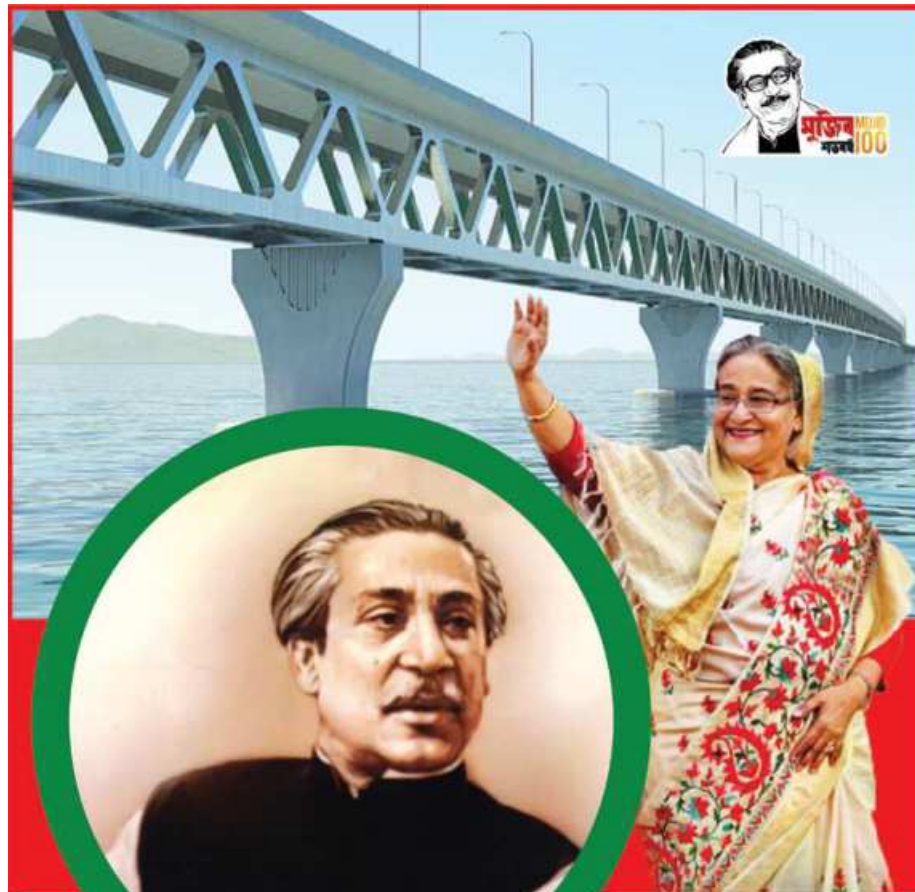
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has recognised 61 more Biranganas (war heroines) for their contribution and sacrifice during the country's Liberation War in 1971.

The recognition comes a day before the country goes into its 50th Victory Day celebration.

The Ministry of Liberation War Affairs yesterday issued a gazette notification in this regard. With the latest inclusion,

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**16<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER**  
**HAPPY VICTORY DAY**  
**PADMA CONQUERED IN THE MONTH OF VICTORY**

The Padma Bridge is no longer just a dream. The robust leadership of Deshratna Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the worthy daughter of Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, has now made visible all of the 6.1 kilometres of the Padma Bridge. The Padma Bridge is a unique milestone for the Bangalees as we enter our 50<sup>th</sup> year of victory. Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, had expressed his determination to build a prosperous Bangladesh by overcoming dependence on foreign aid. Bangabandhu wanted this country to truly become one day a Golden Bengal.

Following the path shown by Bangabandhu, Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina ignored all obstacles and constructed the Padma Bridge with fully national funding, showing the world that any false pressure cannot suppress Bangladesh. Bangladesh has never succumbed to any conspiracy and will never do so in the future.

