

Launch movement to force govt to hold trial of war criminals

Sector Commanders' Forum urges people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Sector Commanders' Forum and relatives of slain freedom fighters yesterday called for launching massive movement across the country to force the government to hold trial of the war criminals.

"When a strong movement will be launched across the country, the government would be forced to put them [war criminals] on trial," said Sector Commander CR Dutta while addressing a view-exchange meeting in the city.

"We have taken the initiative as some quarters are saying that war criminals cannot be tried," he said, adding, "They were not tried in the past, but that does not mean that they cannot be put on trial now."

Forum Convener Lt Gen (Retd) Harun-ur Rashid said although previous attempts to bring the war criminals to justice were of limited success, their latest venture would be a success.



PHOTO: STAR

Sector Commanders' Forum Member-Secretary Dr MA Hasan speaks at a view exchange meeting at the WVA auditorium in the city yesterday. On his right are Forum Convener Lt Gen (Retd) Harun-ur Rashid, Sector Commander CR Dutta and Sector Commander Abu Osman Chowdhury.

"Now major political parties including Awami League, Bangladesh Nationalist Party, Jatiya Party and some Islamic parties that bagged around 90 percent of total votes in election, are of the opinion that trial of war

criminals must be held," he said.

"Our aim is to form a strong public opinion in favour of the trial ahead of the general election and ask the political parties to include the issue in their election manifestoes so that once they are elected,

they will be obliged to put them on trial," Gen Harun added.

Sector Commander Abu Osman Chowdhury said Bangladesh won the independence due to unfaltering unity of people minus Al Badars and Al Shams.

That unity is now needed again to materialise the demand for the trial of war criminals, he added. Stressing the need for unity of pro-liberation forces, Farzana Mazid, whose father was killed during the liberation war, said for want of a strong and united platform, war criminals could not be tried in the past.

Forum Member-Secretary Dr MA Hasan, Rashid Haider, Maj Gen (Retd) Amin Ahmed Chowdhury, Trustees of Liberation War Museum Akku Chowdhury and Dr Sarwar Ali, Lt Col (Retd) Sazzad Zahir, Shyamoli Nasrin Chowdhury, Shaheen Reza Noor, Shaheed Reza Noor and Shaon Mahmud were present on the occasion.



PHOTO: STAR

Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee shakes hands with Foreign Adviser Iftakhar Ahmed Chowdhury after handing over relief materials for the cyclone victims to him at Zia International Airport in the city yesterday.

Dispel public confusion over stay of US navy ship

Speakers urge govt at BBC Bangladesh Sanglap

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The caretaker government should dispel public confusion over the detail plan of a US Navy ship that is acting as the launch pad for US relief effort in the coastal districts, speakers at a BBC Bangladesh Sanglap yesterday said.

They said the administration should clarify how long the US service personnel would stay in here, how they would perform their activities and when they would leave the country, easing public doubt.

"As the US warship has given rise to questions in the public mind, it is the government's duty to make everything clear," said former army chief Lt Gen (ret) Harun-Ar-Rashid.

He said the misgivings are not groundless given the US attitude in different countries. "If people know how long and how US soldiers will work here, then they will get relief from confusion".

Other panellists in the Sanglap included Motia Chowdhury, president of the Bangladesh Economic Association Dr Kazi Khaliquzzaman Ahmed.

Echoing Harun, Motia Chowdhury said the US would have to prove that public confusion over their presence here is pointless.

She said people do not know about the terms and conditions under which the US service personnel arrived here. As the government did not make the terms public, they are now in uncertainty as to whether the US soldiers have intentions other than relief operations only.

Western powers play down bin Laden statement

AFP, Werder

Western interior ministers played down Saturday the latest statement attributed to Osama bin Laden, even though their countries were clearly targeted.

The statement aired Thursday by Al-Jazeera television urged Europeans to break ranks with the United States and quit Afghanistan.

By following in US footsteps in entering Afghanistan, Europe could only be a "subordinate" to Washington, as attested to by the fact that "you entered this war and US soldiers were exempted from accountability in European courts," it said.

The speaker accused countries which took part in the Afghan war of flouting war ethics, including targeting women and children in their air strikes and other attacks.

Speaking at a press conference after a meeting with his counterparts from Britain, France, Italy, Poland, Spain and the United States, Germany's Wolfgang Schauble said, "We must take it seriously, but we must not react too nervously."

He referred to the calmness of Britons who refused to change their way of life after the London bombings of July 2005.

France's Interior Minister Michele Alliot-Marie said Western countries were "declared targets" of groups linked to Al-Qaeda in North Africa, adding that the threat was "not new" but "real and constant."

Italy's Giuliano Amato underlined the importance of transatlantic cooperation, adding that the "terrorist network" must be countered with another network "based on respect for the law."

All participants, including US Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff, stressed that they wanted to act in line with their own laws and international agreements, including the right of citizens to be protected from attacks.

The possibility of introducing new legislation against terrorism suspects was the main theme of the two-day talks at Werder, near Potsdam in eastern Germany.

tions only.

Enam, a former Privatisation Board chairman, said everything will be clear if the timetable for relief work and rehabilitation could first be fixed.

