

## Public outrage over Jamaat

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Jamaat and its leaders. How did Mojaheed make such kind of remarks? Does he think we are stupid?" said a retired government official.

"From the documents of our Liberation War and from our parents, we came to know that the war criminals now belong to the Jamaat-e-Islami," said Rezaul Rahman, a student of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET).

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared general amnesty for war criminals even though they were involved in many misdeeds during the Liberation War. Now they are denying it, he said.

Abdur Rahim, an official at a private firm, said he is surprised to hear such comments from a person who helped the occupying Pakistani army carry out massacres, looting and rape.

It is not at all desirable to hear such comments from a man who is a war criminal and it goes against the Liberation War, he said.

If Jamaat can say that anti-liberation forces never even existed then it is not far off when Jamaat leaders will say that they played an important role in achieving the independence of the country, he added.

"Many political parties cannot tolerate Jamaat-e-Islami, that is why they encourage propaganda against them," said one of the students of BUET as he was subdued by others screaming out that most political parties and common people cannot tolerate this party since it uses religion to get votes and hide their misdeeds in 1971.

During the last five years, this party ran the country as part of the government and gained strength and publicity. Now they dare to say that there are no war criminals in the country, BUET students told The Daily Star.

"Actually we have given them the power to say such things publicly. The political parties could not be united against the people who opposed the Liberation War even after 36 years. They unite only when time comes for seat-sharing in Parliament," said Biplob, 34, a businessman.

Jayed Shahriar, a student of Dhaka University, said, "We must condemn such comments that there are no war criminals in the country."

The comment is an expression of arrogance, he said adding that it has only been possible due to the failure of successive political governments who could not bring them to justice.

The responsibility for making the Jamaat leaders arrogant primarily goes to the immediate past BNP-led government, which took them into its fold, he said.

"The caretaker government cannot do anything about the issue of war criminals now. An elected government can punish

the war criminals," said another businessman Arefin.

A rickshaw puller said there is no doubt that there are "razakars" (collaborators) in the country who opposed our Liberation War.

A number of teachers of Dhaka University condemned Mojaheed's recent comments.

Former president of Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta) Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique termed the Jamaat leader's statement false and misleading.

He said whether Jamaat worked against the Liberation War in 1971 can be proved by going through old newspapers issues, even the Jamaat mouthpiece Dainik Sangram can be used.

Over seven crore people of the country fought against the Pakistani occupational army then, but a few people joined the Razakar, Al Badr and Al Shams and collaborated with the Pakistani army.

History of their activities is recorded in the archives, he said.

Former Duta general secretary Prof Muhammad Akhtaruzzaman said in legal sense, there are no war criminals. However, in Bangladesh the words "war criminals" mean the few people who acted against the independence of the country during 1971.

He said the Jamaat leaders took shelter of rhetoric and used the loopholes of law to befool people.

The statement might be an indistinct demand before the government to probe the war criminals issue and settle the matter, he said.

Chair of Mass Communication and Journalism Department Prof Shaikh Abdus Salam said Mojaheed's statement is not based on facts.

"If there are no war criminals in the country, then who killed three million people of the country, who disgraced over two lakh women and who killed our intellectuals?" he asked.

Their role is now history, and an attempt to deny their role is not positive for the country's politics. The statement does not bear the prudence of politicians, he said.

Prof Nurul Amin Bapari said there is no doubt that they are war criminals, as there are records of them. Since successive governments did not put them on trial, they gained the courage to say something like this.

Meanwhile, leaders of Ekattorer Ghatik Dal Nirmul Committee and South Asian People's Union against Fundamentalism and Communalism said the comment is not arrogant it is tantamount to an attack on the spirit of Liberation War, as well as the existence of Bangladesh.

In a joint statement, they said evidence of the anti-liberation role of Jamaat would be found in Jamaat's mouthpiece Dainik Sangram's issues published during the Liberation War.

