

## ELECTIONS TO JS RESERVED SEATS

# Even ministers, their kin vie for BNP ticket

Each woman MP to donate Tk 3 lakh to party funds; 183 application forms sold on first day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Aspirant BNP candidates in the September 6 elections to the women's reserved seats in parliament thronged the ruling party headquarters in the city yesterday to collect application forms for party nomination.

Besides Prime Minister's Primary

and Mass Education Affairs Adviser Zahanara Begum and technocrat State Minister for Cultural Affairs Selima Rahman, many a wife, sister, relative and protégé of BNP ministers and senior leaders was among the ticket seekers.

Total 183 forms were sold yesterday, with Zahanara grabbing the first at 10am, while seven filled up forms

were submitted. The application form distribution and submission process will continue until August 18 and BNP parliamentary board will interview the applicants on August 23.

The party coffers would be swelled by at least Tk 1.5 crore as proceeds from the nomination

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PHOTO: STAR

Aspirants to parliament crowd the BNP central office at Naya Paltan to collect party nomination forms for the women's reserved seats in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

# Jamaluddin killed one month after abduction

Prime suspect Shahid reveals after arrest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Shahid Chairman, prime suspect in abduction of Chittagong business magnate Jamaluddin Ahmed Chowdhury, was arrested on Saturday night, over two years after the incident.

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), Chittagong held Shahid, a union parishad (UP) chairman, at Patenga beach at around 9:00pm.

They interrogated him at Rab-7 headquarters at Patenga till yesterday morning and then took him to Patiya and recovered two light guns. He was brought back to the Rab headquarters in the afternoon.

Talking to journalists at the Rab-7 headquarters yesterday, Shahid said that Jamaluddin, also a leader of Chittagong (South) district unit of

ruling BNP, was killed about one month after his abduction on July 24, 2003.

He said that Jamaluddin was shot dead after being thrown into a

cave. Kala Mahboob, Lamba Mahboob and Babu committed the murder at an outlying area of Fatikchhari upazila, he added.

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PHOTO: STAR

Shahid Chairman, the prime accused in the Jamal Uddin abduction case, left, guarded by Rab members; and Jamal's wife, right, weeps at the Rab office in Chittagong.

## Italy begins early Iraq withdrawal

AGENCIES, Rome/Baghdad

More than 100 Italian troops whose tours in southern Iraq have ended are not being replaced, apparently marking the beginning of the country's withdrawal from Iraq ahead of schedule, a newspaper reported Saturday.

Six US soldiers were killed over the past two days in Iraqi insurgent attacks.

Premier Silvio Berlusconi, a US ally, said last month that Italy would begin bringing home about 300 troops in September as Iraqi security forces become capable of securing the territory.

But the Italian daily La Stampa said about 130 sailors, a squadron of CH-47 Chinook transport helicopters and some 100 army pilots, mechanics and machine-gunners had left Iraq and only half of those posts would be replaced. The newspaper did not cite sources.

A spokesman for Italy's military contingent in Nasiriyah, Iraq, reached Saturday by The Associated Press, acknowledged the troops had returned to Italy but said he could not confirm that they were not being replaced.

"I only know that they have left. You also need to consider that their tour was over," Lt. Col. Fabio

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# Criminals demand Tk 10 lakh from another Mirpur trader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two days into the killing of businessman Kazi Shahidullah, criminals demanded Tk 10 lakh from another businessman of Mirpur.

"One called me Saturday night, identifying himself as Shahadat and said 'Shahid is finished; now it is your turn. If you do not want to die, give us

Tk 10 lakh,'" a trader quoted a president of a market at Mirpur 1 as saying.

For the last one year, local criminals Shahadat and his gang's kingpin Khorshed, along with Ali Azam, Ali Akbar and Abul Kalam are forcing local traders to pay them illegal tolls, local traders said. They also alleged

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# Mazar income feud behind the blasts

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

While law enforcers remained clueless about Friday's bomb explosions on the Kalla Shaheed Mazar premises in Akhaura that killed one and injured 50 others, local people suspected a feud over the income from the mazar and a market had some link with the incident.

