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Bangabandhu murder: Trial of 6 begins March 12

Star Report
The District and Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka, yesterday ordered the six arrested accused in Bangabandhu murder case to appear in the court on March 12, according to sources concerned.
Trial of the case is likely to be held at Nazimuddin Road, where trial of the cases against former president Ershad was held.
The Ministry of Law and Justice is going to issue an order specifying a place where trial of the Bangabandhu murder case would be held, official sources had said earlier.
The six accused are former military officials Syed Farook Rahman, Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, Mohiuddin Ahmed and Abdul Wahab Joarder, former state minister Taheruddin Thakur and Begum Zohaida Rashid, wife of former army officer A Rashid Khondaker, who is also a charge-sheeted accused and an absconder in the case.

Mahbubur Rahman on LPR, says BB circular

By Special Correspondent
Former Bangladesh Bank Deputy Governor Mahbubur Rahman Khan has gone on Leave Preparatory to Retirement (LPR) from March 1, according to a circular issued by the BB.
When contacted, Khan currently an Officer on Special Duty, said he was not aware of the development as he was yet to receive the said Bangladesh Bank circular. He said he did not apply for LPR as he waited for disposal of his writ petition.
Khan was made OSD at the Finance Ministry on September 16 last year. Finance Minister S A M S Kibria on September 21 accused him of "acting against national interest" while granting licences to 14 non-banking financial institutions.
Later a one-member enquiry committee headed by Finance Secretary Dr Akbar Ali Khan

Warm welcome awaits President Ramos

By Staff Correspondent
President of the Philippines Fidel Ramos arrives in the capital today on a three-day official visit to Bangladesh, which is expected to increase economic and trade ties between the two Asian nations.
President Shahabuddin Ahmed will receive the 68-year old President of the Philippines when he arrives at the Zia International Airport from New Delhi at 9 am. Six jets of the Bangladesh Air Force will escort his aircraft as it enters the Bangladesh airspace. A 21-gun salute will herald his arrival.
After the airport ceremony, the two presidents will ride in a ceremonial motorcade to state guest house Jamuna where the distinguished visitor will be residing.
Ramos will lead a 120-member delegation which includes



Foreign Minister Domingo L Siazon. Minister for Trade and Industry, two other ministers, leaders of business and industry and media representatives.
A 50-member trade delegation would be accompanying the Philippines President.
This would be the first visit to Bangladesh by a Philippine President. Earlier, President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, President Hussain Muhammad Ershad and Prime Minister Ataur Rahman Khan visited the Philippines.
Official talks will take place this afternoon between the Bangladesh side led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the Philippines side led by President Fidel Ramos at the Prime Minister's office.
Expansion of trade and investment opportunities between Dhaka and Manila will be the main focus during the official talks. The two sides will explore areas of increased cooperation and identify commodities for export and import.
Currently the volume of trade between the two countries are at a low level although Bangladesh enjoys a favorable trade surplus by exporting jute goods and some traditional items.
Diplomatic sources indicated that discussions would be held on reactivating a number of agreements and protocols signed on previous occasions between the two countries. These include revival of the Bangladesh Philippines Joint Economic Commission and setting a date for the next meeting.
Talks will also focus on materialising a protocol for establishing direct air-links between Dhaka and Manila and two other previously signed agreements on educational programmes and exchange of cultural delegations on a regular basis between the two countries.
The Philippines President will address a gathering of local business and industry leaders organised by the Federation of Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) at a city hotel on Thursday.
President Shahabuddin will host a state banquet in honour of the Philippines President at the Bangabhaban.
President Ramos is also due to meet Prof Muhammad Yunus, pioneer of the internationally acclaimed Grameen Bank, and acquaint himself with its micro-credit programmes.
During his stay, President Ramos will also meet the Filipino community living and working in Bangladesh at a reception at a local hotel.
He would visit the Savar National Memorial to pay respect to the Bangladesh liberation war heroes.
The Philippines President would leave Dhaka for Islamabad on March 7 at 11.30 am.

