

Israel army kills

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In the occupied West Bank in April. He insisted he was a political resistance leader immune from Israeli prosecution.

The trial is the first of a major player in the uprising, and Israel hopes it will prove that senior Palestinian officials, including President Yasser Arafat, have been behind the violence.

"You're a terrorist murderer who killed my children," Zion Swery, whose son, daughter and son-in-law were killed last year in a roadside shooting in the West Bank, shouted hoarsely as Barghouti was brought into the heavily guarded courtroom.

Barghouti, a charismatic orator considered a potential successor to Arafat, yelled back in Hebrew: "I am a freedom fighter. I am a victim of occupation."

The Palestinians say the hearing is a political show trial and that Israel has no authority to try Barghouti.

Israeli prosecutors have charged Barghouti, an elected Palestinian lawmaker, with orchestrating suicide bombings and other attacks on Israeli civilians during the uprising.

Judge Zvi Gurfinkel began the hour-long session by reading the charges, describing in detail attacks that killed 26 people.

Five killed as US chopper crashes in Honduras

REUTERS, TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras

A US Army Black Hawk helicopter crashed in a mountainous region of Honduras during a routine training mission, killing all five troops aboard, Honduran police said yesterday.

US officials said the helicopter, based at the Soto Cano air base, crashed on Wednesday night three miles east of the town of Santa Cruz in northern Honduras.

There was no word from Washington on the fate of the five troops, but Honduran officials said they were all killed.

"The five people on board the helicopter, who are U.S. military personnel, died and their bodies were found scattered during the rescue operations," police agent Arnold Gutierrez said.

"We saw a light in the sky and then heard the bang when it fell," local resident Hipolito Herrera told a Honduran radio station.

In Washington, Army spokesman Maj. Richard Cruzan said an investigation into the crash was under way.

There are about 400 US troops stationed in Honduras. The US military presence began in 1982 at the height of Central America's Cold War conflicts.

Attack on Khaleda

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after more than a year of investigation, submitted the charge sheet yesterday. Assistant Superintendent of the CID Dulaluddin Akhond was in charge of investigating the case.

The officials during the investigation found "the opposition leader had to abandoned her trip and go back to Dhaka as the then ruling party activists had removed the ferry from the terminal on trading gunfire and vandalism." The incident took place on June 17.

Masukur Rahman Masuk, a local Jubo Dal leader, had filed a case with the Madaripur police on June 20. Police submitted the final report after half a month's investigation. Later, on a petition, the case was transferred to the CID.

Of the accused, 25 are on bail and the rest absconding.

New Pak rulers

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speculation in Pakistan that a deal had been struck between Bhutto and the military to allow her to return.

Without the defections, the pro-military Pakistan Muslim League led by Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamili would have been unable to secure a parliamentary majority.

But Hayat said his decision to swap sides was in the national interest and aimed at burying the hatchet between Bhutto and the pro-military wing. "The People's Party should have formed the government with the PMT," he said.

Above all he wanted to avoid another of the stand-offs between military and civilian rulers that have troubled Pakistan throughout its 55-year history.

How much influence Hayat will have over Bhutto and the PPP remains to be seen. Senior party members warned him he faced punishment and possible expulsion for joining the government.

"They (the defectors) were asked to resign immediately from

Barghouti, 43, has denied any involvement in attacks and has vowed to use the proceedings to put Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip on trial.

"International convention includes no article that allows the killing of civilians and as such the court has full jurisdiction to put on trial Palestinians involved in acts of terror," Gurfinkel said in his ruling.

Gurfinkel also rejected Barghouti's claim that interim Israeli-Palestinian peace deals barred the Jewish state from prosecuting Palestinians in its courts. Barghouti is leader of Arafat's Fatah faction in the West Bank.

Barghouti's lawyers said they would appeal to Israel's Supreme Court. Barghouti's trial is already under way and the Tel Aviv court set the next hearing for January 2.

