

## 1975 put US, India

FROM PAGE 1  
disarray. It led to the assumption that Pakistan would regain its sway on the nation it sought to subdue only a few years back.

In the context of the cold war dynamics, India and the US were also concerned that China, which recognised Bangladesh only after August 1975, might help radical communist elements thrive in the delta sliding into militocracy.

All these worries were reflected in the then US secretary of state Henry Kissinger and Indian external minister YB Chavan.

The US Office of the Historian, which is responsible for preparation and publication of the official historical documentary record of American foreign policy, has transcript of the conversation that took place at the US Department of State on October 6, 1975.

There, the discussion related to the developments in Bangladesh goes like this:

**YB Chavan:** The new president [Khandaker Mushtaque Ahmed] has sent us assurances that he was standing by the same policy but we are concerned, in particular, whether the new government will take an extreme Islamic posture. This would create problems for the minority in Bangladesh. If the Hindus again feel insecure, there might be a new wave of refugees.

**Kissinger:** Is there a large minority group in Bangladesh?

**Chavan:** About 15%. It is a major factor. So far the new government (after Mujib killing) has given assurances it would follow the same policy as Mujib, but we are naturally worried about the influence of Pakistan on Bangladesh.

**Kissinger:** What is your impression?

**Chavan:** They have just announced diplomatic relations. This is a good thing. Even under Mujib we recommended this. We never wanted an exclusive relationship with Bangladesh. Our worry is only this: That they might try to give a different connotation to the situation by giving an Islamic twist to things. Also the Chinese recognised [Bangladesh] only after the coup. Frankly, we are worried. There are radical communist elements in Bangladesh which the Chinese might try to help. Here we hope the US and India will have a common approach.

After a while, Kissinger asked his Indian counterpart, "What is the tendency of the [Bangladesh] military? Is it anti-Indian?"

**Chavan:** Frankly, there is some anti-Indian tendency. I am sorry to say.

At this point, Kewal Singh, the then secretary of Indian external affairs ministry, chimed in, "Some people hostile to Mujib were brought back. We don't want to give the impression we are concerned but pro-Islamic and pro-radical groups have some strength."

**Chavan:** Kissinger met the following day as well and talked about Bangladesh.

Almost immediately they got down to serious talking about political ramifications of the August 15 coup d'état.

Yet again, the Indian minister said, "We are worried about Bangladesh. Radical movements are already there. If Pakistan and China converge their efforts, this could pose a problem. This would be a new factor in South Asia which needs assessment."

The secretary of state said, "Previously, the Chinese were opposed to Bangladesh. They were not among Mujib's admirers."

As he asked if India had any advance indication of the coup, his opposite number replied, "None."

Kissinger then observed, "People are always complaining that we don't know about things in advance... They should realise that any coup that succeeds must have fooled someone. Mujib just couldn't have imagined that anyone would organise a coup against him. As I understand it, your relations with Bangladesh are now good. What you are concerned about is a future possibility."

TN Kaul, the then Indian ambassador to the US, added, "The danger is Pan-Islamism."

At one point, Kissinger said, "The real worry would be if countries with resources like Saudi Arabia get radical leaders. There is a reason why we banned the Jamaat Islami and RSS is that these parties were getting money from the outside."

The Kissinger-Chavan meeting gives an impression that none of the two countries had prior knowledge of the military takeover.

But the US state department's documents suggest quite the contrary. They show that like India, the US had gathered that something sinister was brewing, and it had even informed Bangabandhu about it.

Minutes of a staff meeting headed by Kissinger after August 15 show that the US was well aware of the plot.

There, Kissinger was heard enquiring Alfred Atherton Jr., assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs in 1974-1978, about the assassination.

Atherton said the US had lots of indications in March that some quarters were scheming to kill Mujib.

Kissinger asked, "Didn't we tell him [Mujib] about it?"

The assistant secretary of state said, "We told him at the time."

As his boss pressed to know if Bangabandhu was told who it was going to be, Atherton answered, "I will have to check whether we gave him the names."

At that point, Hyland of Bureau of Intelligence and Research said, "We were a little imprecise on that."

