

## Nation mourns

**FROM PAGE 1** supreme leader of the country's struggle for independence.

On this day in 1975, Bangabandhu and his family members were brutally killed by a splinter group of the army, except his two daughters, Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana, who were abroad at the time.

Although there is no official programme remembering the great leader, President Iajuddin Ahmed and Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed will place wreaths at Bangabandhu's grave in Tungipara in the morning.

"The government has yet to recognise Bangabandhu as the father of the nation, but it's a good sign that heads of the state and government are visiting the great leader's grave," Acting Awami League (AL) President Zillur Rahman told reporters yesterday.

At a news briefing in his Gulshan residence in the capital he demanded that the government officially declares Bangabandhu as the father of the nation and releases Bangabandhu's daughter also AL President Sheikh Hasina from interment this month.

The day used to be officially observed as the national mourning day during the AL rule between 1996 and 2001. But the BNP-led alliance government, after coming to power in October 2001, scrapped the day's official status.

Zillur said they hoped that the present non-party caretaker government would observe the day with stately honour through declaring it the national mourning day and a national holiday. "We are unhappy as the government did not take any initiative to observe the day," said the AL leader adding that the government should consider their demand and take appropriate measures.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's fiery speech and final call for freedom on March 7, 1971 – 'Ebarer sangram amader mukti sangram, ebarer sangram swadhinotar sangram' – inspired and united the entire nation for the Liberation War, which morphed from a non-violent non-cooperation movement of unarmed masses, liberating the nation from Pakistani occupation and oppression, and creating a new state in only nine months.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was born in a middle class Bangalee family and his political ideals arose out of the aims and aspirations of the common people. He was inseparably linked with the hopes, aspirations, joys, sorrows, travails, and triumphs of the people. He spoke their language. He gave voice to their hopes and aspirations, and spent the best years of his youth behind bars doing so.

Two months and 18 days into the assassination of Bangabandhu, the same disgruntled army men gunned down his four close associates – Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, AHM Quamruzzaman and Captain M Mansur Ali – in Dhaka Central Jail on November 3, 1975.

For 21 years, trial of the killers had been barred by an Indemnity Ordinance, which was later legalised through the parliament. The infamous ordinance was finally repealed in 1996, allowing trial of the case. A murder case was filed on October 2, 1996.

In November 1998, a trial court sentenced 15 former army officers to death in connection with the Bangabandhu Murder Case.

Later, the High Court (HC) upheld the death sentences of 12 of the killers, five of whom are now in Dhaka Central Jail. They are Syed Farukur Rahman, Bazul Huda, AKM Mahiuddin, Shahriar Rashid Khan, and Mohiuddin.

The condemned who are absconding abroad are Abdur Rashid, Shariful Haque Dalim, Rashed Chowdhury, Nur Chowdhury, Abdul Mazed, and Moselemuddin, while another one, Aziz Pasha, died.

AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed, one of the condemned in the murder case, was sent to jail on June 18. Mohiuddin was forced to return home from the USA after the authorities there had deported him following a court's refusal to accept his appeal for an asylum. Police arrested him from Zia International Airport and sent him to jail.

After a gap of six years, the Supreme Court resumed hearings of the defendants' petitions for leave to appeal against the High Court verdict on August 7 this year. Earlier a three-member bench could not be formed in almost six years as five of the Appellate Division judges either had reservations regarding the case or had heard the case before as High Court judges.

**ALAND OTHERS' PROGRAMMES** AL will observe the day on a limited scale in line with the directives of the caretaker government, which had declined to allow the party to hold discussions on Bangabandhu's glorious life.

AL will keep the national and party flags at half-mast and also hoist black flags at its offices across the country.

According to the AL programme schedule, wreaths will be placed at the portrait of Bangabandhu on Dhanmondi Road No 32 in the capital at 8:00am and at Banani graveyard at 8:30am. Special prayers will be arranged in mosques, churches and temples across the country, and food will be distributed among flood victims.

Delegation comprising AL leaders Col (ret'd) Faruq Khan and Abdul Latif Siddiqui will visit Tungipara and lay wreaths on Bangabandhu's grave.

Zillur Rahman urged all to observe the day in a manner befitting the leader who steered the nation to independence. Condemning the killers of Bangabandhu, he urged the people of the country to pray for the salvation of the departed soul of Bangabandhu and for the release of Sheikh Hasina from the special jail where she is currently interned.

The AL leader said there are a very few leaders in the world like Bangabandhu who never compromised with the Pakistani occupation forces regarding the fate of the erstwhile East Pakistan which is now Bangladesh after the liberation, even knowing that he could be hanged for his staunch position.