Apart from helping the occupy-

ing Pakistani army carry out genocide and torture, Jamaat formed Razakar, Al Badr and Al Shams forces to collaborate with the enemy and killed many freedom fighters and intellectuals.

They said denying this truth is tantamount to the denial of the existence of Bangladesh.

The false, intentional and provocative remark that Mojaheed made hurting the spirit of Liberation War is sedition, he is a war criminal and a traitor, they said.

They demanded formation of a special tribunal for the trial of Mojaheed and Nizami, Jamaat ameer, and a ban on politics based on religion and fundamentalism.

Jatiya Samjtantrik Dal also condemned the remarks and said the comments are not only false and in violation of the Constitution, they are also arrogant.

In a meeting yesterday, they said through the comment Mojaheed proved that Jamaat has not accepted yet the Liberation War and the independence of the country.

They urged the Election Commission not to register those political parties involved with anti-liberation activities.

Sammito Sangskritik Jote also condemned Mojaheed's remarks.

In a statement, they said the remarks were arrogant, a humiliation to the 30 lakh martyrs and tantamount to denying the independence of the country.

Projonmo Ekattor and Chhatra Sangram Parishad also condemned the remarks.

## Yaba peddlers

**FROM PAGE 1**  
pushing Yaba in Uttara. They said they went to Joydevpur Thursday to flee the Rab action and also to do business there.

Rab officials said they have beefed up vigilance in different parts of the country to dismantle the drug running. They said they would grill the people arrested during drives against corruption as well to get to the root of the illegal trade.

## Mongla workers

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Chairman of Mongla Port Authority Ashraf Mohammad Iqbal termed the work abstention illegal. "Yet, I will talk to them on November 6 about payment of unpaid portion of their Eid bonuses," he said. He said none would be allowed to disrupt port activities any more.

## Stolen furnace

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Meftaul Karim raided Saima Fuel Enterprise, Abdullah Traders and Joint Fuel Supply at 10:15pm on Thursday and continued the search at the dealer shops until 4:30am yesterday.

The elite force also seized 45 barrels of pure furnace oil and over 200 empty barrels from near the three underground tanks.

According to the commanding officer (CO) of Rab-6, vigorous investigation is going on to detect other culprits involved in selling adulterated furnace oil.

The arrestees told Rab that they had purchased adulterated furnace oil from a section of officials of Barge Mounted Power Plant at Khalishpur and would sell it to different parties of Khulna and north Bengal.

They also told that steel, Aluminium, cement and fertiliser factories were their main buyers.

## JMB torture

**FROM PAGE 16**  
he fainted, he added.

The accused include JMB militants Mostafizur Rahman alias Killer Mostaq, Bipul, Sayem, Rezaul Islam, Rezaul Haq, Zakir, Mojammeel, Abdus Salam, Abdul Mannan, Abdul Jalil, Abdul Hamid, Fazlur Rahman, Shahidur, Siddik, Azadul, Emad, Hizbullah, Akbar, Afzal, Altaf, Enamul, Abdur Rahman, Momtunul Islam, Azhar, Nazmul, Jonab Ali and Shamsul.

The JMB began its "operations" against outlaws in April 2004 and killed around 25 people and maimed several hundred in three months in Naldanga upazila of Natore, Bagmara of Rajshahi, and Atrai and Raninagar of Naogaon.

The body of Abdul Qayyum Badsha of Shaikpur was found hung upside down from a tree in Bogra while the body of Idris Ali Khejur of Shimba was found in four pieces in Naogaon. The killings created an outcry across the country mobilising a public opinion against militancy.

Victims of JMB tortures have so far filed 20 cases accusing a number of militants and their aides, including former minister Aminul Haque, former deputy minister Ruhul Kuddus Talukdar Dulu, Rajshahi city Mayor Mizanur Rahman Mina, former lawmakers Nadim Mostafa and Abu Hena.

Convictions have been made in two cases so far, sentencing Aminul and 24 others to 31 years in jail in one case and Dulu and 87 others to eight years of imprisonment in the other.