In the Vatican, Israeli President Moshe Katsav promised Pope John Paul that Israel's army would leave Bethlehem over Christmas if there were no "warnings of terror operations," Israel's embassy to the Vatican said.

Israeli troops reoccupied Palestinian-ruled Bethlehem, revered as the birthplace of Jesus, three weeks ago following a suicide bombing that killed 11 Israelis on a Jerusalem bus.

"The Pope expressed interest in the situation in Bethlehem with the approach of Christmas and the president promised that if there will not be warnings of terror operations, the Israel Defense Forces will redeploy outside Bethlehem," the embassy said in a statement.

It made no mention of Arafat, whom Israel has barred from making a Christmas visit to Bethlehem for the second year in a row. Israel accuses Arafat of not doing enough to stop attacks on Israelis by Palestinian militants.

At least 1,717 Palestinians and 668 Israelis have been killed since the Palestinian revolt began.

Manna

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and Jatiya Party (Monju) leader Golam Faruk Ovi. CID believes Ovi is in hiding somewhere.

Ashraful Huda said Manna was included in CID's list for interrogation following newspaper reports that mused about his connection as he left the country immediately after the murder.

"Moreover, Tinni had signed a film to be produced by Manna but had suddenly withdrawn herself from it," Huda said.

The CID team picked up the actor from his brother's office at the city's Kakrai area at about 11:00am and released him after 5:00pm. Manna was asked to produce his passport so that his departure dates could be cross-checked.

Replying to a query about the connection of any other political leaders with the killing, Ashraful Huda said, "We have yet to include any front line political leaders in our list".

Police have so far interrogated 21 people including Manna. They have a list of about 80 including 24 models.

Keraniganj police recovered the body of Tinni with injury marks from under the Buriganga Bridge on November 16. Four days later, the body was handed over as unclaimed to the Anjuman Mufidul Islam, a charity for burial.

On November 23, police transferred the case to the CID. The body was exhumed from the Jurain graveyard on November 25 for a second autopsy. Police arrested Tinni's housemaids Shefali and Bina, while her husband Shafkat Hossain Piyal surrendered to the Keraniganj Police Station.

HC grants bail to Saber

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later. He has been shown arrested in the sedition case involving the two foreign journalists - who were deported Wednesday. Although Shahriar is not an accused in the First Information Report (FIR) of the sedition case, the police sought the court's approval for his fresh remand for seven days. Its hearing will take place on December 30, as per the court's decision.

The High Court also instructed the CMM's Court to send Saber's statement to the High Court immediately after its recording. But as no statement was recorded, the lower court could not send the deposition to the High Court.

Shahriar's case followed a similar course. The CMM's court disagreed with the defence lawyers on the High Court order asking the lower court to record Shahriar's statement and promptly send it back to the High Court. When Shahriar was produced before the court at 12:30pm, his statement was not recorded and, therefore, no statement was sent to the High Court.

Leading lawyers of the country including Barrister Shawkat Ali Khan, Barrister Amirul Islam, Advocate Rahmat Ali MP, Abdul Matin Khasru, Syed Rezaur Rahman, Kamrul Islam, Sahara Khatun and others assembled at the lower court at around 10 am to defend Shahriar, Saber, AL leader Shafi Ahmed and Mukul Bose, and writer-academician Muntasir Mamun.

Shahriar was brought to the court premises at 10:30am and he was taken to the courtroom two hours

Plans drawn

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Betar, Bangladesh Television and private TV channels will air special programmes.

The ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the main opposition Awami League will observe the day through various programmes in the capital and other parts of the country.

The Dhaka University (DU) authorities will hoist black flag at the main buildings of the university and place wreaths at the Mirpur memorial and also at the graves of martyred intellectuals beside the university central mosque. They will also hold a discussion meeting.

