

# Dhaka Day by Day

## Reaching Out Through Sound Waves

By Aasha Mehreen Amin



Bengalis remember March 1971 as a time of terror, anticipation and unbearable uncertainty. Many family members were separated from each other, not knowing when or if they would ever see their loved ones again. The radio was the only way news could reach the Bengalis within the country. Sometimes it was the only way to stay sane.

On March 26th 1971, the radio station at "Kalurghat", Chittagong, was taken over by Bengalis and Shadheen Bangla Betar was inaugurated. Being a clandestine operation, it moved from one place to another, eventually reaching Agartala in Tripura and then Ballyganj Circular Road in Calcutta. Nasreen Ahmed, then a DUCSU Common Room Secretary, recalls the time when she fled Dhaka, ending up as a news reader for Shadheen Bangla Betar in Calcutta.

During the fateful days of March '71 Nasreen Ahmed was living with her family next to Sheikh Mujib's "Our house," she says, "was a liaison between Sheikh Mujib and the outside. Many foreign journalists would call our house if they couldn't reach him."

"On March 25th, we knew something was going to happen. There were tanks and soldiers everywhere. Through my window, I saw a young boy being shot down, and later his body being trampled by soldiers."

"As the army began to charge and fire, my parents, sister and I rushed to hide in an ante room near the bathroom. My two brothers had gone to Intercontinental Hotel, and we didn't know what had happened to them. The doors of our house had been left unlocked since Sheikh Shaheb had indicated that he may have to hide there."

"After a bout of continuous earth-shattering firing, while we huddled close together, there was pin-drop silence. It seemed as if I could even hear my own heart-beat. Then, suddenly, we heard the sound of footsteps and someone loading a gun. The soldiers were right at our front-door. After a few minutes the footsteps died away. Another session of firing followed, and then silence again. Later we saw the next door gate open and a car going out. Sheikh Shaheb was being taken away by the army. Then someone cried out, 'Joy Bangla', followed

by silence once again.

"At dawn on the 26th, we saw the black flag and the next door gate wide open. We rushed to the house, which was Sheikh Mujib's and our hearts filled with dread as to what we would see. There were bullet holes everywhere -- on the floor, walls, furniture, etc. The telephone cables had been ripped apart and everything was in a mess. Upstairs we found Mrs. Mujib lying on the bed, vacantly staring at the ceiling."

"Afterwards, Mrs. Mujib advised us to leave that very night, since she thought it was unsafe for us to stay. Behind our house lived a banker who took all of us in that night."

"During those days we woke each morning not knowing what to expect. The only thing we could do was listen to Shadheen Bangla Betar and other radio stations."

Nasreen Ahmed then goes on to describe how she and other members of her family escaped to Agartala, eventually reaching Calcutta. "I was with my younger brother and the rest of the family was to follow afterwards. As we passed through the rail gate to the other side of the border the rickshaw-wala said to us, 'Now you are free. You have nothing to fear anymore.'" In the mid-May, Nasreen Ahmed visited the Shadheen Bangla Betar office in Ballyganj Circular Road and read the English news that night for the first time in her life.

"Those days," she says, "were very satisfying because I felt that this was my way of contributing. On December 16th when we had to announce Sheikh Mujib's statement asking Nizari to surrender. Even though they were not my own words, just announcing it gave me a tremendous feeling pride."

At the end of the interview when asked what incident moved her the most during that time Nasreen Ahmed's eyes are moist as she replies, "There were many such moments. But what really touched me was when I was fleeing to India. Once on the other side of the border, I looked back at my country. Never before did the paddy fields look so green, the sky so blue and the Meghna so overwhelmingly beautiful. All I could think of was -- when will I be able to come back home?"

# Hasina urges people to join Azam's trial today

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina Wednesday alleged that the present "autocratic" government has sent "war criminal and killer" Golam Azam to jail in a bid to save him from "people's wrath", reports UNB.

"The government maintains a mysterious silence on the allegations of genocide, rape, loot and arson against Golam Azam during the 1971 Liberation War", she said.

Hasina urged all to join the proceedings of the people's court today (Thursday) at Suhrawardy Udyan. "The patriotic people have only performed their historic responsibility by initiating the people's court."

Addressing an extended meeting of the City Awami League at party office, Hasina said main demand of the peo-

ple is trial of Golam Azam on charges of mass killing, war crimes and treason.

"He (Golam Azam) will be punished by the people's court", she said adding the government will be forced to execute the verdict as will be expressed in the people's court.

Hasina, the President of Awami League, said the entire nation stood united on the demand for the trial of Golam Azam. "No conspiracy will be able to foil the people's court and the trial."

The Opposition leader said that the Bangabandhu's government had banned politics of the anti-liberation forces, cancelled citizenship of many and sent many others to jail.

But, she alleged, Ziaur Rahman had initiated the

hated process of rehabilitation of anti-liberation clique and allowed them to do politics through the fifth constitutional amendment.

