

## Try war criminals

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the deputy speaker, advisers to the caretaker government, secretaries to the ministries, freedom fighters, and high civil and military officials accompanied the president and the chief adviser.

Thousands of people including leaders of different political parties and members of social and cultural groups, as well as the family members of the martyred intellectuals also visited the memorials in Mirpur and Rayerbazar, and placed wreaths there with due respect.

They also hoisted black flags and kept the national flag at half-mast to commemorate the martyred.

Major political parties including BNP, AL, Jatiya Party, the Communist Party of Bangladesh, the Workers Party of Bangladesh, BNP, JSD, and organisations like Bangla Academy, Sammilita Sangskritik Jote and other socio-cultural entities organised various programmes marking the day.

AL demanded immediate setting up of a special tribunal for trial of the war criminals. The demand came from a discussion at its central office on Bangabandhu Avenue in the capital yesterday.

"If the present government does not try the war criminals, then we will try the war criminals after reinstating the Collaborators Act voted to power," said Acting AL President Zillur Rahman. The present government has been apathetic towards the demand for trials of the war criminals, he said asking if there is 'any barrier in trying the war criminals'.

Sector Commanders Forum organised a human chain at Rayerbazar demanding immediate trial of the war criminals, where a rather large number of people joined.

Dhaka University Vice-chancellor Prof SMA Faiz and Prof VC Prof AFM Yusuf Haider along with other teachers and students of the university placed wreaths at the memorial in Mirpur.

Muhammad Selim, deputy leader of CPM's parliamentary party in Indian Congress also a member of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), who has been in Bangladesh for the last few days, also placed wreaths at both memorials in Mirpur and Rayerbazar paying tributes to the martyred intellectuals.

Talking to reporters after placing a floral wreath at the Memorial for Martyred Intellectuals in Mirpur, AL President Member Abdur Razzak said successive governments run or backed by the military facilitated the rehabilitation of war criminals in Bangladesh. He also demanded immediate trial of the war criminals.

BDB president AQM M

## Cylinder blast

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bring down the cost to anything between Tk 10,000 to Tk 20,000. This of course comes at the expense of safety of thousands of consumers.

Conversion rules say, a CNG cylinder has to have the capacity to withstand 3,000 pound-force per square inch (PSI). But the ones provided by unscrupulous traders at a lower cost can endure only 1,000 PSI.

Substandard or non-CNG cylinders have grown popular for their low prices and easy availability. Crooked conversion works have been using those taking advantage of slack inspection.

Kabir Hossain, engineer in charge of the restesting section of Navana CNG, told The Daily Star that he visited several sites of cylinder explosions and what he saw there convinced him that use of cylinders not designed to hold CNG was the reason for most of the blasts.

He said the unauthorised conversion centres use faulty cylinders including those meant to contain oxygen, gas for the purposes of ship breaking, household work and light industries.

Kabir said there is no manufacturer of standard CNG cylinders in the country. Most of the cylinders are imported from countries like Argentina, Brazil, Dubai, South Korea and India.

SM Sahabuddin, assistant inspector of the explosives department under the energy ministry, said the cylinders that exploded were locally made and they all were of quality below the desired standard.

He said the RPGL is responsible for monitoring and supervising the use of proper cylinders in CNG conversion.

Asked why they do not do anything to check the use of substandard cylinders in vehicles, Deputy Manager of RPGCL Shafiqul Islam said though they are authorised to monitor CNG-conversion they do not have specific directives on how to go about monitoring.

Lack of manpower is another drawback, he added.

Sirajul Islam, proprietor of the Wazi CNG and Hydrogen Conversion Works, said there are specific instructions for conversion. And not following the instructions meticulously could

## Today's talks

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extent that simple administrative processes are not happening.

"Slowing down is also problem," he told The Daily Star in an interview, where he said the WB will stress the matter in today's discussions with the government high officials, including his meeting with Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed.

Patel mentioned reports of donor having to carry files and documents from one ministry to another in order to get things done quickly.

In his meeting with the government officials, which will focus largely on rehabilitation projects in the flood and cyclone aftermath and strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change, Patel will also discuss WB's support plans.

The WB feels that the government's massive southern coast rehabilitation and protection project will require public support in the long run, as the project is likely to run beyond the expected election by 2008-end.

"The national consensus can put pressure for a more time-bound action plan that would not be deflected by the current administration's concerns with holding elections later this year," said WB Country Director Xian Zhu, who was also present during the interview.