Referring to the US alerting Bangabandhu to the danger of an attack on him, Atherton said, "He [Mujib] brushed it off, scoffed at it, and said nobody would do a thing like that to him."

Kissinger remarked, "He was one of the world's prize fools."

Talking about the coup leaders, Atherton said, "They are military officers, middle and senior officers, who are generally considered less pro-Indian than the past leadership; pro-US, anti-Soviet."

The secretary of state responded, "Absolutely inevitable."

And Atherton went on, "Islamic. They have changed the name to the Islamic Republic."

Kissinger said, "That they would be pro-US is not inevitable. In fact, I would have thought at some turn of the wheel they were going to become pro-Chinese, and anti-Indian firmly expected. I always knew India would rule the day that they made Bangladesh independent. I predicted that since '71."

Major Dalim, one of the on-the-run convicted killers of Bangabandhu, in a radio announcement soon after the killings declared the country would now be named "Islamic Republic of Bangladesh."

The declaration which eventually did not materialise was a complete contrast to the secular ideals that stirred Bangalees to fight for independence from "Islamic Republic of Pakistan" in 1971.

Though the republic's name was spared a change, its constitution soon lost secular character.

The original charter saw secularism dropped as one of its four fundamental principles. It also had 'Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim' in the preamble.

Even more alarming was the scrapping of the ban on religion-based political parties.

During the rule of Ziaur Rahman, five parties including Jamaat-e-Islami, which collaborated with the Pakistani occupation forces and committed genocide and numerous atrocities during the Liberation War, were allowed to be in politics again.

The government of independent Bangladesh in its first decision banned these parties that always oppose the nation's independence and thrive on communal disturbances.

In the early 80s, the country's second military ruler HM Ershad introduced Islam as state religion, dealing a death blow to secularism.

The rise of Islamist militancy, once a fear, is a reality now, 34 years after the August 15 carnage.

During the BNP-Jamaat-led rule in 2001-2006, Islamist outfits spread tentacles across the country thanks to patronage from some influential leaders of the ruling alliance.

Though the BNP government woke up to the dangers of militancy towards the end of its tenure, it was too little too late.

Now the task lies with Awami League-led grand alliance that came to power on promises that include the one to root out militancy.

And at the centre stage in the combat against militancy is Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who herself had been the target of several attacks.



Aiyub Ali Sheikh, left, still carries the shocking memory of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's bullet-ridden body. One of the coffin bearers of Bangabandhu, Abdul Hye Mollah, right, recalls the horror and grief of August 15, 1975.

## Ayub, Halim

FROM PAGE 1  
There, they were asked to open a coffin. As they lifted the lid of the wooden frame, they found Bangabandhu's bullet-ridden body inside.

The sight sent a chill down their spine and at the same time filled them with a devastating sense of loss.

"I could not hold my tears as I saw people coming to pay honour to him," said Ayub who now makes furniture in front of the gate of Bangabandhu's mausoleum.

He added "It is to feel ashamed of ourselves that we could not give punishment to the criminals yet for this unforgivable incident."

The people, who could see Bangabandhu for the last time during his janaza, still remember that day, full of apprehension, with deep sadness. Some people ran away from Tungipara thinking that the army would kill them after the funeral.

Abdul Hye Mollah, 60, once a ward boy of the Sheikh Sahara Khatun Red Crescent Hospital, was one of them who carried Bangabandhu's coffin from the helicopter down to the place where he was buried beside his parents' grave.

He said the body was brought to Tungipara at around 1:00pm.

He added as the army officers made arrangements to bury him without janaza and bath, Abdul with Idris Kazi, Akbar Kazi, Tota Mia, Jahar Mia and Jarsis Mia prevented them. He found 29 bullet wounds in different parts of the body and a gaping wound as the bullet pierced through his chest.

Around 30-40 people were present at the ceremony, he said.

Munnujan Begum, 50, wife of Abdul, said they were panicked as they heard that the army picked her husband from the hospital.

"It had been only two years of my married life and I saw my mother-in-law crying for her only son," she said.

After the funeral her husband was confined to bed for seven days, she added.