Hasina said the anti-liberation elements, emboldened by patronisation from the state have dared again to engage in conspiracy against independence and sovereignty.

She said those who term the people's court as illegal are virtually guilty of betrayal with the bloods of martyrs. "When normal course of law is obstructed, people are forced to go to people's court."

"People's court is not unconstitutional", said Hasina refuting the contention of those opposing it.

She said it has now been exposed that there is a secret entente between the government and the anti-liberation

# TV earns Tk 60 lakh from World Cup cricket

Bangladesh Television has earned Tk 60 lakh through commercial broadcast of the World Cup Cricket '92 matches, reports UNB.

Out of the total earning, Tk 50 lakh came from the sponsorship and Tk 10 lakh from commercial spots.

BTV transmitted live 23

matches in 19 days including the exciting semifinals and the final. The matches were telecast live, direct from different venues of the tournament.

This amount is much more than the revenue earned through such sponsorship and spot bookings during the last World Cup cricket in 1987.

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## Saudi relief for Rohingyas soon

Saudi Arabia will soon despatch relief materials for the Rohingya Muslims in Bangladesh, reports UNB.

This was decided at a cabinet meeting held at Safa palace in Makkah Monday with the Custodian of the two holy mosques King Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz in the chair.

The meeting reviewed the latest situation arising out of the influx of the Myanmar Muslims to Bangladesh.

King Fahd has instructed the concerned ministries to send relief goods to Bangladesh immediately to mitigate the sufferings of the Muslim refugees.

The meeting also reviewed the progress of development work of the two holy mosques at Makkah and Medina.

## DU Eid vacation begins

By DU Correspondent

The classes of Dhaka University will remain suspended from today (Thursday) to April 10 on the occasion of the holy Eid-ul-Fitr.

The offices of the university will remain closed from April 1 to April 7 on the same occasion.

## Thursday

- Special Session**
- 8.00 am Opening announcement
  - 8.30 am Live telecast of combined military parade from National Parade Square
- Evening Session**
- 5.00 Opening announcement Al-Quran Programme summary
  - 5.10 News in Bangla
  - 5.20 Recitation from the Geeta
  - 5.30 Amar Janma Bhumi: Children's programme Mahey Ramzan.
  - 6.10 Recitation of poems on Independence Day
  - 7.05 Special songs programme
  - 8.00 News in Bangla
  - 8.40 Special drama: Hridaye Jatana Jakhan
  - 10.00 News in English
  - 10.30 Magazine
  - 11.15 Khabar/The News
  - 11.25 Friday's programme summary
  - 11.30 Closing

# Independence Day programmes in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Mar 25: The 22nd Independence and National Day will be observed here and elsewhere in the district today (Thursday) with much enthusiasm and eclat, reports BSS.

The district administration, a large number of socio-cultural organisations and educational institutions have chalked out elaborate programmes to celebrate the day.

The Day will be heralded with playing of whistles at one minute past 12 o'clock for five minutes by ships at the port and Railway station of Chittagong.

National flag will be hoisted atop all private and public buildings in the morning while floral wreaths will be placed at Shaheed Minar.

Police, Ansar, VDP, Fire Service, National Cadet Corps, Boy Scouts and Girl Guides march past will be held at Chittagong Stadium in the morning.

Other programmes of the Day are exhibition of docu-

ments and photographs of Liberation War at Rifle Club. Deputy Commissioner to meet members of shaheed Muktiyoddah families, special diet for orphans, prisoners, special prayer for peace and progress of the country at mosques, temples, and churches.

Milad mahfil at Bangladesh Mahila Samity office, sports competition, drawing competition among children, discussion on Independence Day and milad mahfil at stadum auditorium.

Important public and private buildings will be illuminated in the evening.

Discussion on the significance of Independence Day in National Life, cultural functions and milad mahfil etc are among the programmes of different socio-cultural organisations and political parties.

Local newspapers will bring out special supplement highlighting the occasion while local radio station will broadcast special programme.

## Weather

### Day temperature may rise

By Staff Correspondent

Met office forecast Wednesday that rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at one or two places over the regions of Noakhali and Sylhet till 6 pm today (Thursday).

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry elsewhere over the country.

Day temperature is likely to rise by one to two degree Celsius during the period.

The highest temperature of the country Wednesday, 38.6 degree Celsius was recorded in Rajshahi and the lowest temperature 20.0 degree Celsius was recorded in Rangpur.

The sun sets today (Thursday) at 6.12 pm and rises tomorrow (Friday) at 5.56 am.

The temperature and humidity recorded in important cities and towns Wednesday are:

	Temperature		Humidity	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	35.5	24.6	74	39
Chittagong	31.2	23.6	80	88
Rajshahi	38.6			
Khulna	36.0	21.7	76	
Cox's Bazar	31.0	24.4	71	80
Rangpur	33.2	20	47	39
Sylhet	32.5	20.6	73	65
Barisal	34.0	24.5	58	54
Jessore	36.4	22.0		