At the news briefing AL Presidium Member Motia Chowdhury alleged that Dhanmondi police yesterday vandalised a stage made for a blood donation programme today on Road No 32 in Dhanmondi, although they themselves had given permission to Bangabandhu Memorial Trust for conducting the programme.

Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta) will hold a discussion in Teachers' Club this evening marking the day. Duta members will place wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu in the morning. Meanwhile, the National Committee to Observe August 15 requested the government for permission to hold a discussion marking the day in the auditorium of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh on August 18.

Leaders of different political parties, including Communist Party of Bangladesh, Workers Party of Bangladesh, and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) in separate statements demanded immediate execution of the verdict in Bangabandhu Murder Case. **GRUESOME KILLING** Deafening sound of gunshots broke the tranquility of dawn on August 15, 1971 on Road No 32 of Dhanmondi Residential Area. 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 the state power by killing Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Without provocation, they opened fire on the private household of the late president. With army jeeps, tanks, and heavy trucks the killers ensured that the element of surprise would smother all resistance.

Another group of killers went to the residence of Mujib's nephew Sheikh Fazlul Huq Moni. They attacked from all directions the sleeping household situated about two hundred meters off Dhanmondi Road No 32. They killed Sheikh Moni and did not even spare his wife Arju Moni, who was in an 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 Semiatat. Armed with automatic weapons, they broke into the house, dragged the frightened residents to the drawing room, and shot dead nine people.

**VICTIMS** Bangabandhu, his family, his security personnel, household helps, and some of their guests were assassinated in three separate attacks on August 15, 1975. The slain family members and relatives include Bangabandhu's wife Begum Fazilatunnessa, sons Sheikh Kamal, Sheikh Jamal and nine-year old Sheikh Russel, daughters-in-law Sultana Kamal and Parveen Jamal, brother Sheikh Naser, brother-in-law Abdur Rab Semiatat, Semiatat's 13-year old daughter Baby Semiatat, Semiatat's son Anif, Semiatat's four-year old grandson Sukanto Abdullah and nephew Shahid Semiatat, three guests, four household helps, Bangabandhu's nephew Sheikh Fazlul Huq Moni, Moni's wife Arju Moni, and Bangabandhu's security chief Colonel Jamil Uddin Ahmed.

## EPR challenged

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for the petitioner. Barrister Huq told the court that the EPR was promulgated on January 12. According to the provisions, incidents that have taken place after the promulgation of the EPR can be put under it, he said.

## Abu Hena

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ordered the officer-in-charge (OC) of Bagmara police station to take legal actions after investigation.

According to the case proceedings, Abu Hena, a former BNP lawmaker of Rajshahi-4 constituency, demanded Tk 2 lakh from the plaintiff in 2004 for sending him abroad.

The plaintiff alleged that the accused took Tk 1.5 lakh from him promising to send him abroad, but they did not keep the promise.

**JHENIDAH**

Meanwhile, Abdul Kuddus, a member of Ukri bil fishermen's association of Teltupi village filed a Tk 30 lakh extortion case with a Jhenidah court against former BNP lawmaker Shahidul Islam Master.

The other accused include former lawmaker's brother-in-law Shohidul Islam, Jubo Dal leader Dabir Uddin, Robiul Islam, Shamsul Islam, Rakibul, Ismail Hossain, Bablu and Asadul Haque.

Abdul Kuddus said that Ukri bil was leased out to them in fiscal year 2002-2003.

He alleged that when the BNP-Jamaat coalition was in power, the former BNP lawmaker of Jhenidah-3 constituency demanded Tk 30 lakh from them saying that they would not be allowed to catch fish from the bil unless they paid him the money.

Later, they paid him Tk 28 lakh on April 15, 2003. But the accused barred them from fishing as they could not provide him the rest of the money.

The officer-in-charge (OC) of Moheshpur police station said the case had directed them to take necessary step in this regard.

## 800 workers

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advantage of "golden handshake programme" since no fund was allocated for purchasing raw materials for the mill, said sources.

Project director of the mill, Monowar Hossain, said Aleem Jute Mills is the lone profitable enterprise among 17 other running mills in the country and any move to close this mill would be suicidal.

Aleem Jute Mills made a profit of Tk 30 lakh last month by producing 295 metric tonnes of jute goods. The mill is capable of exceeding its production targets with uninterrupted power supply, Monowar Hossain observed.

