# It is Time Now

## *The government should form a tribunal to try war criminals*

In the ongoing dialogue with the Election Commission all the political parties but Jamaat has echoed the demand that the people of this country want the government to meet. The issue of trying war criminals subsequent governments have ignored, not only that, some so-called democratic parties at times have joined hands with them to go to power. Recent comments made by known collaborators (Razakars) like Mojahed suggest that the war criminals do not want to repent for the rapes and mass murders they have committed in 1971.

Our stride forward as a nation will be flawed if the war criminals are not brought before justice. It is good that the Army Chief himself has on different occasions mentioned the necessity to start the process of trying these vile people, who, in the name of our sacred religion, have actively helped the Pakistani army in genocide. It is also heartening to see the Chief Election Commissioner say that he will make a recommendation to the government to initiate steps for the trials. What is stopping the government from initiating the process is difficult to understand. We know that the caretaker government has come for a limited period of time, and it is also true that it has set before itself the target of holding a free and fair election. For this it has launched a drive to nab the corrupt who have kept the country and its politics hostage in the last few years. Commendable though this war on corruption is, the election will not bring true democracy if mass rapists and murderers of 1971 are allowed to contest in the next election. To save us from such a dangerous prospect, the government should immediately form a commission to try the war criminals. It is high time to make a decision, the sooner that happens the better.

# A Continuing Crisis

Despite the preventive measures taken by authorities in order to control the alarming growth of bird flu cases, the deadly virus has still not been effectively quelled. Over 58,000 chickens were culled were destroyed on Monday, at Shila Poultry Farm in Savar as well as 13 other farms all within a 1 km radius, making the total of destroyed chickens during this particular bird flu outbreak 9,68,731. Other areas in which chickens were culled include Jamalpur, Rajshahi, Thakurgaon, Feni, Gazipur, Bogra and Chandpur.



The bird flu outbreak has not only become a serious health issue for the people of Bangladesh, but also provided a huge blow in the country's economy, both on a rural and national level. The poultry industry, a sector which has developed quickly and serves as the livelihood of millions of people, has faced one problem after another, such as floods, Cyclone SIDR and now the uncontrollable bird flu outbreak, suffering losses of about 4100 crore due to the spread of the virus and the destroying of infected farms. Those farms that are still 'safe' from bird flu are encountering different problems. Since the public has actively boycotted the consumption of chicken, the demand for chicken is less, leaving the farms that have survived the outbreak suffering losses regardless.

The authorities have come up with plans to tackle the problem. In addition to culling chickens the concept of bio-security has also been introduced. Unfortunately it is not an instantaneous solution as it is costly and also will take time to make all the farms in the nation government-approved secure.

Even so basic safety measures while handling poultry such as wearing gloves and masks have to be maintained in the farms and markets; consumers should be made aware of that if they consume eggs or chicken they should be cooked at a temperature of at least 70 degree centigrade. Unfortunately time is running out and options seem to decrease by the day. If something is not done, and soon, the bird flu virus might pose to be an even bigger threat than it seems to be now.