People of Tungipara came to know about the sudden demise of Bangabandhu as the news of this great loss was announced on the radio at 8:00am.

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed recently told journalists that hearings of the appeals will start soon as there is no shortage of judges in the Supreme Court now.

The condemned six still at large are Shariful Haque Dalim, AKM Mahiuddin, Rashed Chowdhury, Nur Chowdhury, Abdul Mazed, and Moslemuddin.

President Ziaur Rahman yesterday issued a statement paying respect to the slain supreme leader of the country's independence struggle.

He said the life and works of Bangabandhu will keep on inspiring not only the country's people but also all down-trodden and freedom seekers around the world, reported BSS.

"August 15 is marked as a dark chapter and stigma in the history of the Bangalee nation," said the president urging the country's people to materialise the dream of the father of the nation by working unitedly with a view to fulfil

the people of all faiths--Muslims, Hindus, Christians and Buddhists--are equal as they all are the citizens of Bangladesh.

Referring to AL torture on the minorities, Khaleda said it is not BNP but AL is a communal party.

Referring to AL's ongoing reorganisation process, she said the leaders and workers of her party will not be evaluated on the basis of their religions but their leadership quality and competence.

Personalities from different professions of the Hindu community and its religious leaders attended the function and exchanged greetings with Khaleda Zia.

Among others, BNP leaders Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, Goutam Chakravarty, Barkatullah Bulu and Nital Chandra Roy spoke on the occasion.

## Nation mourns

FROM PAGE 1  
Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana -- could escape the bloodbath as they were abroad at the time.

The victims also include Bangabandhu's wife Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib, sons Sheikh Kamal, Sheikh Jamal and nine-year-old Sheikh Russell, daughters-in-law Sultana Kamal and Parveen Jamal, brother Sheikh Naser, nephew Sheikh Fazlul Huq Moni and his wife Begum Arju Moni, brother-in-law Abdul Rab Serniabat, Serniabat's son Arif and four-year-old grandson Babu, three guests, Bangabandhu's four domestic helps, and his security chief Col Jamil Uddin Ahmed.

Bangabandhu united the Bangalees to throw off the shackles of Pakistani oppression and steered them towards independence. His stirring speech on March 7, 1971, before a crowd of lakhs ready to stake everything for freedom, left an indelible imprint on the nation's memory.

For 21 long years, his killers had been immune from prosecution due to the Indemnity Ordinance, which was finally repealed in 1996, paving the way for trials of the killers.

A murder case was filed on October 2, 1996. In November 1998, a trial court awarded death penalty to 15 former army officers for killing Bangabandhu and his family members. The High Court (HC) upheld the death sentences of 12.

Five of the condemned -- dismissed army personnel Lt Col Syed Farooq ur Rahman, Lt Col Sultan Shahrish Rashid Khan, Lt Col Muhiuddin Ahmed, Maj AKM Mahiuddin Ahmed, and Maj Bazul Huda -- are behind bars while six are hiding abroad. Another condemned Aziz Pasha died.

The five condemned convicts filed separate appeals with the Appellate Division of Supreme Court in the last week of October 2007 against their death sentences pronounced by the HC.

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## Zimbabwe

FROM PAGE 1  
amassing highest total of 323-7 against Bangladesh. Zimbabwe's previous best against the Tigers was 310-6 at Dhaka in 1999.

Bangladesh were far away from an ideal start in chasing the massive target by losing four wickets for 39 runs. An 83-ball 78 from Rokibul Hasan and an explosive knock by tail-ender Mahbul Alam (57 off 43 balls) only reduced the margin of defeat as the visitors were bundled out for 254 in 44.2 overs.

The game was all but over for the Tigers when they lost half of their wickets for 124 at the halfway mark, needing another 200 runs to beat Zimbabwe. But the local bowlers kept their cool to make sure their batsmen's brilliant effort would not go in vain.

Tawanda Mupfema set the tone removing dashing opener Tamim Iqbal in the very first ball and the Tigers failed to recover from that initial jolt. They needed something special from the top-order but the approach of the top batsmen was pathetic.