"I am yet to accept the resignation letters of workers, employees and officials before looking into the matter thoroughly and consulting with the chairman of BJMC [Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation]," he added.

Although production at Aleem Jute Mills is higher than other jute mills in the region, the government on August 8 allocated Tk 7.81 crore for six state-owned jute mills in Khulna and Jessore industrial belts except for Aleem Jute Mills, said a source at zonal BJMC office.

Abdus Salam, president of Aleem Jute Mills Workers' Union, said the government has already given an indication of massive job cuts by refusing to allocate any fund for buying raw materials for the mill. Under these circumstances, workers, employees and officials opted for retirement to receive their retirement benefits.

Aleem Jute Mills Ltd was established in 1968 on 46 acres of land at Atra industrial belt and was nationalised in 1972. Law enforcers were deployed since midnight Monday to beef up security in and around the mill following the submission of retirement applications.

## Ghorashal

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and Shaful Islam. The authorities took action against the ten on the basis of a preliminary report submitted by a seven-member inquiry committee.

The fire broke out in the high compressor section of the factory in the morning causing a huge loss to it. General Manager (Admin) Farid Ahmed said the probe committee will submit its final report soon.

## Dr Yunus

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of their poverty and not to keep them there forever," Prof Yunus said.

Instead the private sector and non-government organizations must collaborate to "help communities develop the means to get out of the circle."

"More than one billion people are condemned to live on less than one dollar per day. Such a crisis demands tangible solutions, put into practice on a wide scale. It requires leadership from civil society and governments," he stressed.

"Microfinance is one of the most powerful solutions to poverty in existence today, and my hopes are to see it implemented globally with everybody's help," he said.

Financial institutions should instead give financial help to those who need them without any collateral, he said.

The 67-year-old economist won the 2006 Nobel peace prize for helping millions escape poverty through micro-credit financing projects, which enable people without collateral or steady income to get small loans.

## CEC

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deprived of 22 facilities for not having a national identity card."

The NIDs (national identity cards) will work as a safeguard for poor, who in most cases suffer for lacking of an identity.

He cited an example of Abul Kalam Azad, who was in Kushtia jail for lack of proper identification.

The CEC visited around 10 voter registration centres including Balazan Nesa Girls' High School, Golzarbagh Primary School, Hoseniganj Primary School and Police Line School.

## Banks asked

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Mir Nasir said the benefits from this move could be judged by comparing the local market prices with the prices of imported food items sold by Bangladesh Rifles (BDR).

He also said that the interest rate cut would not cause a massive change in prices of essentials.

ABB high official said, "We have taken this step in the greater interest of the nation. But, other government agencies must monitor whether the consumers get the benefit."

Meanwhile, the finance ministry has allocated Tk 30 crore to provide fertiliser and seeds to seven lakh flood-affected farmers for free and more Tk 35 crore will be allocated soon.

Farmers having one bigha land are already receiving seeds and fertiliser for free through their local union agriculture committees.

Agriculture ministry sources said the upazila administration has already been ordered to start working.

Agriculture ministry figures show that seven lakh hectares of land have been affected by recent floods. Of those, 50,000 hectares are used for cultivating Aman rice.

Sources said usually 57 lakh hectares of land are used to cultivate Aman rice. Recent floods have not hit these areas badly. But lands on which vegetables are cultivated have been damaged badly.

## SC rejects govt plea

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HC's interim order granting bail to Hasina in another extortion case filed by businessmen Azam J Chowdhury. The SC yesterday extended its stay order on Hasina's bail in this case till tomorrow.

Meanwhile, the SC yesterday also rejected a government prayer for staying the HC's bail order for detained businessman Abdul Awal Minto.

Like in Hasina's case, the SC directed the government to file a regular appeal with it in this regard today and also fixed tomorrow for hearing on it.

As the SC did not grant government's stay prayers yesterday, the HC orders regarding Hasina's two writ petitions challenging the case filed by Noor Ali, and the ACC order would remain valid. Likewise, the HC order following Minto's writ petition would also remain effective.

A division bench of the HC on August 7 granted bail to Hasina in the case filed by Noor Ali and ordered the government not to have her tried under the Emergency Power Rules, 2007.

On a writ petition filed by Hasina, the HC bench also asked the caretaker administration to reply within four weeks why its approval of the case being brought under the emergency rules should not be adjudged illegal.

The same day, the HC also stayed operation of the ACC order to Hasina to submit wealth statement, and directed the anti-graft body to explain in four weeks why its order shall not be declared illegal.

Besides, it declared illegal the confinement of former FBCCI president Minto and granted him bail. The proceedings on a pre-emptive detention order against him under the Special Powers Act were also halted.