Born of the sacrifice of three million martyrs, Bangladesh has overcome thousands of obstacles to reach where it is today. Statistics show the huge number of achievements in the last 49 years, proving that Bangladesh has come a long way from being once a war-torn country with almost no infrastructure. In some cases, Bangladesh has surprised the world with its success. Even with a small territory, this country of 160 million people is now self-sufficient in food.

Bangladesh has made unprecedented progress in the last decade in any indicator of economic growth and social development. Bangladesh has come a long way in overall growth since 1990, compared to the average growth of developing countries. The rate of poverty has dropped by more than half. Women's contribution to economic activities has increased rapidly. Bangladesh could be able to overtake many other developing countries, including neighbouring India, in many social indicators such as life expectancy, infant mortality rate, female education rate, birth control usage of able-bodied couples etc. The most visible progress has been made in building "Digital Bangladesh". In the meantime, "Bangabandhu Satellite" has been successfully launched.

Bangladesh is ahead of India in a lot of areas and Nobel Laureate, Amartya Sen, has reiterated this point on numerous occasions. In his book titled "An Uncertain Glory: India and Its Contradictions", he dedicated a whole chapter to Bangladesh.

After independence, the life expectancy of an average Bangladeshi was 46 years, and it has now gone up to 72.6 years. Meanwhile, the average life expectancy in South Asia remains at 65 years. In low-income countries, the infant mortality rate is 70 deaths against 1,000 births; in South Asia, it is 52 deaths against 1,000 births; while in Bangladesh, the status is 37 deaths against 1,000 births. Bangladesh has now graduated itself into a middle-income country. With the firm leadership of our Honourable Prime Minister, we aptly tackle the Rohingya crisis. Complex initiatives for ensuring the safe return of the Rohingyas to their homeland are underway. The Honourable Prime Minister has also handled the COVID-19 pandemic as efficiently as any leader of developed countries.

This is the year of Golden Jubilee of independence for Bangladesh. The country steps into 50 years of its glory. In this moment of great achievement and on the occasion of Victory Day, we are remembering the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. At the same time, we are also paying our respects to all the martyrs of the independence war. Along with that, I also remember every freedom fighter who took part in the liberation war.

Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, dreamt that one-day Bangladesh would be a prosperous country, free of hunger and poverty, standing tall in the world. To fulfil that dream, a 20-year plan, 'Vision 2041', has been adopted, and the Prime Minister herself is leading the implementation of it. After Bangabandhu, she is the true leader for a modern Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's first perspective plan 2010-2021 will end in the golden jubilee of its independence. The journey to become a middle-income country and a 'Digital Bangladesh' by 2021 is on course to meet its target even in the midst of the on-going pandemic. Today, under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the country has found a way to achieve its security and prosperity.

Joy Bangla. Joy Bangabandhu.



Courtesy  
**Syed Abul Hossain**  
Writer, Education Entrepreneur And Former Minister

## Won't tolerate chaos in name of religion

PM says in address to nation on the eve of Victory Day, urges harmony, respect to all faiths

UNB, Dhaka

Issuing a strong warning against religious fanatics, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government would not let anyone create any division and anarchy in the country over religion.

"This Bangladesh is the Bangladesh of Lalou Shah, Rabindranath, Kazi Nazrul, Jibanananda... this Bangladesh is the Bangladesh of Shahjalal, Shah Poran, Shah Mokdum, Khanjahan Ali; this Bangladesh is the Bangladesh of Sheikh Mujib and 16.5 crore Bangalees -- this country is for all. We won't allow anyone to create any division and anarchy in the name of religion," she said.

The premier was addressing the nation on the occasion of Victory Day.

Hasina said a section of the defeated force of

"The people of Bangladesh are pious, not religious bigots. Do not make religion a political weapon. Everyone has the right to perform their own religion."

1971 are out to confuse the religion-loving Muslims through providing false, fabricated and fictitious information as they want to create anarchy in the society.