With WB already providing about \$300 million for post-flood budget support and rehabilitation programs, it plans to work closely with the government to jointly assess the damages caused by cyclone Sidr.

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## Democracy a must

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freedom of the press and autonomy of state-run radio and television only when they are in opposition. But as soon as they assume power they start acting the way their predecessor had acted, they noted.

Asked if there is any pressure from the present government, Patel mentioned reports of donor having to carry files and documents from one ministry to another in order to get things done quickly.

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"Besides, we are waiting for an election by the end of 2008 and you could say hopes for a free and fair election are the reason why we are tolerating the pressure and not complaining about the situation."

Queried why the news of Betar and Bangladesh Television (BTV) lacks objectivity, the panel discussants said the government use the state-run media to its advantage and so objective news cannot be expected as long as the organisations remain under government control.

Former secretary Asaf-Uddaula, who headed a commission set up by the last Awami League (AL) government for autonomy of BTV and Betar, said he had told the then prime minister that he did not want to lead a commission doomed to fail.

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## Hizbut Tawhid

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Habibur Rahman, 39, of Betagi village under Patuakhali Sadar upazila, Sirajul Islam Mintu, 24, of Rajapur village under Rupsha upazila of Khulna. Nasir Uddin Ahmad, 29, of Kumarkhali, Kushtia, Nahid Khan, 38, of Adra Pur village under Kushtia Sadar upazila, Md Sajjad Hossain, 27, of Korerbagh village under Lushajang upazila, Munshiganj, and Aminul Islam, 28, of Srimangal upazila of Munshiganj.

Of them, three were arrested from Kochua Paursava area, three from Tetoliya village and the rest from Ghagharia village.

It was learnt that the arrestees are the disciples of Bayezid Khan Panni of Tangail.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Kotwali Police Station Rafiqul Islam suspected that the murders were pre-planned. Kazal Begum's brother Reaz Hossain filed a case accusing none.

## Paharpur terracota

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Pala Dynasty, the Paharpur Bihar, one of the most important archaeological sites in the country, still remains neglected and uncared for, leaving it to the mercy of vandals and thieves who are trying to steal terracotta plaques off the walls or stealing other priceless relics from the site.

High salinity coupled with absence of proper maintenance there used to be a network of 22 channels that drained the surface or rainwater out of the site. In course of time, these channels had been clogged up or do not exist any longer.

Consultants are currently working to protect the structure from salinity, Alam said adding that a project proposal, submitted a year ago to the authorities concerned, to protect the antiquities and the ancient monument is still pending for approval.

High salinity coupled with absence of proper maintenance has already ruined a large number of the terracotta plaques, said Shafiqul Alam, director of the Department of Archaeology.

Delegates said that Indonesia, the host of the talk which is eager for some sort of agreement, offered a compromise that would remove the 25-40 percent figure but call on all nations to slash greenhouse gas emissions.

"Do not force everything to be settled in Bali," Indonesian delegation head Emil Salim said, noting that the negotiations launched by Bali would give two years in which to agree on sticking points.

"Most of the issues are on track." The draft text was welcomed by Japan, which is the host nation of the Kyoto Protocol but is struggling to meet its own commitments as its economy recovers from recession.

"This is a proposal we can compromise on," Japanese Environment Minister Ichiro Kamoshita said.

James Leape, head of the WFP rehabilitation of Sidr victims at Sharankhola of Bagerhat.

Bagerhat Deputy Commissioner Shahidul Islam received the money from GA Ishaque, national director of SOS Children's Village International in Bangladesh, on December 12.

A press release from the Swiss Embassy in Dhaka said under an agreement signed on December 13 the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation will provide \$1.72 million to United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for early recovery of the cyclone victims.

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation signed another agreement with Food and Agriculture Organisation to provide assistance worth \$1.88 million for post-flood rehabilitation programmes.

Both the projects will be implemented in close cooperation with food and disaster management, agriculture and fisheries and livestock ministries.

With these donations, the total amount of aid from Switzerland stands at \$5.5 million. "More Swiss assistance for recovery and rehabilitation is expected to be provided in 2008 in the cyclone-affected areas," the embassy release said.

Earlier, a 60-member medical team went to Jeddah to look after the pilgrims.

The hajj will be performed on December 18 this year.

## Swiss, ROK aid

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rehabilitation of Sidr victims at Sharankhola of Bagerhat.