Earlier on Thursday, the government filed appeals with the Chamber Judge's court of the SC, seeking stay on the HC orders in response to two writ petitions filed by Hasina and one by Minto.

Chamber Judge Hasan Ameen heard the government's appeals on Sunday, refrained from giving any orders and referred the matters for hearing by a regular bench of the SC, which took place yesterday.

When the SC full bench yesterday morning sat for hearing the government prayers, Attorney General (AG) Fida M Kamal prayed for extending its earlier stay on the HC order granting bail to Hasina in Azam's extortion case, the court responded positively and extended the stay till tomorrow.

When the AG prayed for staying the August 7 HC orders on two writ petitions by Hasina, the court asked him why the government did not file regular appeals till now.

The AG replied that the government would do this next Sunday. The court then ordered filing regular appeals by today and fixed tomorrow for hearing.

## Khaleda's wealth

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the commission's approval, he said. Replying to a question about the organogram, he said the National Implementation Committee on Administrative Reforms (Nicar) will sit on August 19 where it is expected to be approved. "If approved, our six divisional offices and 22 zonal offices will be fully functional."

Meanwhile, the ACC yesterday served notices on four corruption suspects, directing them to submit their wealth statements within seven working days.

They are former BNP lawmaker Nadim Mostafa, former chief whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain's son Akhter Hamid Paban, Doctors Association of Bangladesh president Dr MA Hadi and former chief engineer of Roads and Highways Department Faizur Rahman.

## Polls by Dec 2008

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ATM Shamsul Huda, acting Mayor of Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) Rezaunnabi Dudo also spoke at the inaugural function chaired by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Mohammad Khalilur Rahman.

GOC of 11 Infantry Division Major General Shamim Chowdhury, civil and military officials, local elite and representatives from different professions attended the function.

The CA said mere holding election is not enough for flourishing democracy. "There is also a need for procedural change in order to ensure political and administrative transparency and accountability to strengthen the foundation of democracy."

He said the Election Commission has already given indications of the necessity of registration of political parties and possible terms and conditions.

The CA hoped that the Election Commission would be able to finalise rules and regulations of reforms in the near future in consultations with political parties.

He said it will be easier to make politics free of pollution and prevent the use of black money and abuse of authority in political arena through setting up an appropriate legal framework and ensuring its application.

He urged all sections of the people, irrespective of party and opinion, to join this forward march of

Similarly, the court ordered filing of a regular appeal in Minto's case.

Barrister Rafique Ul Huq moved for Hasian and also Minto.

## Babar's trial

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submitted by the defence lawyers for adjournment of the hearing and recorded statement of the complainant Sub-Inspector (SI) Helaluddin of Gulshan Police Station.

The court fixed August 19 for the cross-examination of the witnesses by the defence lawyers after recording their statements.

Babar was produced before the court amid tight security during the hearing of the case.

The lawyers said they had submitted a criminal appeal with the HC earlier challenging the legality of the charge framing against their client. But they did not show any stay order from the HC.

The army-led joint forces recovered four firearms including a shotgun, a rifle, a pistol, and a Brazilian revolver, two magazines and 297 rounds of bullet raiding Babar's Gulshan residence on May 28.

**HARRIS CASE** Eight more prosecution witnesses gave their statements before the same court yesterday in connection with a money laundering case filed against Harris Chowdhury, political secretary to former premier Khaleda Zia.

The court recorded statements of the witnesses and fixed August 19 for the next hearing of the case.

SI Babul Hossain of Gulshan Police Station, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, submitted charge sheet to the court of Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate on July 1 showing 18 people as prosecution witnesses.

Joint forces seized two briefcases with foreign currencies from Harris' Gulshan residence on February 4.

The briefcases were opened on April 2 in presence of Metropolitan Magistrate Mir Ali Reza and the foreign currencies were found inside it, sources said.

According to the statement, Harris collected foreign currencies worth Tk 5.64 lakh to siphon the sum abroad.

Gulshan police filed the case against Harris under the Money Laundering Act on April 9.

Earlier, a special court sentenced Harris to three years of imprisonment on May 22 for not submitting his health statements to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) within the stipulated time.

**MINTOO CASE** Metropolitan Magistrate Shahed Kabir yesterday passed an order to show former FBCCI president Abdul Awal Minto arrested in an extortion case filed in May this year after SI Amrul Islam of Dhanmondi submitted a petition.