Dr Khaliquzzaman said different countries have different styles of helping a disaster-hit country and the US has sent in soldiers. But the government should have made it clear, he said, adding that relief materials would not reach all if distribution of it is not done in a coordinated way.

BBC Bangla Service organised the Sanglap together with BBC World Service Trust and was moderated by Shakeel Anwar of BBC Bangla Service.

All the panellists called on the government to try the war criminals immediately.

Lt Gen (ret) Harun said in this regard that the state has no obstacle to bringing the war criminals in the dock but political goodwill is necessary for this, adding the war criminals could be tried under the

existing law of the country.

The present or any future government can form special tribunal anytime to bring them to book, he said.

Dr Khaliquzzaman said trying the war criminals should be the first task of the next elected government, with Motia adding that the Awami League would try them if voted to power in the future.

Enam said the present government has been busy with trying corrupt people and extortionists, but they should also identify the war criminals to bring them to book.

He admitted that the BNP-led four party coalition government could not try the war criminals because they did not have goodwill in this regard.

All the panellists agreed that the government should coordinate the relief operations to ensure that it reaches everyone equally. They also said donor agencies should conduct their NGOs to the government in conducting relief work.

Acid victim's parents seek security of life

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parents of young housewife Mahmuda Khatun Topi, who died six days after her husband threw acid on her, yesterday said they are passing their days in a sense of insecurity as Topi's detained husband has been threatening to kill them.

Addressing a press conference in the city, Topi's father Ibrahim Khalil and mother Mariam Begum said though Topi's husband Al Mamun is in jail, two other suspected murderers are still at large.

"My whole family is in a sense of insecurity as unknown people are found wandering around my house," Khalil said and urged the chief adviser of the caretaker government to ensure security of his family.

Topi, 25, received severe burn injuries inside her Savor residence on November 8 when Mamun along with his brother-in-law Wahiduzzaman and friend Aminul Islam Munna allegedly threw acid on her for failing to provide a dowry of Tk5 lakh.

Her two-year-old son Tasmin Tagar also sustained burn injuries in the incident.

The parents also urged the government to enlist the case in the list of sensational cases of the monitoring cell of the home ministry and hold trial in the speedy trial tribunal.

In a written statement at the press conference at Bangladesh



Mahmuda Khatun Topi

Crime Reporters' Association, Topi's brother Musauzzaman narrated the brutal killing of his sister.

Musauzzaman alleged that police are showing reluctance in arresting two other accused mysteriously.

Topi's brother also alleged that when Mamun, a veterinary doctor, was on a three-day police remand, he was provided with a mobile phone and allowed to talk to other people.

He also alleged that the two accused are trying to divert the case to save them.

Investigation Officer Abdul Alim of Ashulia Police Station denied the allegations and said he would submit a charge sheet soon against all the three accused as he found them involved in the murder during his investigation.

2 killed in road crashes

STAR REPORT

At least two people were killed and five others injured in separate road accidents in Gaibandha and Pabna yesterday.

Our correspondent from Gaibandha reports: Driver of a passenger coach was killed and five others, including helper, were injured when the vehicle dashed a roadside tree on Dhaka-Sunderganj road at Chandipur yesterday.

Police and witnesses said a coach from Dhaka hit the tree as the driver lost control over the steering.

Driver Habibur Rahman, 55, and helper Nayan, 18, were rushed to Sunderganj Health Complex where Habib succumbed to his injuries. The other injured were released after first aid.

Our Correspondent from Pabna adds: A rickshaw-van puller was crushed under wheels of a speedy bus on Pabna-Ishwardi Highway at

village Maligasa yesterday.

The dead was identified as Akbar Ali, 35, of village Paikpara in Aghoria upazila of Pabna.

The accident took place when a Ishwardi-bound bus hit Akbar on the highway as its driver lost his control over the steering, leaving him dead on the spot.

Agitated people put up barricade on the highway, disrupting traffic. Police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Obituary

BSS, Dhaka

Roushan Ara Khandaker, wife of former inspector general of police (IGP) Abdur Raquib Khandaker, passed away yesterday morning at the age of 70, family sources said.

She was the founder president of Police Nari Kalyan Samity. Her namaz-e-janaza will be held at Gulshan Azad Mosque after Zohr prayers today.

Indian Muslims to meet on Taslima row today

AFP, New Delhi

Hardline Indian Muslim groups said they would meet today to decide whether to keep up demands for the expulsion of Bangladesh author Taslima Nasreen, hounded into hiding by protests against her.

The Milli Ittehad Parishad, an umbrella alliance of 12 Muslim groups, yesterday announced the meeting, a day after Nasreen promised to remove passages from her autobiography that some Muslims found offensive.

"The Milli Ittehad Parishad has called a meeting to take a unanimous stand on Taslima Nasreen," Siddikulla Chowdhury, general secretary of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind, one of the member organisations, told AFP.

The dozen groups have been demanding her deportation from India for "hurting the religious sentiment of Muslims in India."

Nasreen, who has lived in Kolkata since 2004, said on Friday she hoped the move to take out the controversial passages from her autobiography "Dikhandito" or "Split into Two" would enable her to live peacefully in India.