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## Hundreds crowd freed Brac man's house

A CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Hundreds of villagers thronged the home of Brac official Noor Islam in Jessor on Thursday night as he returned home after being released by his Afghan abductors after 82 days.

As Noor arrived at his home in Jamda village under Bagharpura upazila, his mother Zohura Begum hugged her beloved son and cried out of joy for getting him back.

Noor's wife Anwara Parvin Rani and son Arian were with him.

Noor Islam, 37, said, "Even after my release, I could not bear the burden of waiting before I was brought on a plane to my country."

The Brac official was abducted while on duty in Afghanistan on September 15. He was released on December 7 and brought back to Bangladesh under an arrangement of the Brac.

## LDCs should

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for development is not an option, but a necessity."

He was delivering his opening plenary speech at the daylong WIPO High-Level Forum held in Geneva on Wednesday.

He called upon the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) to dedicate more financial and human resources in assisting LDCs constitute a central pillar of the body's activity, according to a press release received from Geneva.

WIPO Director General Kamal Idris inaugurated the Forum.

Ministers from Cambodia, Ethiopia, Guinea, Lesotho, Senegal, Sudan, and Uganda attended the Forum.

As the Global Coordinator of the LDCs, Bangladesh highlighted the potential of intellectual property for accelerating economic development.

At the forum, Debarpriya placed a suggestion for a "one country, one product" scheme be initiated where WIPO and the private sector would come together to identify and develop one distinct product from each of the LDCs and would bring it to the international market.

Police also said they found Kazal Begum's body lying in front of the kitchen while Sathi's in the bedroom.

Police quoted Rezaul Karim as saying that he found the door locked as he went to Barisal from Dhaka. With the help of security guard Habibur Rahman he entered the house breaking open the window.

Police also said they found Kazal Begum's body lying in front of the kitchen while Sathi's in the bedroom.

At least 50 cyclone shelters on the islands. They also emphasised the need for early signalling technology for natural calamities like cyclones.

Around 30,000 fishermen from different districts, who live in these chars for their trade, now want the interests against their loans from different NGOs to be written off. Many fishermen told The Daily Star that it will be very tough for them to pay their loans with the interests they are asked to pay.

However, high salinity and water-logging inside the central area of the structure have caused parts of the major walls of the structure to collapse, said a high official of the Department of Archaeology.

A publication of the archaeology department mentioned that there used to be a network of 22 channels that drained the surface or rainwater out of the site. In course of time, these channels had been clogged up or do not exist any longer.

The drainage system has gone out of order and the higher elevation of surrounding areas is adding to the water-logging problem, said another archaeology department official.

Thieves have stolen many of the ornamental terracotta plaques from the walls and some of those have been damaged or stolen, said an archaeology department official. Although over 1,800 terracotta plaques are still in place, most of them are in dilapidated condition, he added.

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At least 90 percent fishermen come to these islands for fishing with money loaned from traders.

Fish traders in these chars, however, anticipated that they will face a loss of Tk 35-50 crore this year as Sidr washed away fish worth several crores.

Several thousand fishermen have still remained missing since the cyclone hit the coastal regions while many have not come for fishing after witnessing the destruction of Sidr, they said.

There are 200-250 holdings on these chars that control the fishing business and each holding has suffered a loss of Tk 10-20 lakh.

Maj (retd) Ziauddin Ahmed, one of the rich fish traders in Char Meher Ali, told The Daily Star that it will be very tough for them to overcome the loss as fewer fishermen will ultimately net a small amount of fish.

Some members of the group entered their house and one of them named Shahzada beheaded Meherun Nesa. Her body fell to the ground shaking violently and her head was hung by the killers with a ceiling fan.

The beasts went on and also slaughtered her brothers Rafigul Islam and Shahidul Islam in front of their mother. The also played

## Fraud claims cloud

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Benazir Bhutto's party, the largest opposition group, has accused the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Q of distributing thousands of ballot papers marked in its favor to ensure victory in Punjab province, Pakistan's largest and the key to national power.

It also claims that polling stations in opposition strongholds will be shifted at the last moment to effectively disenfranchise legions of voters.

Musharraf has dismissed the claims, accusing the opposition of girding against defeat.

"We haven't even gone for elections and they are talking of rigging and everything," Musharraf told CNN last weekend. "This is a clear indication of their preparation for defeat. Now when they lose, they'll have a good rationale, that it is all rigged, it is all fraud."

Under a state of emergency