

JAGANNATH UNIVERSITY

Grabbers occupy all 12 dorms for years

KAILASH SARKAR

Twelve dormitories of Jagannath University have long been under the occupation of former lawmakers, leaders of Chhatra League and Chhatra Dal, local criminals and even government organisations like the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and police.

The DCC authorities have leased a hostel of the university from the deputy commissioner for building a school while former Awami League lawmaker Haji

Selim built a market in his wife's name occupying part of another hostel illegally. Families of policemen have been living in four of these hostels.

Many of these illegal occupants have even prepared fake documents of their ownership of these university dorms.

Students of Jagannath University have been moving to get back the hostels, which recently ended up in clashes between police and students and closure of the university for indefinite period.

Sources alleged that a few leaders of

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), who receive shares and tolls from different markets and shops of the illegal occupants of these hostels, opposed the movement by the general students.

Haji Selim built multi-storey Gulshan Ara City Market in his wife's name occupying a part of Tibet Hostel at Wiseghat. The other part of the hostel is occupied by the families of a few policemen.

When contacted Haji Selim refused to talk to The Daily Star on the issue.

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Chhatra Dal leaders occupied Crown Bhaban hostel of Jagannath University, left, at Patuatuli and made it a shopping arcade. Even the DCC set up a school "leasing" Bazlur Rahman Hostel, right top, in Mughaltuli while cops have taken over Abdur Rahman Hall at Armanitola in Old Dhaka. More pictures on page 5.

