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Golam Azam will be tried for war crimes, says PM

By Staff Correspondent



Sheikh Hasina

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said yesterday that her government would put Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Golam Azam in the dock for war crimes.

"We'll definitely take initiative for trial of war criminal Golam Azam. Why shouldn't we?" she told a press conference at the Prime Minister's Office in the afternoon after her return from a three-day visit to Kuwait.

But the prime minister did not say anything specific about the trial.

Commenting on Golam Azam's quitting the top job of the party, she said, "Khaleda Zia joined hands with the war criminal to unseat the government. But Golam Azam is now deserting her."

Referring to BNP's alliance with Jamaat, she said late Zia Rahman brought Golam Azam back home although his citizenship was cancelled for his role against the nation's struggle for independence. And the war criminal got back his citizenship during the rule of Khaleda Zia, she added.

She also challenged the Jamaat chief's recent statement with BBC radio that no Islamic party participated in the country's War of Independence, saying that many religious leaders, imams of mosques and teachers of madrasas joined the war.

Meanwhile, the prime minister has urged the women folks not to vote for the BNP and Jatiya Party in the next general elections unless the opposition parties support the pending bill for retention of women's reserved seats in the parliament.

The opposition must join parliament to support the bill to prove that they need votes from the women community who constitute about half

of the voters. Otherwise, I would like to request the women voters to boycott BNP and Jatiya Party in the next general elections," said Hasina who heads the ruling Awami League.

She chimed in with an allegation that the fresh voters' list had at least 10 per cent phony voters, but said that it is the BNP that manipulated the new list.

"Eighty-five voters were listed from the residence of Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia ... this proves that the new list may contain phony voters ... Investigation may reveal more such cases of phony voter enrolment at the residences of other BNP leaders."

About the demand for enrolment of Bangladeshi expatriates in the electoral roll, she said there are legal complications in the way. "But there are scope for them to get enlisted by coming back to the country."

The prime minister blamed BNP for trying to create a situation over holding of a public rally at the Paltan Maidan on November 7 although rallies had been banned there for 10 days starting from November 1 for the sake of Bangladesh's maiden Test match against India.

"We've shifted (the venue) of our November 3 rally from Paltan Maidan to Osmany Udyan despite being the ruling party... What's wrong with the opposition BNP? They can also shift their rally (venue) to the Parade Ground," she said.

Referring to the contradictory press reports on the opposition programme, Hasina also expressed doubts whether the opposition at

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Jail Killing Day today

Shameful episode in history, says President

By Staff Correspondent

The Jail Killing Day will be observed today.

Four national leaders Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, AFIM Quamruzzaman, and Captain Mansur Ali who led the Liberation War were killed inside the Dhaka Central Jail on this day in 1975.

The killings took place in less than three months after the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman along with most of his family members in a military putsch on August 15.

President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave separate messages on the occasion.

The ruling Awami League will organize various programmes in the city and elsewhere in the country today in observance of the day.

It will hold a commemorative meeting in the city's

Osmany Uddyan this afternoon, to be addressed by Prime Minister and AL President Sheikh Hasina.

Other programmes include wearing of black badges, hoisting of black flags atop party offices, hoisting of the National Flag and AL flags at half-mast and offering munajat at the graves of the four leaders.

This year, the Jail Killing Day is being observed amid some progress in the long-stalled Jail Killing Case.

On October 12, the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka framed charges against 21 persons accused in the case. Thirteen of them are absconding. Cross-examination of witnesses will begin on November 20.

The case was filed with the Lalbagh thana a day

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BB tips banks off on big loans

By Inam Ahmed

The Bangladesh Bank (BB) has advised the commercial banks to be cautious in giving huge amount loans to avoid their exposure to external risks.

The latest BB directive will prevent at least 14 banks, four nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) and 10 private commercial banks (PCBs) from sanctioning loans involving big amounts beyond a certain formula.

According to the formula, banks which have up to five per cent of classified loans, will be allowed to give big loans not beyond 80 per cent of their total loans.

