

Nation mourns

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to the Appellate Division on ad hoc basis. But, according to informed quarters, such a move is highly improbable. The case is unlikely to resume before March 2007, when the present chief justice will retire making way for a new judge to be appointed in the Appellate Division. A taskforce to bring the convicted killers back from abroad was set up during the previous AL regime. But it was dissolved after the BNP-led coalition came to office in 2001. Even special public prosecutors in the case had been terminated, starting from December 19, 2002. For 21 long years, the trial of Bangabandhu's killers had been barred by Indemnity Ordinance, which was later legitimised through parliament. The infamous ordinance was finally repealed in 1996, paving the way for holding trial of the case. The murder case was filed on October 2, 1996.

Sheikh Mujib, the architect of independent Bangladesh, was born on March 17, 1920 in Tungipara of Gopalganj district. His highly emotive final call on March 7, 1971 - 'Ebarer songram - amader mukti songram; ebarer songram - swadhinotar songram' (The struggle this time is for freedom! The struggle this time is for independence!) -- inspired and united the entire nation for the Liberation War.

The way he turned a non-violent non-co-operation movement of unarmed masses into an armed struggle, liberating the nation from Pakistani occupation and oppression, and creating a new state in barely nine months, will remain a wonder of history.

He was born in a middle class Bangalee family and his political ideals arose out of the aims and aspirations of the commoners. He was inseparably linked with the hopes and aspirations, the joys and sorrows, the travails and triumphs of these ordinary people. He spoke their language. He gave voice to their hopes and aspirations. Year after year he spent the best days of his youth behind bars.

THE VICTIMS

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the following members of his family were assassinated in three separate attacks: his wife Begum Fazilatunnessa, sons Sheikh Kamal, Sheikh Jamal and nine-year-old Sheikh Russel, daughters-in-law Sultana Kamal, Parveen Jamal, Bangabandhu's brother Sheikh Naser, brother-in-law Abdur Rab Serniabat, 13-year-old Baby Serniabat, Serniabat's son Arif, four-year-old grand son Babu, three guests, four servants, Bangabandhu's nephew Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni, Moni's wife Begum Arju Moni, and Bangabandhu's security chief Colonel Jamil Uddin Ahmed.

PROGRAMMES

Today the national and the party flags will be flown at half-mast at all offices of the AL and its front organisations. The party will also hoist black flags everywhere in observance of the day, which used to be a national mourning day during the AL's stay in power from 1996 to 2001. But the BNP-led coalition government, after coming to power in October 2001, scrapped the day's official status.

AL President Sheikh Hasina, also the leader of the opposition in parliament, along with her party colleagues will place wreaths at Bangabandhu's portrait at the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in Dhanmondi at 12:15pm. From there, they will go to Banani graveyard and offer Fatiha.

Similar programmes will be held at Bangabandhu's grave in Tungipara.

The AL, its front organisations and various socio-cultural organisations will hold milad mahfil, destitute feeding, blood donation and mourning processions.

Hasina will go to Tungipara tomorrow to attend a programme there.

Besides AL, different political parties excepting the components of ruling four-party alliance have taken up different programmes to mark the death anniversary of Bangabandhu.

THE GRUESOME KILLING

The deafening sound of gunshots broke the stillness of the dawn on August 15, 1971 on road No 32 of Dhanmondi. In less than an hour, the darkest chapter in the political history of Bangladesh was written on that fateful morning.

A group of disgruntled army officers in conjunction with some fiercely ambitious political elements led the attack to usurp power by killing Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Without provocation, they opened fire on the private household of the then president. With army jeeps, tanks, and heavy trucks they ensured that the sudden attack and the element of surprise smother all resistance.

Another group of killers went to the residence of Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni. They attacked from all directions the sleeping household situated about two hundred meters off Bangabandhu's residence. They killed Sheikh Moni and did not spare even Begum Arju Moni, who was in the advanced stage of pregnancy.

A third group of the assassins rushed to the residence of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's brother-in-law Abdur Rab Serniabat. Armed with automatic weapons, they broke into the house, dragged the frightened inmates to the drawing room, and shot dead nine people.



Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain speaks at a meeting marking the 30th death anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the National Press Club yesterday. Dhaka city Gono Forum organised the meeting.