In his forwarding report, Amir said that Minto and seven others demanded Tk 50 lakh from Abdus Sattar, a resident of Bhutergoi, as he was constructing a building on his land adjacent to Anchor Tower. Later, the accused took Tk 10,000 from him. Thus, Minto should be shown arrested in the case, the IO said.

The case was filed with Dhanmondi police station against Minto and seven others on August 13. Minto was arrested from his residence on May 30 for amassing huge wealth illegally.

Meanwhile, UNB reports that the judgment in the graft case against former communications minister and BNP leader Nazmul Huda and his wife Sigma Huda will be delivered on August 23.

Judge AK Roy of the special court set the date yesterday after closing arguments by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) prosecutor and the defence lawyers.

ACC Deputy Director Shafiqul Islam filed the case against Huda and his wife with Dhanmondi Police Station on March 21 for taking Tk 2.40 crore in bribe from Mir Zahir Hossain, owner of a construction firm.

## Indigenous people

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experts during writing anything on them for textbooks.

Wahiduzzaman Diamond, director of the film 'Nacholer Rani,' was the chief guest while Jatiya Adivashi Parishad President Anil Marandi and Asroy Director Abdus Samad, among others, were present.

Several hundred indigenous people of various adivashi communities including Garos, Mundas, Bunos, Santals, Khumis, Monipuris and Bawms were present.

A colourful rally, cultural function and an exhibition depicting indigenous people's culture were also held to mark the day.

## Two advisers

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Matiur Rahman said, of the 443 dead, 394 drowned, 27 died of snakebites, 15 died of diarrhoea, and seven others of Respiratory Tract Infections (RTI).

Tapan said the government would provide Tk 10,000 to each family whose home was destroyed and Tk 5,000 to each family whose house was damaged.

"Extra Tk 12 crore has been allocated for building the damaged houses," he said adding that the government has allocated 13,765 tonnes of rice and Tk 4.16 crore in cash for distribution among the flood-affected people.

About seeking foreign aid for the flood-affected people, Tapan said, the government is yet to officially seek help from foreign countries.

"Our friend countries are sending help willingly after being informed through diplomatic channels," he said.

Tapan said Saudi Arabia would donate about \$50 million as grant and send 300 tonnes of relief materials. "A cargo plane with 54 tonnes of relief materials has already reached Dhaka and another four such aircraft will land by August 27," he added.

The food and disaster management adviser claimed that the state of emergency is neither affecting the relief work nor is it responsible for the price hike of essentials.

## Nadim Mostafa

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According to the charges Saidur, Mominur and other accused, on Nadim Mostafa's directive, demanded Tk 1 lakh from Maria UP Chairman Molla Hasan Imam Faruk on UP election day July 14, 2003.

As Faruk refused to pay, Nadim's accomplices resisted Faruk's followers from going to the polling centres. As voters protested, Nadim's men attacked them. Plaintiff Sekandor Ali and his brother Jamal were injured during the attack along with many others.

This was the second verdict going against Nadim. On July 3, the same court in connection with extortion jailed him for five years.

A court on July 4 acquitted him in a case filed in connection with misappropriating corrugated iron sheets of the government's relief department.

He has another case under trial which was filed in connection with patronising militants. Two other extortion cases filed against him are under investigation.

## Ershad

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evidence to punish him. On the other hand, the defence lawyers sought acquittal of Ershad, as according to them, there was no evidence against their client.

Ershad accompanied by his party leaders and activists was present at the court during the hearing.

Earlier, the court recorded statements of eight prosecution witnesses including the complainant and investigation officer (IO) of the case.

A team of customs officials held four people including two foreign nationals at Zia International Airport on July 17, 1990, when they were attempting to smuggle around 3.6 kgs of gold worth about Tk 2.5 crore into Bangladesh, the prosecution said.

A case was filed against the four – Bernhard Rudiger of Germany, David Anthony Chalmar Chaker of England, the then manager of the Zia International Airport Major (ret'd) Ashraf Uddin Sekender and Abu Taher, an airport security guard, with the Cantonment police station the same day.

During the investigation, the IO found evidence of Ershad's involvement in the smuggling and his name was included in the charge sheet on August 31, 1991.

The trial against Ershad did not start following a High Court (HC) stay order.

He was also acquitted and discharged of four graft cases in August and September last year after his announcement of joining the four-party alliance.

## Entire Dhaka

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They said later the system will also be applied to the telephone system.

Officials at the police telecommunications wing said necessary equipment has already been purchased and will be imported soon from Germany while infrastructure development work is going on in full swing.

The project is supposed to be implemented by June 2008.