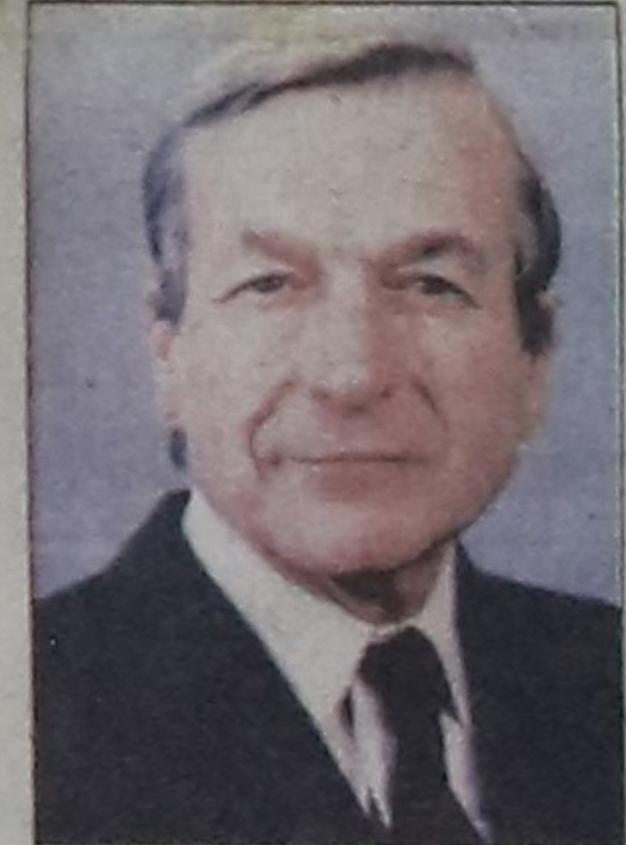
Those banks, which have between five and 10 per cent of classified loans, will have to limit their big lending within 60 per cent of their total credit.

Banks having between 10 and 15 per cent classified loans can give loans up to 40 per cent. With between 15 and 20 per cent classified loans, banks will be tied to a maximum limit of 30 per cent of total credit for big loans. If their classified loans cross 20 per cent, they will be allowed to give 20 per cent loans.

According to sources, the BB after analysing the balance sheets of the banks has found

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StanChart
chairman
due today



Sir Patrick Gillam

By Staff Correspondent

Chairman of Standard Chartered Group, parent company of Standard Chartered Bank, Sir Patrick Gillam arrives here today.

His visit is considered significant following the acquisition of ANZ Grindlays Bank's operation in South Asia and Middle East by the Standard Chartered Grindlays Bank, former ANZ Grindlays Bank, says a source added.

The acquisition established Standard Chartered as the leading bank in the Middle East and South Asia including Bangladesh.

During his three-day stay in Dhaka, Gillam will meet senior government officials, customers and employees of Standard Chartered Bank and Standard Chartered Grindlays Bank, former ANZ Grindlays Bank, says a source added.

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Ruling party raring for a showdown

Mammoth rally planned today to scare off opposition

By Reaz Ahmad

Ruling Awami League is all set to turn today's commemorative meeting marking the Jail Killing Day into a 'political showdown' in a bid to thwart the opposition move for an early general election.

High level party sources said that unlike all previous occasions, AL will arrange a bigger mass gathering in and around the city's Osmany Udyan today in remembrance of the four national leaders who were killed in Dhaka Central Jail on November 3, 1975.

"Traditionally, we have been organising limited-audience commemorative meetings at Paltan Maidan on November 3. But this time it is going to be a mammoth public rally," said a central AL leader.

Sources told The Daily Star that party workers from all adjoining districts of the capital would attend the meeting, the venue of which would stretch up to Abdul Gani Road and the road between the Udyan and Nagar Bhaban.

Prime Minister and AL President Sheikh Hasina will address the rally where she would re-affirm the government's position to relinquish power immediately after the expiry of its tenure, paving the way for a caretaker government to take over and hold the general elections, the sources added.

Awami League had originally planned to hold the rally at the traditional meeting venue of Paltan Maidan, but was denied permission to ensure security for the multi-million dollar TV and other communications equipment that are to be installed in and around Bangabandhu National Stadium, adjacent to Paltan Maidan, where

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An army team sweeps the ground at Osmany Udyan for possible bombs yesterday ahead of today's rally of ruling Awami League to mark the Jail Killing Day.

-- Star photo

100 hurt as police club agitating IU students

From IU Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Nov 2: At least 100 people were injured when police clubbed and teargassed students of the Islamic University on the campus here today.

The students staged a sit-in demonstration in front of the VC's office at 10 am demanding suspension of an officer of the transport section for his negligence of duty.

They also put up a barricade on Kushthia-Dhaka highway, disrupting traffic on the road and threat-

ened to confine all employees of the varsity inside the administrative building.

At around 4 pm, the treasurer and proctor of the varsity came to the agitating students to settle the issue, but the students refused to sit with them. They were demanding assurance from the Vice-Chancellor in this regard.