BANGABANDHU MURDER CASE

Govt violating constitution by not completing trial: Dr Kamal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is violating the constitution by not completing the trial of the Bangabandhu murder case after several judges expressed embarrassment to hear the case, said Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday. According to the constitution, the government can appoint a judge on an ad hoc basis to dispose of a case if any justice feels embarrassed to hear a case, said the eminent jurist at a meeting marking the 30th death anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Dhaka city Gono Forum organised the meeting at the National Press Club. The government must be accountable to the 14 crore people for its failure to complete the trial of the Bangabandhu murder case even 30 years after his assassination, he said, terming unprecedented the government's indifference to the

constitutional provision in this regard. The death of Sheikh Mujib has left a void in honest, independent and courageous leadership in the country, said Dr Kamal, who was the foreign minister in the Bangabandhu's government after independence. "To Bangabandhu, people were the source of all power. He even loved his enemies, which is a rare quality among today's leaders," he said. The constitution expert also criticised the political leaders, saying that they lack the quality of being united. "Division among the political leadership has made our politics sick." The leaders try to create a division among each other or political parties during any crisis, he said and called on all to unite to save the country from all kinds of misrule, communalism and corruption. "Let us be united again as in '71 and form a robust movement to

eliminate all the evil forces," he said. Gono Forum General Secretary Saifuddin Ahmed Manik said the Bangabandhu murder case would not be completed as long as the present BNP-Jamaat government remains in power. The anti-liberation forces are now active to wipe out the spirit of the Liberation War from all sectors, including administration, politics and education, he said. Chaired by Dhaka city Gono Forum President Mostafa Mohsin Montu, the meeting was also addressed by Pankaj Bhattacharya, Dr Abdul Hakim, Mohidul Islam, Commander Abdur Rouf, Mokabbar Khan, SM Altaf Hossain, Mezbahuddin Ahmed, Advocate Sagir Ahmed, Bikalpa Chhatra Dhara President Mahfuz Akram and Muktioddha Sangsad Vice-President Ismat Kadir Gama.

Biharis demand repatriation, submit memo to Pak HC

UNB, Dhaka

The stranded Pakistanis, popularly known as Biharis, languishing in camps for over three decades, submitted a memorandum to the Pakistani mission here demanding "immediate" repatriation as Pakistan celebrated its independence day yesterday. Mohammadpur and Pallabi police said several thousand Urdu-speaking people tried to march towards the Pakistani High Commission to press their demand from 10:00am. Later Sahanur Khan, OC of Mohammadpur, and Abul Kalam Azad, OC of Pallabi, pacified the protesters and let a twelve-member team to proceed and submit their memo to the Pak mission at about 11:50am. Abdur Jabber, President of Mohammadpur Bihari camp, and Sakbad Hossain, leader of Pallabi Bihari camp, led the delegation. "We want immediate arrangement for our repatriation to our motherland Pakistan," they said in the memo. At present about 2.50 lakh Biharis live in different camps in the country with the assistance of Relief and Disaster Management Ministry of Bangladesh.

Inaugural ceremony of 2nd National Furniture Fair-2005 organised by Bangladesh Furniture Industries Owners Association will be held with Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury as chief guest. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 12:30pm.

Film show
Academy Film Society will screen two films titled 'Fantastic 4' and 'Sex and Lucia'. Venue: 21/C Jigatola. Time: 6:30pm and 8:30pm.

Dr Halida new DG of FPAB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Dr Halida Hanum Akhter has joined as the director general of the Family Planning Association of Bangladesh (FPAB). Prior to her new assignment, Dr Halida was the founder-director of Bangladesh Institute of Research for Promotion of Essential and Reproductive Health Technologies and the founder-honorary managing director of Health Promotion Limited (HPL). She received the 'Developing Countries Award 1995' from the Justus-Liebig University Giessen, Germany in recognition of her contribution to improving health status of women and children. Established in 1953, the FPAB has been providing family planning and reproductive health services to underprivileged people in 120 upazilas across the country.