## What Jamaat men said

**FROM PAGE 1**  
crimes and with the Razakar, Al-Badr and Al-Shams groups. He claimed that Jamaat did not work against the Liberation War in 1971 and that there is no war criminal in the country.

"In fact, anti-Liberation forces never even existed," Mojaheed told reporters after Jamaat's dialogue with the Election Commission on electoral reforms.

As a response to the Jamaat secretary general's claims, following are selections from the reports published in the daily Sangram and documents of the then West Pakistan government:

Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, president of Dhaka unit of East Pakistan Islami Chhatra Shanga (ICS), directed his party workers to build Al-Badr Bahini to resist freedom fighters, according to a "Fort-nightly secret report on the situation in East Pakistan" the political section of the then East Pakistan home ministry used to send to the head of the government General Yahya Khan.

Mojaheed at a meeting of the ICS in Rangpur on October 17 directed the party workers to build the Al-Badr Bahini. He told the meeting that anti-Islamist forces must be resisted. He also emphasised organising youths to join Al-Badr.

Al-Badr day was observed in Dhaka on November 7, 1971 and Mojaheed announced a four-point declaration that said, "We do not believe in any map of Hindustan on earth. We will not rest until the name of Hindustan is erased from the world."

"From tomorrow, you will not be allowed to sell, publicise or keep at libraries books either written by Hindus or written in their support," according to a report published in the daily Azad on November 8, 1971.

The Al-Badr was assigned a variety of combat and non-combat tasks, including taking part in operations, spying against the Mukti Bahini, interrogation, working as guides for the regular army, assassination, detecting and killing Bangalee intellectuals, looting and supplying women and children to rape, according to Wikipedia.

**NIZAMI**  
According to the secret report, the current Jamaat ameer addressed an ICS meeting in Jamalpur as chief guest on June 14, 1971 and directed his party workers to assist the Pakistani army to save Islam.

On April 12, the Nizami-led ICS and Jamaat brought out a procession, chanting "Longlive Pakistan". The Sangram reported on April 13 that Nizami, the then Pakistan ICS president, Golam Azam and other collaborators also led a procession on April 12 under the banner of "Peace Committee of Dhaka" with a special prayer for the survival of Pakistan and to declare their support for Pakistan.

On August 2, Nizami addressed a seminar in Chittagong organised by the local Muslim Institute, where he said, "If the patriotic people had come forward since March 1 to confront the assailants, this situation would not have taken place in the country. Allah has given the faithful Muslims the duty to protect His beloved Pakistan, but when the Muslims failed, Allah protected Pakistan through the military."

The next day Sangram quoted Nizami as saying, "The Pakistani soldiers are our brothers...It is not a matter of personal dignity or partisan interest, it is a matter of Pakistan's survival."

"The only way the Muslims can survive here is Pakistan's survival," he said, adding, "With the chaos the miscreants and Indian agents had created since March 1, no one could hope that Pakistan and Pakistani Muslims would be able to survive as independent entities."

Lamenting the victory of Awami League in the 1970 elections, Nizami said, "Divisions within the Pakistani and Islamic leaders allowed them to win and cause havoc in this country."

## Try collaborators

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Had they not been an anti-liberation force, so many people would not have to die in the war, said the former army chief. "This is time to make them face trial."

Lt Gen (ret'd) Mir Shawkat Ali, commander of sector-5, said, "Ali Ahsan Mojaheed is just trying to befool the people. Everybody in this country suffered in the hands of anti-liberation forces like Jamaat."

"If anti-liberation forces never existed (as Mojaheed claimed), then he should ask his conscience why 30 lakh people were martyred and three lakh mothers and sisters lost dignity during the war," he posed the question to the Jamaat leader.

Shawkat further asked, "Who were the 'Al-Badr' and 'Al-Shams' (involved in genocide) and who were their leaders?"

Retired Air Vice Marshal AK Khandakar, deputy chief of the liberation forces, said, "They (Jamaat leaders) cannot deny history by telling lies. The people have rejected their false claims."