The federal government has pledged to protect Nasreen and moved her to a safe house outside New Delhi last weekend after thousands of Muslims rioted in her adopted home city, demanding her ejection from India.

But the government warned her not to make any statements that might "hurt the sentiments of our people" -- a reference to India's 140-million-plus Muslims.

Extremists accused the author of blasphemy over her 1994 novel "Lajja" or "Shame," which depicts violence against minority Hindus by Muslims in Muslim-majority Bangladesh. She fled her homeland the same year.

Before living in Kolkata, Nasreen, who has often received death threats over her works, spent time in Europe and the United States.

She holds a Swedish passport but has been seeking permanent residence in Hindu-majority but officially secular India.

So far the government, fearful of angering the nation's Muslim community, has only granted her six-month visa extensions.

Matin urges int'l agencies to help construct cyclone shelters

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Communications Adviser Maj Gen (ret) MA Matin has appealed to the United Nations and other international agencies for immediate help in constructing adequate cyclone shelters and dams, which are essential to protect life and property during natural calamities.

MA Matin, also the coordinator for relief and rehabilitation work for the cyclone victims, made the appeal while talking to UN Assistant Secretary General Jane Holl Lute who visited the relief and rehabilitation centre at Barisal airport yesterday.

He also called for assistance in repairing embankments and implementing long-term projects to protect life and property during any natural disasters.

Brig Gen Rashiduzzaman briefed the UN official about the devastation and relief operations for the victims of the Cyclone Sidr.

The UN official said they are aware of the needs and problems of the people in cyclone-battered areas, and assured the adviser of providing all possible assistance to the cyclone victims.



Salahuddin, Gani president, secy of Keraniganj Press Club

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Haji M Salahuddin Mian of Janakantha and M Abdul Gani of Inqilab have been elected president and general secretary of Keraniganj Press Club.

Besides, M Dewbar Hossain of Jugantar was elected vice-president, Jahangir Hossain Jhanu of Banglabazar and M Alamgir Hossain of Manab Zamin were elected assistant general secretaries, Sultan Mahmud of Khabar organising secretary, M Altaf Hossain of Sangbad treasurer, M Raihan Khan of Bhorer Kagoj publication and publicity secretary, M Ziaur Rahman of Naya Diganta office secretary and M Abul Bashir of Ittefaq sports and cultural secretary.

HM Amin of UNB, Iqbal Hossain Ratan of Prothom Alo, Sadhan Chandra Saha of Sangbad and Moktar Hossain of Shamokal were elected executive members.

Former president of the press club Saiful Islam conducted the election on Friday.



PHOTO: STAR

Leaders of Freedom Fighters' Day Observance National Committee place wreath at the Shikha Chirantan in the city yesterday on the occasion of Freedom Fighters' Day.

Islam's liberal, humanistic appeal has great relevance to present-day world

President tells int'l conference

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday eulogised Allama Jalaluddin Rumi saying that the great poet has been unique in his presentation through the 'Masnavi' of the universal message of hope of Islam.

"Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi devoted himself to upholding and



87th anniversary of artist Kamrul Hassan's birth today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 87th birth anniversary of famous artist Kamrul Hassan.

Different organisations have taken up programmes to commemorate the life and achievements of the artist who is popularly known as Potua Kamrul Hassan.

Potua Kamrul Hassan Art School will place wreath at the grave of the artist on the premises of Dhaka University (DU) Central Mosque at 9:00am.

The school will arrange a national art competition for children and adolescents on the premises of DU Institute of Fine Arts on December 7.

Cartoonist Rafiqunnabi will inaugurate the competition. The school will also hold a discussion on Kamrul Hassan at Sofia Kamal Auditorium of the National Museum on December 15.

Born in Calcutta on this day in 1921, Kamrul died of cardiac arrest while presiding over a session of National Poetry Festival organised by Jatiya Kobita Parishad on February 2, 1988.



Rise in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Slight rise in night temperature is expected over the country, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 29.5 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 14.5 degrees Celsius at Rajshahi.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:10pm today and rises at 6:26am tomorrow.

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

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity in percentage
	Max	Min
Dhaka	28.0	18.0
Chittagong	27.2	19.9
Rajshahi	28.0	14.5
Khulna	28.0	17.3
Barisal	28.5	17.5
Sylhet	27.5	19.0
Cox's Bazar	29.5	20.0
	Morning	Evening
	70	55
	64	77
	83	80
	77	68
	87	86
	93	81
	76	79

HIV-positive boy hung in bag on tree to die

AFP, New Delhi

A three-year-old HIV-infected boy was left to die in a cloth bag hung from a tree in southern India, a report said yesterday.

The child was discovered in a shopping bag hanging from a tree in southern Tamil Nadu state when villagers heard a cry on November 7, the Indian Express reported.

"It was the most inhuman thing that anyone could do to such a child," local doctor Hari Ram told the daily newspaper.

It was not clear how long the boy had been hanging from the tree.

He was later handed over to his grandmother who came forward after seeing his photograph in a newspaper on November 14, the Indian Express said.