Tamim jabbed loosely to first slip and promoted opener Nayeem Islam lost his leg stump to a wild slog against Chigumbura in the second over and former skipper Mohammad Ashraf had his bad old habit as he skied a cut to third man.

It was all over when in-form Shabbir tried to take the aerial route only to top edge to midwicket.

Earlier Masakadza played brilliantly against ordinary Tigers bowling during his 112-ball 102 that saw four boundaries and two over boundaries and his 142-run fourth wicket association with Brendon Taylor, who was spilled by Rokibul on 57, set the foundation for Chigumbura to put the visiting bowlers to the sword.

Chigumbura, who later picked up two wickets, smote three fours and five sixes while another short came from Stuart Matsikenyer, who scored 23 in nine balls.

Mahbul was the most expensive bowler conceding 84 runs in nine overs and all the spinners, the main weapons for Tigers in the recent success against West Indies and Zimbabwe, including Shabbir failed to restrict the Zimbabweans.

The fourth match will take place at the same venue tomorrow.

Internet

FROM PAGE 1  
got disconnected around 3:20am.

The fibre optical line was cut off after being exposed to water and getting damaged at a point near Saleh Noor College in Patiya upazila where it runs beneath a bridge over a canal.

This caused the country's internet and telecommunications to collapse.

Jamuna eco park

FROM PAGE 1  
Sources said two peacocks and two monkeys were reported injured--mainly caused by ill treatment of a section of unruly visitors.

During this visit, park-ranger Idris Ali Sarker could not find any deer in the park after his effort for quite some time. He, however, managed to trace two monkeys, two porcupines and two peacocks.

The ranger told The Daily Star that the animals are now going through severe food crisis due to poor allocation of fund. Besides, the park is immensely under-staffed including no veterinarians and poor number of security guards.

Denying the allegation of mismanagement and negligence, Idris Ali said he had sent letters narrating the poor state of the park and its wildlife to the higher authorities, but to no avail.

BDR camp

FROM PAGE 16  
meetings between them and the administration.

"We assured them of ensuring security of these areas by deploying security forces. If the security worsens then a police camp will be set up soon," the DC added.

The government started withdrawing temporary army camps from the hill district as per the CHT peace accord.

Govt plans

FROM PAGE 16  
10 HC judges whose jobs were not confirmed during the rule of BNP-Jamaat government. They were appointed as per the SC guidelines.

Md Bazul Rahman Chhana, a former additional judge of the HC whose job was not confirmed by the previous four-party alliance government, was reappointed as a regular judge of the HC in May this year.

Besides, the government on June 23 this year appointed nine additional HC judges.

## Faridpur gang

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Police Station yesterday. Sub-Inspector Abul Kalam of the same police station was the investigation officer before.

Local police have finally watched the video CD of the sensational gang rape and they are now saying the whole incident was staged.

Though the SP said the incident took place with the girl's consent, a counsel of the victim Rakibul Biswas told The Daily Star that the victim is only 14 years old and if such incident took place even with her consent it is still statutory rape.

Police also claimed that the alleged victim had an affair with the prime accused Kalam and she knew him well. They might have had an illicit relationship, they said.

The video CD was being secretly bought and sold in the market for quite a while but police officially spoken about its contents only yesterday.

SP Mizanur Rahman said they sent copies of the CD to higher officials.

Locals questioned that if Militants sued

FROM PAGE 16  
Earlier on July 23 the chief judicial magistrate's court placed them on a ten-day remand for interrogation.

JMB activist Montaz, son of Fazal Ali of village Kharibila, went into hiding soon after the serial bomb blasts on August 17 in 2005. He was arrested on July 21.

Police arrested Mohaddes, son of Abdus Sattar Gazi of village Haripur in Shyamnagar upazila, from Itagachha area in the town on July 22.

When in 1995 Indian national Mufti Obaidullah came to Bangladesh Mohaddes sheltered him at his house in Haripur.

During interrogation, he said he came in contact with Mufti Obaidullah while he was a student of Sangu Madrasa in India in 1991.