Bilateral consultative meet begins today Govt to seek \$610m Japanese aid for eight projects

Bangladesh will seek some 610 million US dollars from Japan at a consultative meeting beginning here today to discuss new development projects under Japanese aid, reports UNB.
An eight-member Japanese Consultation Mission on Official Development Assistance (ODA) loans is already in the capital to take part in the two-day meeting.
Futao Motai, Senior Assistant for Loan Aid, Economic Cooperation Bureau of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is leading his country's team in the two-day consultation, billed very important by officials here.
Officials told UNB that the government would place eight specific projects, mainly in infrastructure and power sector, with a total involvement of 928 million US dollars and ask for 610 million dollars from the Japanese government.
Besides, project proposal for the Rupsha Bridge will be placed in the meeting for Japanese ODA.
The projects to be placed in the meeting include the Jamuna bridge access road project, Paksey bridge project, four power sector projects, one irrigation project and a port development project.
"The mission is very important. And the talks are also very crucial to us," said a senior official of the Economic Relations Division (ERD) which will represent the government in the consultation.
The consultation team has asked the Bangladesh officials to brief them about the economic policy of the present government, said the ERD official requesting anonymity.
During the last two years, visits of the Japanese ODA Consultation Mission could not take place because of uneasy political situation in the country.
A few months back, a Japanese mission came to discuss grant projects, but left here without any fresh commitment, indicating that fresh commitment might not be available unless Dhaka improves its performance.
But a senior official of the Japanese embassy in Dhaka said they were now happy with the present government as a "drastic change" has taken place in its decision-making process which has become quicker compared to the previous government.
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Politics on RU campus banned

From RU Correspondent
RAJSHAHI, Mar 4: The Rajshahi University Syndicate at an emergency meeting tonight banned political activities on the campus from tomorrow.
The Vice Chancellor Prof M Abdul Khaleque presided over the meeting.
The syndicate requested the Home Ministry to take necessary steps for maintaining a congenial atmosphere on the campus. The meeting banned rallies, processions and demonstrations on the campus till further order.
Talking to The Daily Star, the VC said the actions were taken to run the academic and administrative functions smoothly. Meanwhile, the Islamic Chhatra Shibir (ICS), protested the decision of the Syndicate.
The ICS and the Pro-Jamaat teachers of the University staged sit-ins separately protesting the removal of Prof M Yousuf Ali from the office of the Vice Chancellor.
Earlier, the ICS had called a five-day strike on the Campus from tomorrow demanding reinstatement of Prof M Yousuf Ali as Vice Chancellor of the university.

SSC exams begin tomorrow

About 7.42 lakh students are appearing in the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations under five education boards beginning tomorrow, reports BSS.
Official sources said, this is for the first time that the SSC examinees — 4,30,247 males and 3,11,614 females — of Dhaka, Rajshahi, Jessore, Comilla and Chittagong boards are sitting for the examinations with common sets of question papers.
The system of common question papers was introduced for the first time in the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations from last year.
According to an official chart, in Dhaka Board, over 2,20,059 candidates are expected to sit for the examinations at 201 centres, while in Rajshahi Board over 1,98,358 candidates at 197 centres are