A 112-strong police contingent is keeping vigil around the mazar, where the ongoing urs will end on Tuesday

Police earlier arrested two of the bomb-injured persons, one of whom left the local hospital after dodging the police on Saturday.

Meanwhile, the local police administration yesterday said they no longer suspect the two injured as offenders.

The two came from Comilla and Dhaka as devotees, they added.

Last year the Mazar Committee received Tk 54 lakh in the mazar fund as donations from the

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## People to try alliance govt for sitting on verdict

Says Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the people would execute the verdict of the Bangabandhu murder case as the BNP-led alliance government has sided with the killers.

"The people of the country will hold trial of the BNP-Jamaat-led government for not executing the verdict of Bangabandhu murder case," Hasina said. She was addressing a discussion organised by her party to commemorate the death anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family members.

Hasina, also Awami League (AL) chief, said the government has rewarded the killers of Bangabandhu instead of bringing them to justice.

"Bangabandhu's killers have been appointed to the foreign ministry and made MPs through the February 15 election in 1996," the AL chief said.

She alleged the BNP government has not only rewarded the killers but also rehabilitated the war criminals in politics.

The coalition government is siding with the killers of Bangabandhu and trying to erase his name from the Liberation War

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## Govt should explain judges' embarrassment

Kamal tells The Daily Star



JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

The state is responsible for prosecuting the killers of Bangabandhu and the government has failed to carry out this constitutional duty, Dr Kamal Hossain said in an interview with The Daily Star yesterday, on the 30th anniversary of the August 15 tragedy.

The constitution empowers the government to appoint judges on ad hoc basis to resume hearing of Bangabandhu Murder Case, but unfortunately the government, being reluctant to pursue the case, is continuously showing disrespect to the constitution, he said.

Asked if the government is accountable to people to explain why the judges are being

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## AL calls half-day hartal for today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Main opposition Awami League (AL) enforces a six-hour countrywide hartal today from 6:00am to 12:00noon, demanding immediate execution of the verdict in the Bangabandhu Murder Case.

The programme was taken also to protest the revocation of state mourning on August 15 and demand reinstating of the day as a public holiday.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jaal in a statement yesterday urged the countrymen as well as the party workers to observe the hartal.

## Coastguards foil smuggling of 3.1 lakh litre diesel

BDNEWS, Bagerhat

Coastguards yesterday arrested nine people and seized a Bangladeshi tanker with 3.1 lakh litres of diesel for their attempt to smuggle the fuel to a Panama flag carrier ship.

The coastguards nabbed the nine — seven crewmen of tanker MV Priyanka and two employees of two fuel stations — at Mongla seaport.

However, they let go the crew of MV KS Harmony and did not seize

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# Nation mourns Bangabandhu today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nation today pays tribute to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding father of the nation, amid a lingering uncertainty over the trial of his killers.

At the crack of dawn on August 15, 1975, Bangabandhu and his family members, excepting two daughters — Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana — who were fortunately abroad at the time, were massacred by a group splintered off the country's armed forces.

The August 1975 assassinations were followed by the killings in prison of four national leaders three months later.

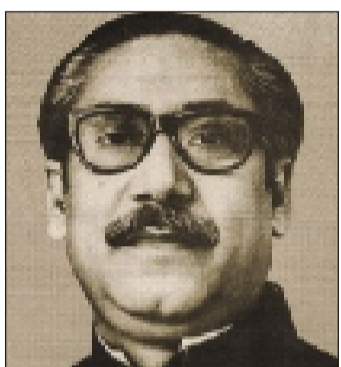
In November 1998, the trial court sentenced to death 15 people for the August 15 killings, but the High Court later spared three of them.

Since then, the case is pending with the Appellate Division of the

Supreme Court, which is two judges shy of a three-member division bench required to hear the leave to appeal petition.