The Vice-Chancellor appeared before the agit-

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Jamaat Ameer to be elected through secret ballot

By Staff Correspondent

With Golam Azam quitting the post of Amir, Jamaat-e-Islami believes it would now become more acceptable to the people.

Azam, who acted against the country's independence during

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Cabbies and cohorts reign at ZIA

Passengers get routinely robbed as law enforcers sit idle

By Shaikh Nazrul Islam

The arriving and departing passengers at the Zia International Airport are facing all sorts of harassment at the airport premises despite the fact that 17 law enforcement agencies are stationed there.

Snatching of passports, foreign currencies and luggage of the passengers are a regular phenomenon and a racket is involved in these illegal activities, victims and official sources said.

A section of taxi drivers, specifically of black cabs, and their cohorts are responsible for this slide in law and order in the airport area, complained several passengers and airport officials.

Muggers pounced on a Dhaka-based BBC Bangla Service correspondent inside the security enclosure of ZIA while he was leaving the airport in a cab at around 3:40 a.m. on October 16.

A Biman passenger, Rezaul Sattar, who left Dhaka for Heathrow on a Biman flight (BG015) on August 30, found garbage in his suitcase. He said he first thought that it may have got damaged in the process of handling. But reaching home he examined his belongings. "To our horror we found cherished items are missing. This has definitely happened in Dhaka airport, as it was a direct flight with a stop-over in Dubai for refuelling," Sattar informed.

He said he was not the only victim; many of his close friends and relatives flying out from Dhaka had to go

through such shocking experience.

Several other passengers alleged that their luggage were cut and then attached with adhesive after the valuable were taken out. They also complained that waste and bricks were put into the luggage to keep the weight same as before.

Such state of lawlessness at ZIA has been there for quite some time, but there haven't been any effective measures to curb the criminal activities even after series of newspaper reports.

Drivers and owners of about 300 taxi-cabs have been using the taxi stand for more than 15 years without paying the rental to the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB), the supervising authority of the airport.

On the other hand, drivers of a small number of newly introduced yellow cabs are paying Tk 20 for every trip and Tk 500 annually to the CAAB. Taxi drivers do not comply with the rules set by the CAAB, which include carrying identity cards, stickers and fare charts.

Recently, the Home Ministry in a fact-finding report said that taxi drivers and their cohorts were aiding and abetting that at ZIA.

The police personnel stationed in the airport area have alleged that the Ansar personnel, who have been hired by the CAAB and are responsible for law and order there, are corrupt and involved with the racket.

The parking lot is dominated by the extortionists. They collect tolls from some of the taxi drivers, and those who pay better amounts get passengers more frequently than others who do not, officials said. In the process, the passengers are forced to choose certain cabs as directed by men engaged in toll collection.

Asked about the silence of the CAAB authorities in taking legal actions against trouble-mongers, a top CAAB official said that these criminals operate outside the car parking area, which is out of the CAAB's jurisdiction.

It is worthwhile to mention that airport authorities in other countries perform their duty in the whole airport area.

On the other hand, the law enforcement agencies stationed at the airport are hardly any help. "We formally appealed to the Deputy Commissioner of the Police, North several times, but to no avail," a senior CAAB official told The Daily Star.

But the police at the airport said they arrested a total of 1399 people within the first ten months of this year on charge of harassing passengers.

However, it is always the same criminals who get arrested and are immediately released only to start their illegal activities again, sources alleged.

INSIDE TODAY

COMMENT

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Sovereignty is still there, but it is not the same as applied to nation states of ninth century because the time has changed. **Hasnat Abdul Hye** writes in *Insists on Sovereignty*

Communism tried to undermine materialism, while capitalism worships it. But the gift of life has been neglected in both as the rich and poor shriked under one or the other. Meanwhile, we need to know why the rich commit suicide and the poor want to live, writes **Mohammad Badrul Ahsan** in *Why Do the Poor Want to Live?*

FOCUS

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The Hydra-headed Monster by Mansoor Mamoon

Rise of the Lal Sena by Harun Rashid

The Build-up Continues by Zaglul Ahmed Chowdhury

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Containing the Re-emerged Tuberculosis: Think Globally but Act Locally

by Dr Zakir Husain

PEOPLE

Noted novelist **Abul Quasem Azizul Huq** faces

to face with Ziaur Karim

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More deaths

An unidentified body lies under a blanket near the wreckage of the car carrying a bomb that went off near Jerusalem's Mahane Yehuda market yesterday, killing two people and injuring eleven others.

-- AFP photo