Besides, programmes have been taken up by the National University, Muktijoddha Jadugahr, Nazrul Institute, Dhaka Union of Journalists, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, Bangladesh Awami Juba League and Krishak League, Bangla Academy, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, National Museum, Sammilito Sangskritik Jote and scores of other organisations and institutions.

The martyrs' families will hold Khatme Quran and special prayers separately at their residences.

Shykh Siraj

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Seraj was summoned Wednesday

to be quizzed about the cultural team's trip to Sweden, of which top criminal Kala Faruque was a member. Earlier popular singer Shuvra Dev was also arrested for his alleged involvement in helping Faruque to be a member of the cultural team.

Faruque was arrested from an aircraft at the Zia International Airport prior to his departure for Sweden. Police also held another member of the team Nazrul Islam Qureshi, a programme director of Channel 1, and he is now in jail.

Faruque was later taken to the Airport Police Station and then Uttara police Station. According to the police, Faruque was shot in the leg as he tried to escape when he was taken to the Osmani hostel of the Textile College at Tejgaon on November 5 to identify his accomplices. Injured, he was taken to the National Orthopedics (Pangu) Hospital where the on-duty doctors declared him dead.

Army raids

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spot and found two more explosives on the rooftop.

The hall, declared unusable by the authorities, was vacated following the killing of a JCD activist on the college campus four months back.

In Faridpur the joint forces arrested Jatiya Party (JP) leader Saiful Islam Nilu and handed him to police, our correspondent reports.

The joint forces also arrested a leader of Sarbahara party, Zahidur Rahman, at Alipur.

In Lalmonirhat, according to our correspondent, the army yesterday arrested a top criminal from Saptana Bazar residential area. Salama is a local leader of the ruling party.

Our Feni correspondent reports that the joint forces arrested four people including a cadre of Hazari Bahini yesterday.

In Rajbari, the army arrested three listed criminals from different parts of the district yesterday, our correspondent reports.

Meanwhile, in a press release, the police headquarters said they arrested 1,293 people including four identified criminals during the countrywide drive in the last 24 hours till 6.00am yesterday.

Police have also recovered six firearms along with 218 round of bullets.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police in a press release yesterday said they arrested 195 people including 13 wanted criminals.

Shahriar's lawyers filed a bail petition to the CMM's Court saying that as Shahriar was not an accused in the case, and also as the main accused in the case - the two foreign journalists - have been released, bail should be granted.

Upon hearing the petition, CMM's Court Magistrate Khandker Atiar Rahman rejected the bail prayer and ordered Shahriar to be sent to jail under one-month detention. Shahriar was sent to jail at 1:00pm.

During the court proceedings, defence lawyers and prosecution lawyers were locked in a hot debate till the arrival of Saber, Muntasir and Shafi at the court premises at 2:20pm.

At that time, Barrister Amir-ul-Islam read out to Magistrate Mamun-al-Rashid the High Court order dealing with Saber Chowdhury and submitted a petition requesting the lower court to record

Saber's statement. Countering Amir's disposition, Metropolitan Public Prosecutor Abdullah Mahmud Hasan read out a letter of the Deputy Attorney General (DAG) saying that the prosecutors would go to the Supreme Court Appellate Division against the High Court order. In this context, he argued, the CMM could not record Saber's statement.

The CMM's Court accepted the prosecutor's argument and did not record Saber's disposition.

Barrister Amir further argued that a letter of the DAG could not take precedence over a High Court order. The issue has not been sent to the Appellate Division and, as such, the DAG's suggestions could not be accepted.

Again, the magistrate upheld the prosecutor's argument.

At this point, Barrister Amir said that Saber could not be placed in the dock as he has already got ad-interim bail from the High Court and his bail bond has been furnished. He requested the magistrate to release him.

But the magistrate rejected the submission saying there was 'no such provision' and sent Saber to jail under a one-month detention order.

However, in the end the court fixed December 22 for submission of the stay order of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court. Afterwards, there was another

round of debate between the prosecutors and defence lawyers that occasionally turned into angry exchanges. The situation was brought under control several times with the intervention of senior lawyers.