Bankruptcy Act '97 passed Court to declare a company bankrupt

Bankruptcy Act '97 passed
The Jatiya Sangsad last night passed the Bankruptcy Act 1997, in an amended form, envisaging effective and speedy realisation of outstanding bank loans, reports BSS.
Finance Minister S A M S Kibria, who piloted the bill, said the district judge's court would be considered as the bankruptcy court. The bill provides power to the court to declare a company, firm and statutory body along with persons concerned bankrupt.
The finance minister accepted six amendments to the bill moved by two BNP members — M K Anwar and Abdul Mannan.
The House, however, rejected all other amendments moved by the opposition members.
The Act will be effective from the date to be fixed through a gazette notification by December 31, 1997.
Earlier, 11 members — six from BNP and one from Jamaat-e-Islami — took part in the general discussion on the President's address to parliament on its opening day.
Winding up the discussion, the finance minister described the bill as a historic bill and said it would usher in a new era in the national economy.
Kibria said the government had taken up a number of decisions to bring more dynamism in the economy. The Bankruptcy Bill is one of the steps, he added.
Kibria pointed out that the past BNP government had brought the bill before the House and we too examined it critically and now to enrich the bill, some of the amendments as proposed by the opposition members would be accepted, he added.

Move to check illegal migration Special passport for wage earners being considered

By Reaz Ahmad
A proposal to introduce a separate type of passport for Bangladesh wage earners abroad is under active consideration of the government, sources in the Ministry of Labour and Manpower said.
The proposal is aimed at reducing the scope for illegal migration to foreign countries.
Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA), which had made the proposal to the previous government, renewed it with added emphasis during a meeting with the State Minister for Labour and Manpower recently, the sources said.
The State Minister, M A Mannan, told The Daily Star

Summon Jai Jai Din editor for apology, Nasim urges Speaker

By Staff Correspondent
Posts and Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim yesterday urged the Speaker to summon the editor of a vernacular news weekly before the Jatiya Sangsad Privilege Committee and to ask him to apologise for his 'derogatory remarks' about parliament.
Nasim made the demand after a Treasury Bench MP, Ali Ashraf had raised the issue again yesterday. Ashraf had raised the issue earlier on February 24.
Rising on a point of order, Ashraf drew the attention of Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid, who was in the chair of the time, to some remarks of the editor of the 'Jai Jai Din', Shafiq Rehman, published in a daily on February 21.
He said, the editor of the

Each thana to have a Grameen Court: PM

By Staff Correspondent
The government has planned to set up at least one "Grameen Court" at each thana in the country for speedy disposal of minor disputes locally and at a low cost, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.
Replying to a question from Mirza Azam of the ruling Awami League, she further said that a bill on the planned Grameen Court would be placed in the House.
Speaking for the second time so far during PM's Question Time yesterday, Sheikh Hasina also replied to four other questions. These were from Zafrul Islam Chowdhury of BNP on setting up of more agriculture training centres and agriculture colleges, Abdul Latif Mirza of AL on supply of yarn and dye to the weavers at fair price, Tahura Ali of the same party on

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Road accident kills 6 near Jamalpur

At least 11 people were killed and 24 others injured in three road accidents in Jamalpur, Dhaka, Laksam and Jhenidah yesterday, reports UNB.
Six people were killed and four others injured in a road accident at Ambaria in Melandah thana of Jamalpur district yesterday.
Police said the accident occurred when a cement-laden truck from Dhaka skidded off the Jamalpur-Islampur road and fell into a 40 feet deep at about 5 am.
Some farm labourers who worked in Tongi and Gazipur were returning home by the Islampur-bound truck.
The dead were identified as Karim, 40, Kharu Mia, 35, So-laiman, 30, Dulal, 32, Bashed, 50, and Bablu, 38, of Munni-achar village in Melandah thana.
The injured were admitted to Jamalpur thana health complex. They were identified as Jamal, 25, Saraj Mia, 28, Habibur Rahman, 35, and Zaman, 28.
A crane from Jheel Bangla Sugar Mills reached the spot to salvage the truck. The acting DC of the district visited the spot and the TNO of Melandah was supervising the rescue operation.
In the capital city, two people were killed in separate road accidents yesterday, hospital sources said.
Sobhan, 40, died on way to Dhaka Medical College Hospital after he was hit by a scooter at Fulbaria at about 7 pm.
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Doctor murder: 2 arrested men confess to court

By Staff Correspondent
Two persons arrested late Monday night confessed their involvement in the killing of PG Hospital doctor Hafizur Rahman, police said last night.
Jahangir, 27, and Dulal, 25, arrested from Rayerbazar area were sent to the Dhaka Central Jail after recording their confessional statement under Section 164 at the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court yesterday morning.
Dr Hafizur Rahman was gunned down in front of his residence at Sanatnagar in Zia-tola under Dhanmondi thana Saturday night.
Meanwhile, police were interrogating the 12 other persons arrested Sunday in connection with the killing and later taken on remand for two days.