Post-9/11 terrorist attack on US costs \$40b globally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The post-9/11 terrorist attack on the US cost some \$US 40 billion globally. This was disclosed by a visiting US expert on international terrorism while delivering a lecture on 'Economic Costs of Terrorism' in the city yesterday. Dr C Christine Fair said "The long term economic costs are more devastating." Citing an example she said, "The increased cost for security has also raised the travel costs. It has been estimated that travel cost by air would increase by 11 percent

amounting to US\$ 11 billion per year." Dr Christine also spoke about the loss of lives and productivity as a result of terrorist attacks. While responding to a question she said, "The post-9/11 economic cost has a big impact on the foreign students enrolling in various academic institutions in the United States. A large amount of the subsidies for native students used to come from fees of the foreign students." Referring to terrorist acts in Iraq, Dr Christine said, "Iraq may one day become another Afghanistan. There are evidences of foreigners volun-

teering to fight for Iraq as it happened in Afghanistan." The lecture, held at the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS), was attended by hosts of local scholars and journalists. BISS Director General Major General Muhammad Abdul Matin delivered the welcome speech while Chairman of BISS Ambassador Mufleh R Osmany made the concluding remarks. Dr Christine, a programme officer of South Asia Studies, US Institute of Peace, Washington DC, is having private meetings with Bangladeshi scholars.

NATIONAL MOURNING DAY
Police resort to mass arrest

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Incidents of mass arrest of the activists and leaders of Awami League and its front organisations by police and attacks by BNP cadres are reported from various parts of the country on the eve of the death anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman today. Police, however, denied the allegation. A section of BNP leaders including pro-BNP union parishad (UP) chairman of the Keraniganj upazila have allegedly threatened the opposition AL leaders and activists not to observe the day. To observe the day, leaders and activists of local AL have erected 126 arches at different places of Keraniganj and taken elaborate programmes including Qurankhwani and destitute feeding. Lalbagh, Hazaribagh and Kamrangirchar AL leaders also alleged that the law enforcing agencies launched a massive drive in the areas to net the AL leaders and activists with a view to foiling the opposition party's mourning day programmes and half-day hartal. They claimed that police have

the occasion. "Besides, Kolatia union Jubo Dal leader Chan Mia along with some police member have raided different houses of local AL leaders and activists to foil the mourning day programmes and hartal," they alleged. To observe the day, leaders and activists of local AL have erected 126 arches at different places of Keraniganj and taken elaborate programmes including Qurankhwani and destitute feeding. Lalbagh, Hazaribagh and Kamrangirchar AL leaders also alleged that the law enforcing agencies launched a massive drive in the areas to net the AL leaders and activists with a view to foiling the opposition party's mourning day programmes and half-day hartal. They claimed that police have

raided the houses of Chhatra League leader Mohiuddin. The AL leaders also alleged that the cadres of BNP tore down the posters of Bangabandhu. Our Barisal correspondent adds: cadres of BNP and its front organisations attacked a human chain of AL at Hizla in the district on Sunday. Three AL activists Julhas, Rahman and Razzak sustained serious injuries in the attack. AL organised the programme marking the death anniversary of Bangabandhu. The BNP cadres also threatened the local AL not to hold any rally at the upazila headquarters. Additional police were deployed in the area to avert further untoward incident.

Shrine Blasts

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The coroners did not find any splinter in the dead man's body and doctors too have not seen any in the injured ones', sources concerned said. Detective Branch (DB) officials said they found the 10th bomb, which failed to explode, wired to a clock and two pencil batteries. One of them requesting anonymity said the bombs most probably were timed, as they blasted after regular intervals. But the devices were locally made, crude and not much strong, he added. Captain Montazur Rahman of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) said if the bombs were strong ones, the casualty would have been huge. He, however, declined to comment on the clock and batteries wired to the unexploded bomb. But Additional Police Superintendent N Jahangir Hossain said the clock was inactive. There has not been any change in the opinion of the district police authorities that the Kharampur bombs were similar to those used in the attack on an Ahmadiyya mosque at Kandipara about two months ago. DC Saidur Rahman claimed there was no negligence in safety and security measures at the shrine on that fatal night, as 112 policemen

including officers had been on duty there. Meanwhile, the spots of the blasts have not been cordoned off yet, as is customary in such cases, exposing the evidence to the risk of ruin. Additional SP Jahangir Hossain however defended their action, or non-action, saying they have collected some evidence and took pictures of the spots. Meanwhile, Dipu, 20, one of the two suspected bomb-carriers, fled from Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital dodging the police guard. On the issue, Brahmanbaria SP ATM Tareque said actions will be taken against the police stationed at the hospital to watch over him, adding their primary quizzing suggests the two arrestees might be innocent. The police also have not begun investigating into the case filed by the shrine committee, as the investigation officer Tajul Islam has been suspended due to alleged negligence in duty. Despite the tension and fear sparked off by the attack, hundreds of devotees came to attend the end prayer of the 7-day Ors yesterday.