Later, Shafi and Muntasir were produced before Magistrate Mamun-al-Rashid. Again, the magistrate did not record Shafi and Muntasir's statements and subsequently did not send their statements to the High Court.

At 4:00pm, Saber, Shafi and Muntasir were taken to a prison van in the court premises to be sent to the jail. During this time, over two thousand lawyers, journalists, relatives, visitors and activists thronged the courtroom and the premises.

Most of these people appeared agitated and a tensed situation prevailed for some time. In this situation, the police started baton charging till the crowd dispersed.

At 4:15pm, AL leader Mukul Bose was brought to the court by the police on completion of his three-day police remand. This time around, Magistrate Mamun obeyed a separate High Court order to send Bose to jail instead of police custody. Bose has been given one month's detention order.

Legalisation not only way

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caretaker government Justice Habibur Rahman and Member of the SACEPS Board of Trustees Dr Kamal Hossain.

Lack of literacy is one of the causes of the first-generation human-rights violation, Sen said, with an emphasis on higher education to establish human rights.

Comparing different human-rights commissions in South Asia, he said the Indian human-rights commission has a legally recognised form, while the Pakistan human-rights commission is basically an NGO (non-governmental organisation).

Some of the human-rights declarations do not have legislation and public recognition is important in that case. The famous economist said human-rights laws incorporate political, social and economic laws. Social agreement in the context of South Asia is very important and it requires social consensus, he

added. Justice Habibur Rahman has observed that there are adequate laws in the South Asian region, but most laws are unnecessary.

He stressed the importance of social consciousness in establishing human rights.

Dr Kamal Hossain in his speech said the laws of the region reflect the heritage of 50 years of postcolonial excuse and underlined establishment of a just society.

Pointing to the hardship during the colonial period and achievement of the people of the region, he said, "We are billion people and whatever we have achieved is through pains."

Prof. Rehman Sobhan, executive director of the SACEPS and chairman of CPD, who chaired the session, discussed the role of different private thinktanks in upholding human rights.

The programme is being attended by nine representatives of South Asian countries, including India, Nepal, the Maldives, Sri

Lanka and Pakistan.

Lawmakers, academicians, policymakers, local business leaders, experts from regional and multilateral organisations attended the inaugural session.

The meeting is aimed at finalising the draft of the Citizen's Social Charter for South Asia which is being prepared by a taskforce convened by the SACEPS, drawing upon inputs from citizen groups across the region.

The meeting is expected to concentrate on the implementation and institutional mechanisms needed to enforce the charter.

The eventual goal of this mobilisation of citizens will be to contribute to the preparation of the SAARC Social Charter and to ensure that the provisions are made enforceable to safeguard the social, economic and political rights of the deprived South Asia.

Shahriar in sedition case

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December 30 for hearing the remand prayer and sent Shahriar to the Dhaka Central Jail.

Meanwhile, freelance journalist Saleem Samad and NGO representative Pricilla Raj, the local guides of the foreign journalists, are yet to be freed. They were detained for helping Italian Leopoldo Bruno Sorrentino and British Zaiba Naz Malik of British Channel 4 TV to gather information on Islamic fundamentalism and al-Qaeda activities.

After two weeks of remand and detention, the government on Wednesday deported the foreign newsmen to their respective countries. The government however said no sedition charges were levelled against them.

The government is yet to decide on the fate of Saleem and Pricilla, though. Police sources said the government has no intention to release Samad and Pricilla anytime soon. They also said that government would rather be tough on the

two. The sources added that the sedition charges against Saleem and Pricilla would not be dropped despite the fact that the principal accused in the case -- the two foreign journalists -- have been released.

Mother of Pricilla Raj, Hasna Begum, has urged prime ministerial intervention for release of her daughter.

In a statement yesterday, she said she could not comprehend why her daughter was still in jail while the prime accused -- the two foreign journalists -- were released. "There is no reason to detain my daughter any longer," she said.