Alleging that Jamaat is denying a "historical truth," he urged the government to ban the party.

Lt Col (ret'd) Kazi Nuruzzaman, commander of sector-7, said "To defeat these forces, all pro-

"I pray to Allah for the success, courage and sacrifice of the military brothers in facing external and internal attacks," he said.

He blamed the rulers for misleading and misinforming students on Islam and said, "We forgot our identity after achieving Pakistan. When India attacked our country in 1965, we became self-aware but we were confused as soon as the war ended. Allah punished us. Now we have become self-conscious again, but if we make the same mistake again, maybe Allah will not give us another chance."

On August 16, the Sangram reported that Nizami said, "Those who want to secede from Pakistan want to uproot Islam from this country."

On September 4, Nizami in a letter to the Pakistani flight cadet who died in an air fight with Bir Shreshtha Matir Rahman described Matir Rahman "Indian agent".

On September 8, Sangram reported Nizami as saying, "Every member of the Islami Chhatra Shanga is committed to protect every inch of Pakistan. We are even ready to attack Hindustan to protect Pakistan."

On September 9 Nizami said in Jessore, "Allah has punished those who conspired to destroy Pakistan...Those who said Pakistan is a graveyard have not been accepted by the land. The funeral pyres in Calcutta and Agartala are all they got."

"The way we have come forward risking death, the same way the government should build Pakistan in a purely militaristic manner," he said.

Addressing a gathering of Razakars in Jessore the next day, Nizami said, "Every single one of us must identify ourselves as soldiers of Islam and we have to use all our forces to destroy the people who are involved in an armed conspiracy against Pakistan and Islam," Sangram reported on September 15.

The next day Nizami urged his followers to "confront and reveal the true identity of the so-called Bengali-lovers".

While visiting an Al-Badr camp on September 22, Nizami said, "Only the patriotic youths of East Pakistan can effectively annihilate the Indian infiltrators and their local agents."

Celebrating the Badr day on November 14, 1971, Nizami wrote an editorial in Sangram, saying, "Hindu forces are far stronger and capable than us. Unfortunately, a number of infidels have taken their side and are trying to weaken us from within. We have to foil their conspiracy and protect the existence and ideal of Pakistan. This is not possible only by defensive action...It is our luck that the Islam-loving youths of this country have been able to form the Al-Badr unit with the help of the Pakistani military...The youths of Al-Badr have renewed their pledge on this occasion...to stand next to the army to defeat the Hindu forces and annihilate Hindustan and hoist the flag of Islam all over the world."

**GOLAMAZAM**  
At a meeting of the Jamaat in Khulna on August 4, 1971, the then Jamaat ameer described Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as a separatist. He told the meeting that Mujib had been misleading the country's people and urged party workers to be united to destroy the separatists, according to secret document No. 482/158-PL-S(I).

Golam Azam at the party council of Kushtia district unit in the second week of August 1971 described the freedom fighters as criminals and directed the party workers to resist them. He also directed formation of Shanti Bahini (peace committee) in every village of the country. He told the meeting that very soon the Razakars, Mojaheed and police would be able to resist the "criminals," said document No. 549 (159)-PL-S(I) signed by the then home secretary MM Kazim on September 14.

## Recruiters trade

**FROM PAGE 16**  
"The problem is some employers take this lightly, even giving agents the power of attorney. The agents want to make a cut for themselves and that's how the workers are given false promises of higher pay," he said.

Talat Mahmud Khan, labour counsellor of Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, told The Daily Star he had asked the Bangladesh recruiting agencies to be careful in selecting workers so that they fulfil employers' requirements.

"Agencies however were not sincere about my instructions," he said. The workers in the textile factories were not as skilled as they were expected to be, and it might be a reason for their lower wages.

The Malaysian government is investigating the workers' claims of getting lower pay.

An agent in Bangladesh told The Daily Star the agents are so engaged in counting profits through hiring more and more workers that they are not careful about employers' requirements.