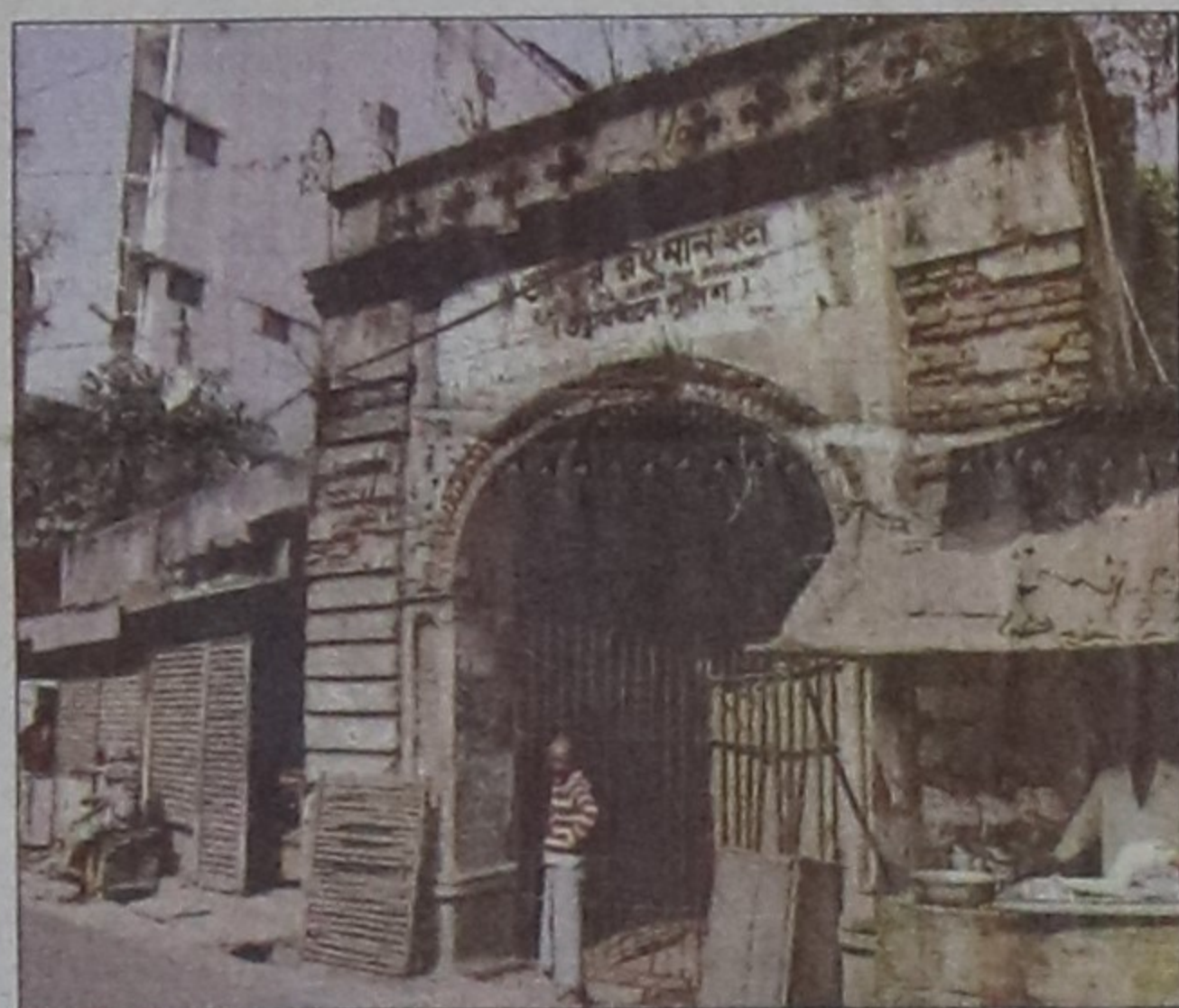


PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Govt plans to recast Law Commission

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The government is mulling over a plan to recast the Law Commission, which has been an ineffective institution due to shortage of manpower and logistic supports.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Shafique Ahmed on Thursday told The Daily Star that the positions of the chairman and a member of the Law Commission are now vacant.

"The Law Commission should be made functional and we are thinking about its recasting," he said adding that there is shortage of officials in the commission.

Sources said the position of

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KHALEDA'S VACATED SEATS IN BOGRA Losers, local leaders lobby for tickets

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

Several central and local leaders of BNP are aspiring for party nomination for contesting parliamentary by-election to two Bogra seats vacated by party Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

A section of BNP leaders have started lobbying for party ticket for senior central leaders while district level leaders expect the party leadership will nominate candidates from among them considering local people's sentiment, party insiders said.

Khaleda Zia, who won three seats in the December 29 parliamentary election, retained Feni-1 seat and vacated Bogra-6 and Bogra-7 seats before taking oath as lawmaker on January 15.

A group of party leaders are trying to persuade the party high command to pick the by-

polls contestants from among senior central leaders who got defeated in last month's election but are known as good parliamentarians.

"We need more of our senior leaders in parliament as we now have only a small number of them in the House. So, it would be better if senior leaders could come to parliament through by-election," a BNP lawmaker told The Daily Star on Thursday.

Senior leaders like Khandaker Delwar Hossain, Jamiruddin Sircar, Khandaker Mosharrif Hossain and Moudud Ahmed have already figured in discussions within the party prior to the chairperson's consideration for nomination.

Besides, local leaders who are also coming into such intra-party discussions include Rezaul Karim Badsha, president of Bogra district BNP,

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Bapex finally breaks free from red tape, to buy €20m rig

SHARIEF KHAN

Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration Company (Bapex) has outwitted a five-year-old vicious cycle of bureaucratic bottleneck to procure a drilling rig for 20 million euro to expand its oil and gas exploration capacity.

After four rounds of failed tender bids since 2004, Bapex succeeded in its fifth round tender opened in April last year.

On January 20, the company finally signed a deal with Sichuan Hong Hua Petroleum Equipment Co (Shhpec) of China to supply a "2000 HP" rig along with accessories. The sophisticated parts of the rig would come from west Europe and the US and the rest from China.

"We expect the rig well before the end of 2010," says Muhammad Imaduddin,

managing director of Bapex. While it now produces a paltry 40 million cubic feet gas per day (mmcf), Bapex's production is set to grow up to 140 mmcf from 2011.

During that time, Bapex as the country's lowest cost operator is expected to be involved in several drilling programmes for itself and as contractor for other companies operating in the country and thus help increase local gas production.

All the four previous bids to purchase the rig, except the first one, fell flat because every time Bapex floated a tender, the lowest price offer turned out to be 20-30 percent higher than the government approved budget.

Each time Bapex went back to the authorities and returned with a revised budget the price offers in the next tender

turned out to be higher than the revised budget. Each re-tender process was claiming a year's time.

Just when this was becoming a perpetual cycle, Bapex did something different to break the vicious cycle.

"This time we went for the fifth re-tender without revising the budget first," Imaduddin said.

Typically the tender evaluation process for selecting complicated equipment like a drilling rig needs three months. Bapex utilised these three months for fixing a new budget on the basis of the initial impression of the price offers submitted by six bidders. This revised budget was sent to the Executive Committee on National Economic Council (Ecne) for approval within three

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Biswa Ijtema begins

KAILASH SARKAR

Tens of thousands of pilgrims from home and abroad thronged the bank of river Turag yesterday to join the 45th Biswa Ijtema, the second largest Muslim congregation after the hajj.