Under-trial prisoner 'tortured' to death

DMCH CORRESPONDENT

An under-trial prisoner at Dhaka Central Jail died yesterday after allegedly being tortured by the police of Ramna Police Station. Dhaka Central Jail Police sent Shankar Sen, 27, who was arrested on August 8 for allegedly stealing a mobile phone from Kakrail, to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) at 11:30am, where doctors on duty declared him dead. Protik Sen Jishu, the cousin of Shankar, son of Ruhini Sen of Rawjan in Chittagong, said his brother died after being tortured to death. Family members also said Shankar was a mental patient and had been missing from the Fakirapul bus station since August 8. They also filed a General Diary (GD) on August 9 with the Motiheel Police Station and advertised a picture of Shankar in the Daily Prothom Alo on August 11, a family source said. Ramna police, seeing the advertisement, called his relatives. When the family came to the police station to inquire about Shankar, the police told them that he was a prisoner and being held on a two-day remand. They added that Shankar had been sent to the Central Jail, and instructed the family to inquire about him there. The family then contacted the Central Jail, and found Shankar on Saturday, August 13. Suddenly, yesterday, a Central Jail official called the family and said that Shankar was undergoing treatment at DMCH. When the family arrived to DMCH, they found Shankar dead. "Sub Inspector (SI) Kamal is responsible for the tragic death of my brother. The SI had arrested my brother without any case and tortured him in custody," Protik Sen Jishu alleged. SI Kamal was the investigation officer in Shankar's case. "We will file a case against SI Kamal," he headed. Morgue sources said the body was sent to the DMCH for an autopsy. After completion of the autopsy, the family took the body.

PROMOTION OF TEACHER

HC stays SUST decision

UNB, DHAKA

The High Court yesterday stayed the operation of a decision of the Shahjalal University of Science & Technology (SUST) regarding the promotion of an associate professor to professor. A decision bench of Justice MA Matin and Justice Mamoon Rahman also issued a rule upon the SUST vice-chancellor and others to explain why the promotion of Dr Abdul Hye Chowdhury as professor should not be declared illegal. The rule, returnable within three weeks, was issued following a writ petition filed by Associate Professor Dr Yasmin Huq challenging the decision of the 119th meeting of the Syndicate, which recommended Hye's promotion on August 4. Petitioner Yasmin Huq questioned the qualification of Hye and argued that the promotion was given in violation of the existing rules. She said Hye was also 15 years junior to her in the teaching profession. Dr Kamal Hossain appeared for the petitioner.

The long shadow of Aug 1975 coup

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identify this individual. I have been freed from a restraint of confidentiality that I have adhered to for almost three decades. But, be patient, with me a bit longer while I explain how and why I came to meet this individual.

I was one among many foreign correspondents covering the coup. Yet, I was the only journalist reporting these events for a major publication who had actually lived in Bangladesh as a journalist. I was the Dhaka correspondent of the Far Eastern Economic Review (Hong Kong) in 1974. The following year I moved to New Delhi and took up a new position as South Asia Correspondent for the Review. The violent death of Mujib would draw me into an inquiry that I could never have anticipated would, again and again, hold me in its sway at different stages of my life.