The government can correct the situation by appointing two judges

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Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman



## THE PAST IS NEVER DEAD

# The long shadow of the August 1975 coup

LAWRENCE LIFSCHULTZ

The 30th anniversary of the August 15th military coup in Bangladesh powerfully illustrates the dictum of William Faulkner that the past is never dead, it is not even past. For those of us who lived through the years of Bangladesh's 'War of Independence' and the decade of the 1970s, we remember these dates as milestones of an era. They are markers on a road we traveled to a destination many did not reach.

After thirty years Bangladesh still lives with the legacy of the violent night of August 15th. Just over four years from that dark March night in 1971 when Pakistani Army troops rolled their tanks and armoured vehicles through the streets of Dhaka slaughtering their fellow countrymen instead of accepting the outcome of national elections they had agreed to accept, a small unit of the new Bangladesh Army invoking the sordid tradition of Pakistan Army staged a traditional military putsch.

Within hours, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, symbol for many of an ideal of liberation, was dead in a military coup d'etat that had run amok in a frenzy of killing. Mujib and almost his entire family were slaughtered including his wife and sons, the youngest only twelve. On that deadly night groups of soldiers broke into squads and traveled around the city killing relatives of Mujib's family.

The pregnant wife of one relation who attempted to intercede to save her husband's life was herself killed for her efforts. Mujib's two daughters were abroad and they survived with Sheikh Hasina years later becoming Prime Minister. Yet, only a year ago, she too was nearly assassinated in broad daylight by a hit squad that still "eludes" capture, demonstrating

Was the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family members on August 15, 1975 merely the result of personal malice and an act out of sudden fury of some army officers?

Long investigation by veteran US journalist Lawrence Lifschultz has made it clear that there was a deep-rooted conspiracy behind the dark episode of August 15.

Lifschultz in a number of investigative reports published in newspapers made it clear that Khandaker Moshtaque and a quarter of US embassy officials in Dhaka were closely involved with the small section of army officers in the August 15 coup.

At long last, Lifschultz disclosed the name of his "very reliable source", the then US ambassador in Dhaka Eugene Booster with whom he has maintained close communication for the 30 years.

Booster repeatedly objected to the conspiracy leading to the August 15 assassination, even issued written instruction in this regard, but failed to prevent the then station chief Philip Cherry of US Central Intelligence

Agency (CIA) in Dhaka office from doing the conspiracy.

Lifschultz's plan to publish an interview of Eugene Booster in this regard remained unfulfilled as Booster passed away on July 7 last.

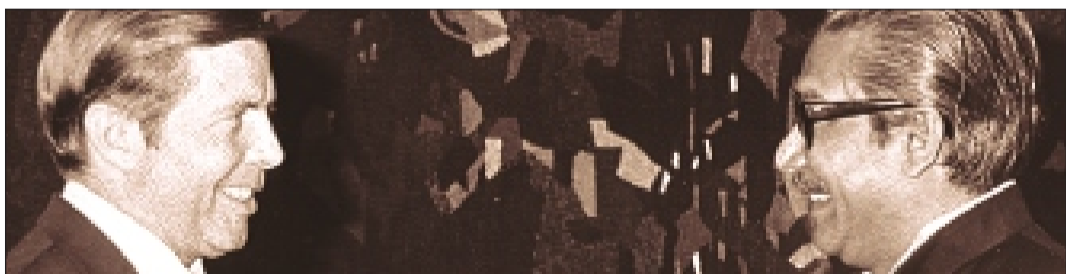
The new-born Bangladesh could not save herself from the wrath of then foreign secretary Henry Kissinger who could never forget that Bangladesh was born in opposition to his suggestion.

Along with Salvador Allende of Chile and Taiyoo of Vietnam, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was in Kissinger's political vendetta.