"Involvement of so many middlemen in recruiting process creates a huge mismatch between what the primary middlemen promise and the employers actually offer," he said.

The government must take strong measures against the recruiting agencies as per the immigration laws to make sure that right workers go to right places, he observed.

## Pichchi Hannan

**FROM PAGE 16**  
from the house of his another associate, Swapna, at Dhanmondi.

At RAB-3 office, Babu told journalists that he along with his cohorts killed at least six people, including Dhaka College student leader Pinto and notorious criminal Shikander, as a sequel to inter-party conflict during the rule of the Awami League.

Babu also confessed to setting fire to some buses during the August 20-22 student unrest.

## Delwar

**FROM PAGE 16**  
enforcers, saying that the visit was just for offering special prayers at the shrines of the two Muslim saints, not for political ends.

Failing to convince the law enforcers, the BNP secretary general and other party leaders offered Juma prayers at Bahapur Jame mosque in Lalabazar area.

After Juma prayers, the BNP leaders again requested the police to allow only Khandaker Delwar and his two daughters to visit the shrines, but all went in vain.

Delwar and his companions left Lalabazar for the capital at about 2:10pm.

Earlier, about 30 leaders of Sylhet district and city BNP received the party secretary general at Rashidpur on the Dhaka-Sylhet Highway.

A police official, however, said the BNP secretary-general was intercepted as party leaders and activists were to join an informal meeting at a hotel in the city. Under the emergency rules, such gathering is totally banned, he added.

Ali Ahmed, former joint secretary of the BNP district unit, told the Daily Star that the law enforcers yesterday morning took away the keys of three rooms of Hotel Fortune Garden in the city. The rooms were earlier booked for Khandaker Delwar and members of his entourage.

## 2 JMB men

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Adabari under Mirzapur upazila and Selim Miah of Namdar Kumulle of Sadar upazila in Tangail.

The court sentenced them to seven years' rigorous imprisonment in the arms case and three years in explosive case.

## India lifts ban

**FROM PAGE 16**  
rice-growing states like Punjab, Haryana and Andhra Pradesh.

The ban, imposed on October 9 to build buffer stock in the country and improve domestic supplies, took a lot of flak from rice growers and exporters, who thought it prevented them from accessing the lucrative global markets. They also claimed that the ban would bring down domestic prices which would hit them.

India exported 3.7 million tonnes of non-Basmati rice valued at Rs 4,258 crore in financial year 2006-07.

Being cheaper than Basmati, the superior quality non-Basmati rice has begun fetching good export earnings of late.

## 6 killed

**FROM PAGE 16**  
rescued the injured and rushed them to hospitals. Of the injured, seven were admitted to Mirzapur Kumudini Hospital.

Mirzapur police recovered the bodies and sent them to Tangail General Hospital morgue for autopsies.

## Local body affairs

**FROM PAGE 1**  
bodies effective as well for ensuring good governance at grass roots level, sources said quoting the draft report. The report also suggests the government make the commission permanent.

In a bid to strengthen the local government system, the caretaker government on June 3 formed the seven-member committee headed by former secretary Dr AMM Shawkat Ali. The government asked it to come up with recommendations within three months after reviewing the present structure and activities of the local government bodies. It was later given another two months time ending next month.

The committee plans to submit the report to the government at the end of this month or early next month, sources close to the committee said.

After its formation, the committee held a series of view exchange meetings with professionals, politicians, former lawmakers and other stakeholders and prepared the draft incorporating their opinions.

Currently, the committee members are working on finalising the report as soon as possible.

The committee opted for formally dissolving the controversial Gram Sarkar system, which was introduced by the immediate past BNP-led alliance government. It recommended introducing a local government system having three tiers -- zila, upazila and union parishes.

In addition, the committee has also been working on how to make the city corporations and municipalities more effective by bringing necessary reforms in their formation and functions, sources added.