The Biswa Ijtema, also called the World Congregation of Muslims, began with the delivery of religious sermons after the Fajr prayers.

The event mainly focuses on prayers and meditation seeking divine blessing from Allah and lasts for three days. The programme concludes with the Akheri Munajat, or final prayer on the last day.

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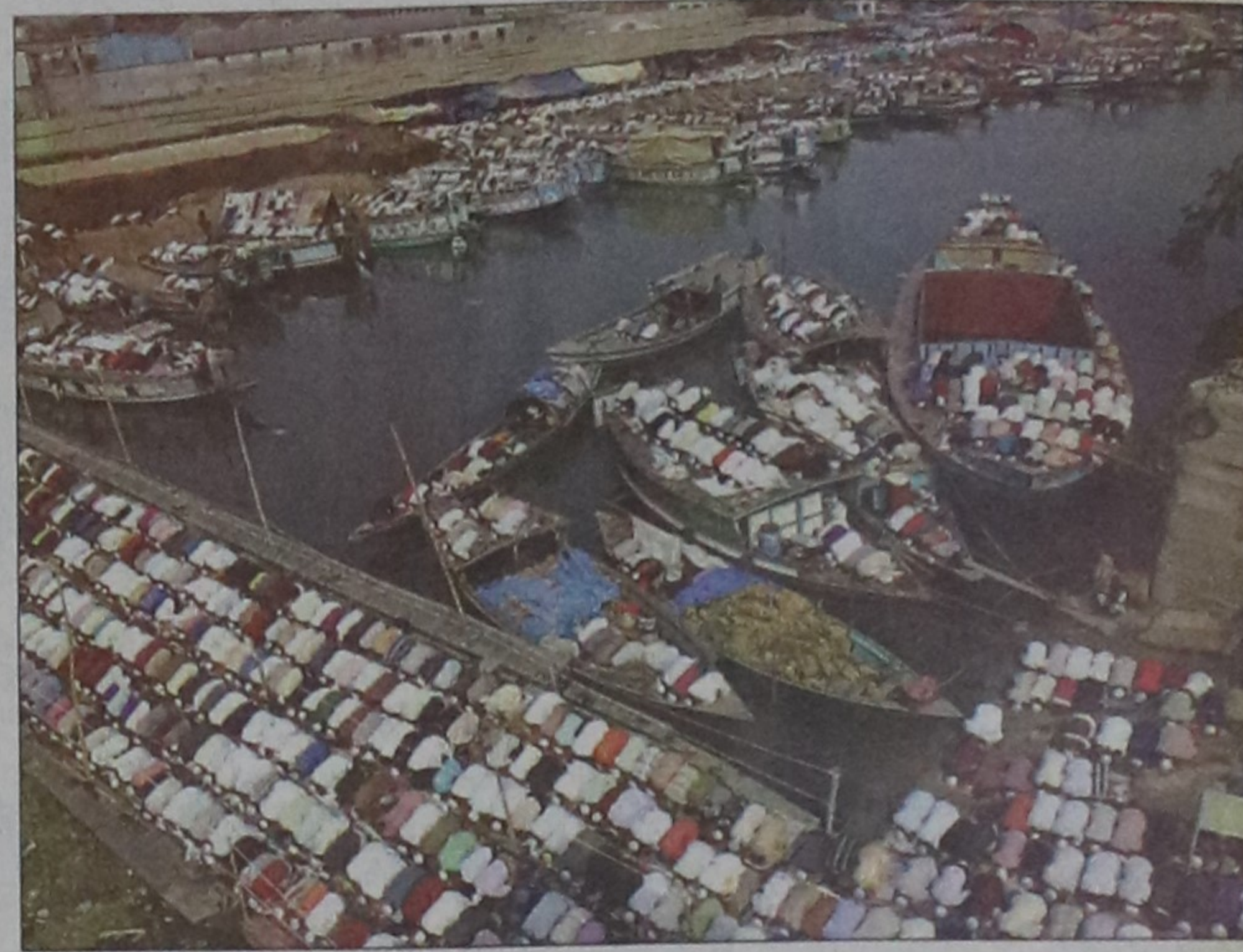


PHOTO: SHAFIQ ALAM

As there was no space left on the Biswa Ijtema ground at Tongi, devotees offer Juma prayers on a temporary floating bridge and boats on the Turag yesterday.

Step to prevent war criminals from fleeing country

UNB, Dhaka

The Ministry of Home Affairs has asked the authorities concerned to guard all points so that no war criminals can flee the country, said Home Minister Sahara Khatun yesterday.