EU extends

FROM PAGE 16  
breaching the terms of her house arrest after a US national swam to her lakeside residence in May.

Than Shwe, head of the ruling junta, commuted the sentence to 18 months' house arrest but the trial and the verdict have created international outrage.

Also convicted along with 64-year-old Suu Kyi was US citizen John Yettaw, who triggered her trial with his bizarre swimming stunt. He was sentenced to seven years hard labour.

The sentence against Suu Kyi means she will remain in detention during elections promised by the junta next year.

The EU's sanctions targeted those in the military regime "who benefit most from its misrule, and those who actively frustrate the process of national reconciliation, respect for human rights and progress towards democracy," the European Council said.

Later Thursday, the UN Security Council unanimously agreed a watered-down text expressing "serious concern" at the extended detention of Myanmar's democracy icon and calling anew for all political prisoners to be freed.

China, Russia, Vietnam and Libya had blocked a tougher US draft, which would have condemned Aung San Suu's sentencing and called on the Myanmar government to release her and other political prisoners.

The four countries invoked the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of a UN member state.

Britain's UN Ambassador John Sawers, the council chair this month, read out the agreed statement on behalf of all 15 members.

He described it as "an important expression of serious concern about the outcome" of the Suu Kyi trial.

"I think we all know that different members of the Security Council have different views on the situation there and that the strong views in various Western capitals are not entirely shared in countries elsewhere," Sawers noted.

The European Union

she even had an affair with Kalam why would she "have sex" with an unknown youth? They said the victim was stunned and bewildered by the happenings.

The SP said there is a question whether the girl was raped but there was an offence committed and he has instructed the people concerned to arrest the accused.

The victim in her complaint lodged with a Faridpur court claimed that three of the four accused raped her at sharp weapons point.

Kalam Khan and Tushar Khan were mentioned as the accused in the first information report but the victim could not identify the other two criminals.

Muggers

FROM PAGE 1  
killing OC Nur Hossain said Alamgir might have been stabbed because he recognised the gang members or there had been previous enmity. Police picked up two security guards of the area for interrogation, added the OC.

In another incident on Thursday, miscreants shot dead a businessman at Mizzmizi area under Siddhirganj Police Station of Narayanganj.

The victim Abu Taleb, 50, was an industrialist and philanthropist of the area.

Witnesses said around 8:00pm when Abu Taleb came out of a mosque after Maghrib prayers a group of criminals sprayed bullets on him. The locals rushed the critically injured victim to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Medical sources said Taleb succumbed to his injury at 4:00am Friday. His body was handed over to his relatives after autopsy.

A case was lodged with the Siddhirganj Police Station in this connection.

slapped its first set of sanctions on Myanmar in 1996, banning arms exports, imposing visa restrictions on junta allies and families, limiting diplomatic contacts and freezing officials' offshore accounts.

New measures were taken in 2007 after a crackdown on pro-democracy protests by Buddhist monks, banning European firms from importing wood, minerals, gems and metals from Myanmar.

The detailed list of the individuals and companies targeted in the latest round of sanctions will be published later in the European Union's official journal.

Suu Kyi has spent 13 of the last 19 years in detention since the junta refused to recognise her National League for Democracy's landslide victory in elections in 1990.

Zardari

FROM PAGE 16  
"In the long run we must defeat the militant mindset to defend our country, our democracy, our institutions and our way of life," Zardari was quoted as saying by state news agency APP during his overnight address.

Although his civilian government is weak, Zardari is a key ally in US President Barack Obama's strategy to defeat Taliban and al-Qaeda insurgents in Pakistan and Afghanistan, where 100,000 US and Nato troops are deployed.

Pakistani and US officials believe that Pakistan's public enemy number one, Taliban warlord Baitullah Mehsud, was killed last week during a US spy plane attack on his South Waziristan tribal stronghold.

Mehsud's Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan movement appears to have been thrown into turmoil following his presumed death and analysts have urged Pakistan to now bolster efforts to eliminate militants in tribal strongholds.

Pakistan has waged countless military operations in the tribal belt, most recently a six-month offensive that killed hundreds of people in Bajaur, which the military announced in February was secure.