Besides, the committee is preparing recommendations outlining qualifications and disqualifications for the candidates contesting the polls of local government bodies and redefining the jurisdiction and functions of the institutions to increase participation of women.

It is also going to recommend enacting a single law defining the functions, jurisdictions and formation of zila, upazila and union parishes, instead of the existing separate laws for them.

Similarly, a single law might be introduced for the six city corporations, sources said.

The committee will also recommend curbing government power of removing elected representatives to union parishes as it has reportedly been misused.

According to the committee's recommendations, a chairman or member of a union parishad can be removed only if other parishad members pass a vote of no confidence against him after investigating the allegations against him. A chairman or a member can be removed on other grounds like if he is convicted of crimes or declared insane or unsound-minded by a competent court.

**LOCAL GOVT COMMISSION**  
The committee is drafting a law for setting up the three-member inde-

## 71 bridges

**FROM PAGE 16**  
due to the lack of a connecting road.

There are a few new bridges in similar condition in Gosalbari of Dhunat upazila. Three bridges in Hatibandha area of Gabtali upazila have also remained unused for the last four years.

RHD Executive Engineer Ittefak Kabir said the department spent Tk 10 crore to construct bridges in Madla of Shahjahanpur, Durgahata and Nashipur of Gabtali but they have remained unused for the last three-four years.

## Mannan Bhuiyan

**FROM PAGE 1**  
proposal including the one aiming to dislodge Khaleda Zia from the post of chairperson on June 25, said Khaleda Zia is the party chairperson and they will hold council to bring reforms with her approval.

According to his proposal, the chairperson will be elected for three years instead of the existing two years. However, nothing has been mentioned about the tenure of the secretary general that he has been holding for over 10 years.

Referring to the meeting of former lawmakers with Khandaker Delwar, Bhuiyan said a few people went there to help keep the party united.

"Everyone who loves the party wants unity and reform and I hope those who are talking against unity will join the unity process," Bhuiyan said. He urged the BNP leaders and workers not to be confused.

There is no alternative to reform to overcome the party's crisis. I want both reform and unity," he added.

Asked whether he will accept the appointment of Khandaker Delwar as secretary general of the party, Bhuiyan said he has been expelled in an undemocratic way, that is why he does not accept the expulsion decision.

When asked about his reform proposal, Bhuiyan said, "I have announced the proposal but it is not final. More proposals may

pendent commission. It will comprise experts on local government and financial sectors, sources added. The chairman and two members of the commission will be appointed for five years.

"Once the commission is formed, the LGRD and Cooperatives ministry's current power to direct, control and supervise the local government bodies will be curtailed legally to a great extent," a source said.

About the jurisdiction of the commission, the source said the commission would recommend allocation of resources to the local government institutions and send suggestions regularly regarding strengthening the local government system.

"If the central government wants to take any steps regarding the local government institutions, it will consult with the commission," a source said quoting the committee's draft report.

## PREVIOUS EFFORTS REMAINED IGNORED

Since restoration of democracy in 1990, both BNP and Awami League (AL) had pledged to strengthen the local government system. However, they did not make any move for setting up an independent commission demanded for a long time.

The fear of losing control over the grassroots level administration is the cause for their inaction, many political analysts observe.

Assuming power in 1991, the BNP government dissolved the upazila system introduced during the Ershad regime and formed a committee to restructure the local government.

The committee recommended a local government system with zila and union parishes. However, the government only formed union parishes and took no step to form the zila parishes.

It also recommended that the government form a finance commission, which was supposed to make recommendations regarding the distribution of resources between the central and local government.

In its report in 1997, a committee formed by the AL government came up with a set of recommendations that included introducing a local government system having three tiers of zila, upazila and union parishes.

Though the AL government revived the upazila parishes during its tenure, the polls for the parishes were not held. Other important recommendations made by the committee led by the then state minister Advocate Rahmat Ali were also not implemented.

In its electoral pledges in 2001, the BNP promised to form upazila parishad, but it failed to keep that.

## College student