"All relevant information about war criminals has already been sent to respective places," she told journalists after attending the 23rd Annual Conference of Bangladesh Law Association (BLA) at Kazi Motahar Hossain Bhaban in Dhaka University (DU).

Replying to a query, the home minister said the recent incidents like murder of a businessman and stabbing of a DU student are being looked into seriously. "I ordered arrest of the criminals involved in the incidents."

Asked about the clashes at Baitul Mukarram mosque over the appointment of Khatib,

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4-PARTY STANCE ON WAR CRIME TRIAL

None but IOJ to side with Jamaat

RASHIDUL HASAN

Jamaat-e-Islami is virtually isolated in the four-party alliance on the issue of trial of war criminals as two of its three other partners are keeping their distance from the religion-based party.

Supporting a transparent trial of war criminals, the BNP and Bangladesh Jatiya Party said it is Jamaat that has to face the situation.

Jamaat leaders admitted that they are unlikely to receive any support from others on the issue.

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain recently said BNP and Jamaat will work from their own standpoints as the four-party alliance was formed for elections only.

Against this backdrop, survival of the four-party alliance has come under question.

Meanwhile, Jamaat-e-Islami formed a committee headed by party Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid to draw up its strategy and next course of action in connection with the possible war crime charges some of its leaders are now staring at, sources in Jamaat said.

Jamaat's highest policymaking body Majlish-e-Sura has given the party's working committee the authority to report the present political situation and the party's poor performance in the December 29 elections. It also gave the committee the authority to prepare a report on the issue of the trial of war criminals and a guideline in this regard to follow in future.

The Majlish-e-sura yesterday made the decision wrapping up its two-day meetings at Al-Falah Auditorium at Moghbazar in the capital.

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Form special war crime tribunal, commission

Suggest eminent citizens for trial, gathering evidence

SURANJITH DEABNATH

Sector Commanders, intellectuals, lawyers and academicians yesterday suggested that the new government form a special tribunal and a commission to try the war criminals and collect evidences of war crimes.

However, some of them proposed holding the trial under international laws involving the United Nations for its acceptance to all.

They also congratulated the new government and the lawmakers on passing the resolution in the parliament unanimously on 'immediate' trial of war criminals on Thursday.

Termed the move 'the first victory of their movement,' Sector Commander Maj Gen (ret'd) KM Shafiqullah said the trial of war criminals has become a national demand.

He said the trial should

begin under the international laws involving the United Nations.

"I know that it will take a little longer to complete the trial if the United Nations is involved in it. But the United Nations' involvement in the trial process will leave no scope for any other government to overturn it," KM Shafiqullah told The Daily Star.

He said the government will have to submit charge

sheets against those who perpetrated war crimes.

Another sector commander Lt Gen (ret'd) Mir Shawkat Ali proposed that the government form a commission to collect all evidences of war crimes.

"The trial of war criminal must be held as per the laws of the country. We can engage an expert from international war crimes tribunal in the trial

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Shibir leader stabbed to death in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Muggers stabbed an Islamic Chhatra Shibir leader to death in front of the Aziz Cooperative Supermarket at Shahbagh early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as ATM Fazlullah, son of Fazlul Karim in the city's Purana Paltan and assistant publication secretary of Shibir.

Another Shibir activist Shafiqullah, a BA (pass course) student of Kabi Nazrul Islam College, was also injured in the incident.

Family members of the deceased claimed that he was a fourth year student of statistics department at Dhaka

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Motive for Lalbagh killing still unclear

Versions differ as alleged killer's house attacked

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained Sheikh Zahurul Islam Zahir confessed to his involvement in the gruesome murder of Asgar Ali of Lalbagh during police interrogation yesterday.

Quoting Zahir, detective police said the accused called Asgar to Zahir's residence at DND road around 9:00 Wednesday night and strangled him with a scarf.

Zahir in connivance with two of his associates then cut the body into pieces with a



Victim Asgar Ali

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IN REMEMBRANCE



We fondly remember Late Aziz H. A. Sattar, the founding Managing Director of GMG Group of Industries, on his 16th death anniversary. He was a pioneer and a role model of industrialization in this country. His unfathomable depth of knowledge, vision, uphill struggle and firm determination inspire all of us. A doa mahfil has been arranged after Zohr Today January 31st at GMG Industrial Corporation, Tejgaon to pray for the salvation of the departed soul. All his relatives, friends and well-wishers are cordially invited to attend.

Family members
all officers & employees of GMG Group