"In 1972, the Father of the Nation had said not to make religion a tool of politics. But the

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## MEET WITH HOME BOSS Hefajat sticks to its stance on sculpture

RASHIDUL HASAN

Calling sculptures anti-Islamic, Qawmi madrasa-based clerics, many of whom are Hefajat leaders, have proposed that the government construct minarets instead of sculptures of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Led by Mahmudul Hasan, chairman of madrasa education board (Befaq), a 12-member delegation came up with the proposal at a meeting with Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan at his residence in the capital on Monday night.

Coming out of the hour-long meeting, Hefajat-e-Islam Nayebe-Amir Atallah Hafezzi termed it fruitful. He claimed that the minister did not oppose their argument against the establishment of sculptures or idols.

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressed the nation yesterday on the eve of Victory Day celebrations. In her 18-minute speech, she issued a strong message to religious fanatics and remembered the sacrifices made for an independent secular Bangladesh.

PHOTO: PID

## She only went to buy chips

8-yr-old found dead after rape in Bogura

STAR REPORT

An eight-year-old girl has been killed after rape in Bogura's Dhunat upazila.

The victim, Tabassum Khatun, was a second grader at a primary school in Nosrotpur village of the upazila.

Police said the girl along with her grandparents went to a waz mahfil near their home in the same village on Monday night. At one stage of the religious event, the girl went to a nearby shop to buy chips around 10:00pm.

As she was late to return, her

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## All air travellers must be Covid free

CAAB threatens int'l carriers with flight suspensions if they carry people with no coronavirus-free certificates

STAR REPORT

Airlines carrying passengers without Covid-19 negative certificates will have to face flight suspension penalty from now on.

Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) came up with the directives as multiple airlines recently carried passengers to Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport without Covid-19 negative certificates.

In some cases, some airlines also carried passengers despite having Covid-19 positive certificates.

Group Captain Chowdhury Zia-ul-Kabir, member (Flight Standards and Regulations) of CAAB, said with great concern, CAAB observed several airlines carrying passengers without having Covid-19 negative certificates in RT-PCR lab. "Even some airlines are carrying Covid infected passengers."

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## 40 more die, highest in 12 weeks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country yesterday reported 40 deaths due to Covid-19 -- the highest for a single day in more than 12 weeks.

Besides, 1,877 people died from Covid-19 in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, according to a DGHS press release.

Earlier, the 21st day of September saw the same number of deaths due to novel coronavirus infection. After that, the number of daily deaths continued to go down and

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BANGABANDHU KILLERS  
**Suspend their gallantry awards**  
 HC orders government

STAFF CORRESPONDENT  
 The High Court yesterday ordered the government to suspend the state gallantry awards for four convicted killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family members.  
 The four are: Nur Chowdhury, Shariful Haque Dalim, Rashed Chowdhury and Moslehuddin Khan.  
 Nur Chowdhury was awarded the title Bir Bikram, Shariful Haque Dalim Bir Uttam, and Rashed Chowdhury and Moslemuddin Khan were awarded the title Bir Protik for their contributions during the Liberation War in 1971.  
 The then government had given them the awards in 1973 and also issued a gazette notification to this effect on December 15 of the same year.  
 According to the gazette notification, seven valiant freedom fighters were awarded the title Bir Shrestha, 68 Bir Uttam, 175 Bir Bikram and 426 were awarded the title Bir Protik for their contributions during the Liberation War.  
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Traffic has been single file on Rokeya Sarani in the capital's Mirpur for the last three months since Dhaka Wasa excavated for development work a part of the road already narrowed down by work on the metro rail project. Vehicles could ply this road three abreast once.  
 PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH  
 BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES  
**'Sheikh Mujib never compromises'**  
  
 Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman laying the foundation of the National Memorial at Savar on December 16, 1972.  
 December 16, 1972  
 SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN  
**BANGABANDHU'S VICTORY DAY SPEECH**  
 Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman reasserts in unambiguous terms today that the trial of war criminals must be held on Bangladesh soil. Addressing a huge crowd at the Suhrawardy Udyan on Victory Day, the prime  
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GANG-RAPE IN NOAKHALI  
**PBI charges Delwar, 13 others**  
 OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali  
 Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) yesterday submitted charge sheet before court against 14 persons in a case filed over gang-rape and torture of a woman in Noakhali's Begumganj upazila.  
 The charge sheet was submitted to the court of Noakhali Chief Judicial Magistrate Utpal Chowdhury.  
 Of the accused, two are still on the run, said  
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RECRUITMENT SUSPENSION  
**RU will want to know why**  
 Says VC embroiled in controversy  
 MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and ARAFAT RAHAMAN  
 Rajshahi University authorities would want to know from the education ministry the reasons for postponing all kinds of appointments to the university until further notice.  
 RU Vice Chancellor Prof M Abdus Sobhan yesterday also said he would talk to the media later regarding his steps to relieve Prof Abdul Bari from the post of university registrar.  
 "We will respond to the orders regarding the recruitment policy," Sobhan said while talking to reporters after a programme on the campus.  
 He made the comments as the ministry in an order on December 10 postponed all kinds of appointments to RU  
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JOURNO KAJOL PROBE  
**HC unhappy with cyber tribunal, IO over delays**  
 STAFF CORRESPONDENT  
 The High Court yesterday expressed grave dissatisfaction that neither the investigation officer nor the cyber tribunal has explained the delay in concluding investigations into two cases filed against photojournalist Shafiqul Islam Kajol under the Digital Security Act.  
 The court had sought  
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**'Democracy prevailed'**  
 Says Biden after Electoral College confirms his win; Putin congratulates  
 REUTERS, Lansing  
 President-elect Joe Biden delivered a forceful rebuke on Monday to President Donald Trump's attacks on the legitimacy of his victory, hours after winning the state-by-state Electoral College vote that officially determines the US presidency.  
 "In this battle for the soul of America, democracy prevailed," Biden said in a prime-time speech from his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware. "Now it's time to turn the page, as we've done throughout our history - to unite, to heal."  
 Monday's vote, typically a formality, SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

  
**PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 16**  
 Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
 AZAN 5:20 12:45 3:45 5:22 7:00  
 JAMAAT 5:55 1:15 4:00 5:25 7:30  
 SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

**Bangladesh hands another list of secret yaba labs to Myanmar**  
 STAFF CORRESPONDENT  
 The Department of Narcotics Control handed over a list of 49 clandestine labs in Myanmar to that country's Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control (CCDAC), hoping that they would take stern actions to stop yaba smuggling into Bangladesh.  
 "We have handed over the list to Myanmar's anti-narcotics authorities based on our intelligence information," Muhammed Ahsanul Jabbar, director general of DNC, said yesterday.  
 The DNC handed over the list during the fourth bilateral talks between DNC and CCDAC, held online this year, titled "Prevention of Illicit trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances".  
 The last bilateral meeting was held in 2017.  
 Ahsanul briefed the media after the meeting.  
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ROHINGYA TRAFFICKING NETWORK  
**They sell dreams, deliver violence**  
 AFP investigation reveals operations worth millions  
 AFP, Cox's Bazar  
 Auto rickshaws slip easily past barbed-wire checkpoints at the world's biggest refugee camp, their drivers among the smallest players in a complex human trafficking network involving high-seas extortion gangs, corrupt police and drug lords.  
 Aboard the spluttering rickshaws are small groups of young men, women and children hoping to escape the misery of life with other members of their stateless Rohingya group who are crowded into shanties in Cox's Bazar.  
 Nineteen-year-old Enamul Hasan was aboard one of the rickshaws early this year, taken to the coast and then by small boat into a bigger fishing vessel anchored in the Bay of Bengal where he joined hundreds of other Rohingyas hoping to reach Malaysia.  
 "I was told I'd get the opportunity to finish my studies and earn money  
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