What USA started during the Liberation War in 1971 with attempt to split the Awami League using Khandaker Moshtaque and his accomplices continued after the independence following a direct US instigation, resulting in the carnage on August 15, 1975.

On basis of his 30 years' investigation that included interviews with the US sources, Moshtaque and others concerned, Lifschultz has written a series of that tale.

The first part of his four reports is published today.



FILE PHOTO

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with the then US ambassador in Dhaka, Eugene Booster.

yet again Faulkner's insight the past is not even past. It is very much present.

The political configuration that exists today is a direct descendant of August 15, 1975. The current Prime Minister, Khaleda Zia, was the wife of the late General Ziaur Rahman, the Deputy Chief of Army Staff in 1975, who played a crucial behind scenes role in the plotting that preceded the coup and in the

events which followed.

At the American Embassy that night political and intelligence officers tried to monitor the unfolding events. But, there was one figure at the Embassy in the days that followed the coup who was particularly unsettled. A small knot had settled in his stomach. The events were an echo of what he had feared might happen months earlier and which he had made strenuous

efforts to prevent.

I would meet this man in Washington three years later. He became a critical source for me and clearly hoped the information that he provided would one day lead to uncomfortable truths being revealed and those responsible being held accountable. For the first time in nearly thirty years I can

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## CROSSFIRE KILLING

# Masum's parents for judicial probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parents of Jagannath University student Iqbal Hossain Masum, who was killed on August 8 in "crossfire" with crime-busting force Cheetah, have appealed to the prime minister and the home minister to form a judicial enquiry into the killing and ensure punishment to the killers.

Addressing a press conference at the National Press Club yesterday, Masum's father Khandaker Abul Khaer termed the murder a cold blooded one and said, "If Inspector Nurul Alam and other members of team No 4 of Detective Branch are quizzed, the mystery behind the killing will be revealed."

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PHOTO: STAR

Parents of Masum break down at a press conference in Dhaka yesterday, demanding trial of their son's killers.

# Govt stalls process to bring killers back

ZAYADUL AHSAN

The government has stalled the process of bringing back the convicted killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who are now absconding abroad.

The taskforce formed in 1999 during the Awami League rule to have the killers extradited was dissolved after the BNP-Jamaat led coalition took office in 2001.

The foreign and home ministries are now tightlipped about the convicted killers. The foreign ministry has no official information about the whereabouts of the killers.

Immediately after Awami League (AL) formed government in 1996, some of the killers left the country fearing arrest and prosecution. Some others who were working in different foreign missions of Bangladesh left their jobs and went into hiding after they were asked to come back to face trial for killing Bangabandhu.

Fifteen former army officers were awarded death penalty by a lower court in the Bangabandhu Murder Case on November 8, 1998. Later, the High Court upheld the death

sentence of 12 killers. Of them, Lt Col Syed Farook Rahman, Lt Col Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, Lt Col Mohiuddin and Maj Bazlul Huda are in jail.

One convict has died abroad and seven others are still absconding.

The taskforce formed by the AL government with officials from the foreign, home and law ministries in 1999 came to know from intelligence sources that the killers were staying in the US, Zimbabwe, Canada, Pakistan, India and Middle Eastern countries.

It sent copies of the court verdict in the Bangabandhu Murder Case to the governments of those countries and initiated steps to have extradition treaty with them.

The Interpol rang a red alert throughout the world to hunt down the killers.

The taskforce officials visited the US in 2000 and completed preliminary procedures for an extradition treaty. The AL government also appointed two legal advisors in the US for the purpose but the move was

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## 1 out of 12 on voter list erroneous

Reveals NDI survey

BDNEWS, Dhaka

One out of twelve names in the voter lists is erroneous in Bangladesh, said a study conducted by Washington-based National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI).

The NDI has conducted the first-ever survey on the integrity of the current voters list with funding from USAID and ran a nationwide sample survey of 34,000 voters, covering some 150 polling centres, both in rural and urban constituencies.

"Interested parties, including the chief election commissioner, can

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