"I appealed to the prime minister to intervene into the matter so that my innocent daughter is released without further delay," she added. Hasna Begum said Pricilla has been living in inhuman condition in the jail. She also alleged that police tortured her daughter during remand. Bangladesh Mahila Parishad

has expressed grave concern over the delay in releasing Pricilla. In a statement, it said Pricilla should be released immediately to show respect to the rule of law and the human rights of women.

The Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) in a joint statement yesterday also demanded immediate release of Saleem and Pricilla.

On November 25, police arrested Sorrentino and Malik as they were about to cross over to India via the Benapole border. Pricilla, who acted as an interpreter for them, were arrested in Rajbari the same day while she was driving back to the capital after seeing off the two journalists. Saleem, Bangladesh representative of Reporters sans Frontiers, was arrested from a house in Uttara on November 29.

Red carpet for Khaleda

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and given a red-carpet welcome at the airport.

As the Bangladeshi leader alighted from the special aircraft of the Thai Airways in Chiang Mai, a 19-gun salute boomed in the air heralding her arrival.

Four F-16 fighter aircraft of the Royal Thai Air Force escorted the plane after it entered the Thai airspace. The aircraft also carried the Thai PM, Governor of Chiang Mai, six ministers, MPs, chiefs of the three services and other high officials.

Khaleda is leading a 42-member official delegation, which includes Foreign Minister M. Morshed Khan, Communications Minister Nazmul Huda, Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin, Principal Secretary to the PM Dr Kamal Uddin Siddiqui, Foreign Secretary Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury and Political Secretary to the PM Mosaddak Ali.

Chiang Mai Vice-governor Boian received Khaleda at the tarmac when she disembarked from the aircraft along with the Thai PM. The plane carrying the two Prime ministers touched the runway of the Military Air Terminal Wing 41 of Chiang Mai at 4:15pm BST.

She was then escorted to the saluting dais from where she took the salute from a smartly turned out contingent drawn from the Royal

Thai Services as the bands played the national anthems of Bangladesh and Thailand. She also inspected the guard.

Two young girls presented flower bouquets to Khaleda. Dozens of beautiful girls in colourful dress, mostly traditional costumes, were present to give a befitting welcome to the Bangladeshi leader.

The airport wore a festive look with school children waving miniature flags of the two countries and colourful streamers.

School girls wearing traditional Thai costumes stood in two lines and showered flower petals on Khaleda as she walked towards the VVIP lounge of the airport, which was decorated with spread out red carpets and hanging life-size portraits of the prime ministers of Bangladesh and Thailand. She waved back at the children.

The entire airport was decorated with national flags of the two countries and banners inscribed with welcome slogans. Khaleda was then taken to the line of presentation where Thai Ministers, diplomats, high civil and military officials were introduced to her. She also introduced the Bangladeshi ministers and entourage members to the Thai PM.

Bangladesh Ambassador to Thailand Hemayetuddin and other officials of the embassy and their spouses were also present at the airport to greet the Prime Minister. Members of the Bangladeshi com-

munity were also present at the airport.

The entire route from the airport to Westin Riverside Plaza Hotel, Chiang Mai, where she will stay for one night and two days, wore a festive look with people gathering on both sides of the road to see the distinguished guest from Bangladesh.

They waved hands as the motorcade passed by them. Mounted security men received the motorcade and escorted it in slow motion up to the hotel gate.

In the evening, the Thai prime minister hosted a dinner in honour of Khaleda at Le Grand Lanna Restaurant where both of them delivered speeches and expressed their readiness to further strengthen the existing ties between the two countries.

After a brief meeting at Lana Room in Westin Hotel, the two sides (Bangladesh and Thailand) will hold formal official talks at 10:00am today which will cover the entire gamut of bilateral issues.