My unusual source who worked at the American Embassy that night would encourage me forward by his own honesty and quality of integrity. He was one of those unusual individuals one occasionally finds inhabiting an official bureaucracy. He was deeply distressed about the coup and the subsequent killings. He was a man with a conscience. Unlike the rest of us he knew something others did not and that knowledge tore at his conscience. It was this sense of ethical responsibility that brought us face-to-face in one of the more memorable encounters I had as young reporter. After the coup against Mujib the official story put about by the successor regime and its minions in the Bangladesh press disturbed me. It didn't hold together. Moreover, the cracks began to reveal rather curious links and antecedents. The version of events which emerged at the time was that six junior officers, with three hundred men under their command, had acted exclusively on their own in overthrowing Mujib. The motives for the coup were attributed to a combination of personal grudges held by certain of the officers against Mujib and his associates, together with a general mood of frustration at the widespread corruption that had come to characterize certain elements of Mujib's regime. In short, according to this view of events the coup was an ad hoc affair not a thought out plan a year or more in the making. The morning Mujib and his family were killed, the figure installed by the young majors as President was Khandakar Mustaque Ahmed, generally considered to be the representative of a rightist faction within Mujib's own party, the Awami League. After the putsch, Mustaque remained impeccably reticent about any part he personally might have played in Mujib's downfall. He neither confirmed nor denied his prior involvement. He simply avoided any public discussion of the question and desperately attempted to stabilize his regime. A year following the coup, after he had himself been toppled from power and before his own arrest on corruption charges, Mustaque denied to me in an interview at his home in the 'Old City' of Dhaka that he had any prior knowledge of the coup plan or prior meetings with the army majors, who carried out the action. However, the majors who staged the military part of the coup and were forced into exile within four months by upheavals within the Bangladesh Army began to tell a different tale. In interviews with journalists in Bangkok and elsewhere, bitter at their abandonment by their erstwhile sponsors and allies, the majors began to talk out of school. They confirmed prior meetings with Mustaque and his associates. A story began to emerge that Mustaque and his political friends had been involved for more than a

year in a web of secret planning that would lead to the overthrow and death of Mujib. A few months after the coup, a mid-level official at the U.S. Embassy told me that he was aware of serious tensions within the U.S. Embassy over what had happened in August. He said that there were stories circulating inside the Embassy that the CIA's Station Chief, Philip Cherry, had somehow been involved in the coup and that there was specific tension between Cherry and Eugene Boster, the American Ambassador. He had no specific details about the nature of this "tension" only that there were problems. "I understand," he said, "something happened that should not have happened." He urged me to dig further. American involvement in the coup didn't make sense to me. In the United States, two Congressional Committees were gearing up to investigate illegal covert actions of the Central Intelligence Agency. The so-called Church and Pike Committee hearings in Washington on CIA assassinations of foreign leaders had begun. The committee hearings were having their own impact within the American diplomatic and intelligence bureaucracies creating great nervousness and anxiety. The American press was openly speculating that senior American intelligence officials might face imprisonment for illegal clandestine action in Chile and elsewhere. It was the summer when citizens of the United States first heard acronyms like MONGOOSE, COINTELPRO, AM/LASH and elaborate details of assassination plots against Lumumba in the Congo, Castro in Cuba and Allende in Chile. The covert hand of American power had touched far and wide. Now the tip of the iceberg was publicly emerging so that

for the first time Americans could take a clear look. Yet, all that was happening far away in Washington, in a muggy heat as sultry as any South Asian monsoon. In India, Indira Gandhi, speaking of the tragedy of Mujib's death, spoke of the sure hand of foreign involvement. As usual, Mrs. Gandhi was graphically lacking in details or specifics. However, her avid supporters during those first nuptial days of India's Emergency, the pro-Moscow Communist Party of India (C.P.I.) were more explicit: the CIA said the CPI was behind the coup. I dismissed this as propaganda based on no specific evidence. Yet, how had the coup happened? There were still huge gaps in my knowledge of how specific actors had traveled through the various mazes they had constructed to disguise their movements yet which ultimately led to August 15th. I was living in England nearly three years after the coup when I decided to make a trip to Washington to visit a colleague of mine, Kai Bird, who was then an editor with The Nation magazine, published from New York. Today he is a prominent American author. Lawrence Lifschultz was South Asia Correspondent of the Far Eastern Economic Review (Hong Kong). He has written extensively on European and Asian affairs for The Guardian (London), Le Monde Diplomatique, The Nation (New York), and the BBC among numerous other journals and publications. Lifschultz is editor and author of several books including Why Bosnia? (with Rabia Ali) and Hiroshima's Shadow: Writings on the Denial of History & The Smithsonian Controversy (with Kai Bird). He is currently at work on a book concerning Kashmir.

WEATHER

TODAY

Light to moderate rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at most places over Chittagong, Barisal and Khulna divisions and at many places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions till 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy falls are also expected at places during the period, Met Office said predicting nearly unchanged day temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 35.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 25.2 degree Celsius at Jessore.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:32pm today and rises at 5:34am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	32.4	28.0	91	76
Chittagong	29.0	25.5	90	83
Rajshahi	34.0	28.0	84	94
Khulna	32.2	28.0	84	83
Barisal	31.0	27.6	98	92
Sylhet	34.0	27.7	88	95
Cox's Bazar	31.0	25.7	93	96