Teachers of medical colleges brought out a silent procession in the city yesterday demanding trial of the killers of Dr Hafiz. — Star photo

12 nations launch 'Friends of Microcredit' tomorrow

NEW YORK, Mar 4: Some 12 countries are setting up an informal consultative group at the UN Headquarters here to promote the idea of microcredit lending throughout the UN system, reports UNB.
The countries, to be represented by their permanent representatives to the United Nations, will meet periodically to review the progress and recommend new measures.
The idea to launch the group, 'Friends of Microcredit', has come from Bangladesh, and was first initiated at the microcredit summit held in Washington earlier last month, where Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina served as co-chairperson.
US First Lady Hillary Clinton, Queen Sophia of Spain and former Japanese prime minister Tsutomu Hata were the three other co-chairpersons at the summit, also attended by heads of government of Mali, Uganda and Peru, and the Queen of Belgium.
All stressed the need for actively encouraging the expansion of microcredit in national and international anti-poverty programmes.
Ambassador Anwarul Karim Chowdhury, Bangladesh's permanent representative to the United Nations, told UNB that the group would be formally launched on March 6 at the UN Headquarters. Initially, 12 countries will join the group, but the number is expected to grow.
"We would like to encourage the UN and its agencies and programmes to expand microcredit initiatives and integrate them in all anti-poverty action programmes," Chowdhury said.
The use of microcredit was recognised by the UN at the 1995 Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen.
Juan Somavia, Chile's permanent representative to the United Nations, who also served as the chief of the Social Summit, is expected to be actively involved in the work of the proposed group.
The formation of the 'Friends of Microcredit' is a direct outcome of the microcredit summit which adopted a plan to mobilise 21.6 billion US dollar over the next nine years to strengthen the existing credit facilities that extend loan to low income people, especially women. The concept was popularised by Prof Muhammad Yunus of Bangladesh, whose Grameen Bank is widely considered as a model for micro credit lending.
The United Nations and its affiliated bodies have already welcomed the action plan adopted at the summit. UN Development Programme (UNDP) Chief James Speth announced recently that his programme would provide 41 million US dollar to help sustain microcredit initiatives in 25 developing countries.
"One of our objectives will be to keep reminding the UN agencies of the commitment they have made in support of microcredit programmes worldwide," Ambassador Chowdhury said.
He expressed optimism that more countries, including developed ones, would join the group to pursue a common goal, the elimination of poverty.

Gunshots rock DU campus again

The Dhaka University campus was rocked once again by gunshots fired in and around two dormitories last night, reports UNB.
Campus sources said at least 10 rounds of gunshots were heard from the areas of Mohsin Hall, a dormitory dominated by ruling Awami League-backed BCL, and Surya Sen Hall, dominated by BNP-supported JCD, at around 10:45 pm.
Details of the firing could not be ascertained till filing of the report.
A tense situation was prevailing. Police were deployed outside the halls and at main points of the campus.

Savar incident 18 out of 32 arrested remanded

By Staff Correspondent
The District Magistrate's Court, Dhaka, yesterday granted a three-day remand for interrogating 18 persons out of 32 arrested in connection with the killings at Shadhapur village in Savar on Friday morning.
CID sources said, they prayed for a seven-day remand for further interrogation of the 13 Ansars and five security guards now in the Dhaka Central Jail. The court granted remand for three days.
They are likely to be taken to the CID custody from jail this morning.
Meanwhile, the CID team visited Savar yesterday and questioned several people of the Sadhapur village.