She will visit Sa Paper Community, a project under One Village, One Product scheme, which is a paper manufacturing plant using indigenous knowledge and technology. She will leave Chiang Mai for Bangkok at 4pm today. The PM will return home Saturday night.

Ijtema begins

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western corner of the venue.

The organisers said the number of security personnel has increased this year and 1,500 law enforcers, including plainclothes police and ansars, are working shifts on the ijtema premises.

About eight to ten police control rooms will be set up to maintain law and order and control traffic movement.

The army has set up three Bailey bridges over the Turag River. Fire extinguishers were set up for safety. Five generators have been installed to ensure electricity.

The government has added 30 more beds to the Tongi Hospital to provide healthcare to the devotees. Besides, 37 medical teams of different government and non-governmental organisations have been deployed.

Ten cleanup teams have started working on the roads leading to the ijtema venue. Sanitation teams will

Justice tangled

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for special groups of prisoners such as juveniles, women, foreigners, mentally disturbed and drug addicts.

They also recommended regular inspection and free flow of information which are necessary to all categories of prisoners, whether convicted or on-trial.

Chief Justice Chowdhury, who was chief guest of the inaugural session, said, "The consequences are alarming. Majority of the prison population in this country is being held as pre-trial prisoners."

"Many of these prisoners may have been victims of fictitious and false cases and many may be imprisoned for a period more than the length of punishment of their yet-to-be-proved crimes," he said.

He also emphasised extending alternative non-formal justice system through mediation and conciliation between conflicting parties to ensure inexpensive and generally reconciliatory and restorative justice.

Dr Kamal Hossain, chairperson of BLAST, Ahmed Othmani, chairperson of PRI, Justice J S Verma, chairperson of National Human Rights Commission of India, John Amarantunga, interior minister of Sri Lanka and Moudud Ahmed, Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister, also spoke at the inaugural session.

Who are they?

FROM PAGE 1
at the centre of the memorial reminds one that it was built to pay tribute to them.

On the eve of the independence, Bangladesh lost its eminent academics, litterateurs, doctors, engineers and journalists. Sensing an imminent defeat, the Pakistani occupation forces and their local collaborators picked up those intellectuals from their residences and killed them brutally.

"Our next generation should be aware of the history of the nation," said Sayeedur Rahman, a teacher who brought his little daughter to the memorial.

"It is very unfortunate that the memorial does not provide any information about the martyrs," he regretted.

Some of the visitors suggested there should be a small museum at the site to enable people to know about the martyrs.

Besides, the place deserves more attention. Though a notice by

check the quality of foods and drinking water in hotels and restaurants.

The Bangladesh Railway and the Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) have provided special trains and buses from different parts of the country to ensure uninterrupted transportation.

The Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation has introduced special ferries on Paturia-Kazirhat, Paturia-Daulatdia and Maowa-Charjanajait routes.

President Iajuddin Ahmed, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina gave messages wishing the devotees divine blessings on the occasion.

They hoped the congregation would help strengthen unity, integrity and brotherhood among the Muslims and play an important role in establishing peace in the world.

Typical tales

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A heart patient, Shahriar said he was not allowed to take medicine or sleep during the last five nights. He was not given any drinking water and was forced to drink toilet water when thirsty, the journalist alleged.

On December 10, Salam, a duty officer of the Cantonment Police Station, took away the food provided by his family, Shahriar said.

Columnist Muntasir, a history teacher of Dhaka University, told the court that he was arrested without warrant. He was kept in custody with Banga Babu, a listed top criminal.

"I was not involved in any activities other than writing books and teaching," Mamun told the court. He said he was blindfolded and taken to the JIC every night for interrogation. He was not given any bed to sleep at night.

"Let me live some more days to finish my unfinished work on a book," he appealed to the court.

Awami League leader Shafi Ahmed said, "I have no words to express the police brutality in the name of interrogation."

Awami League leader Mukul Bose alleged that he was physically tortured and taken to the JIC blindfolded everyday. Bose, also a heart patient, was not