

Build poverty-free Bangladesh: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government is moving ahead with two major tasks -- implementation of the Supreme Court verdict on the fifth amendment of the Constitution and build a country free from hunger and poverty.

She said the defeated and anti-liberation forces had distorted the Constitution after the assassination of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975.

The prime minister made the remarks while addressing as the chief guest a commemorative meeting at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city, organised by Awami League in observance of the National Mourning Day.

Awami League General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam, Presidium Member Begum Matia Chowdhury, Advisory Council Member Suranjit Sengupta, Joint General Secretary Mahbul Alam Hanif and former home minister Mohammad Nasim also took part in the discussion, chaired by Deputy Leader of Parliament Syeda Sajeda Dewdhury.

Hasina urged all to work unitedly, inspired by the ideals of Bangabandhu, to resolve the problems faced by the countrymen.

Expressing satisfaction over the execution of the killers of Bangabandhu, she said: "The nation got rid of the stigma through the execution of the Bangabandhu's killers. We observed August 15 differently this year."

"I always thought that it wouldn't be possible to execute the killers of my father... nation wouldn't get rid of stigma. But it had happened before August 15 this year and the nation has got rid of the stigma," Hasina said in an emotion-choked voice.

She alleged that illegal military governments and anti-liberation governments had rehabilitated the killers of Bangabandhu.

"They (killers) were rewarded with jobs in foreign embassies...even Indemnity Act was enacted to save the killers," she said.

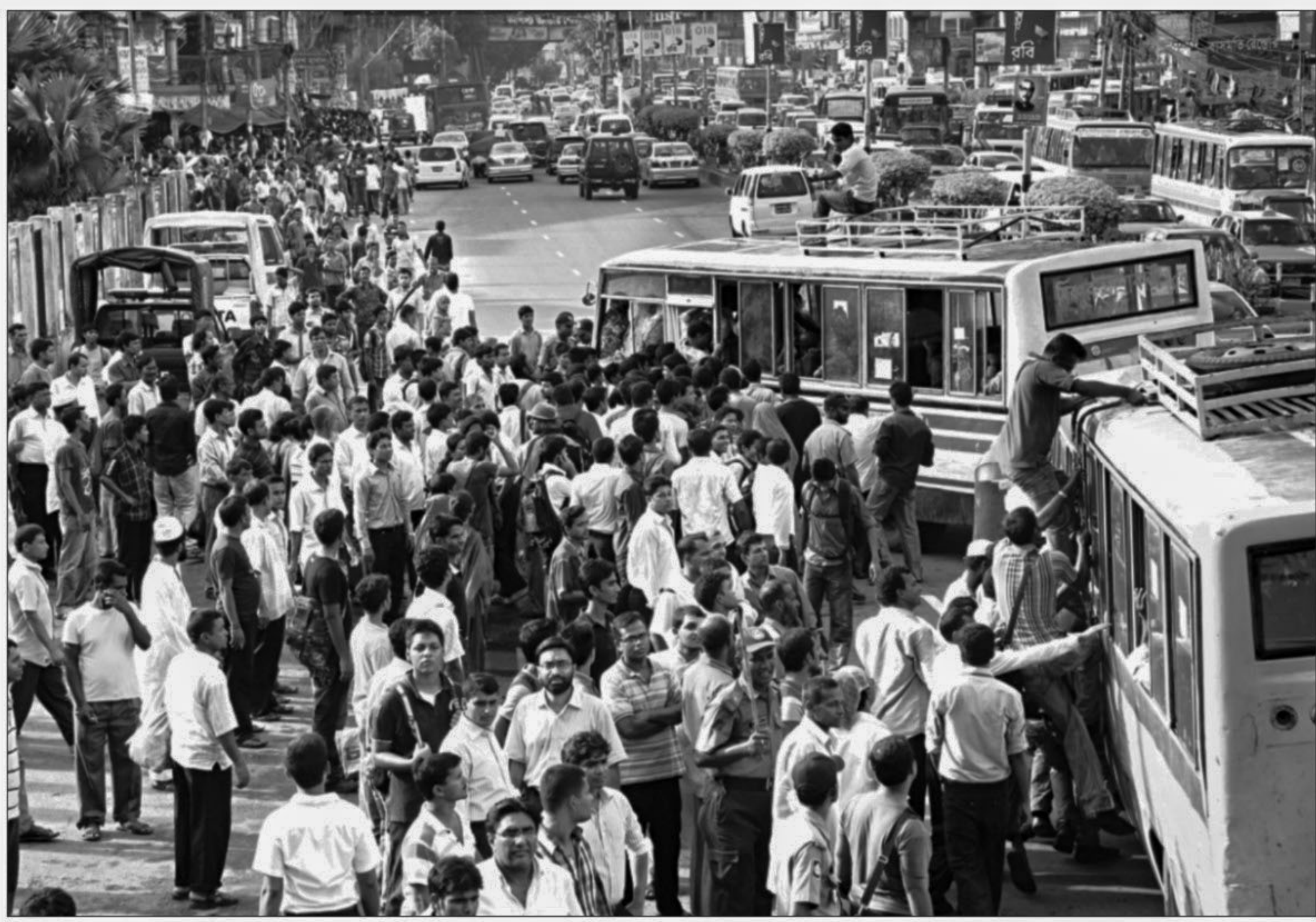
The prime minister said the defeated and anti-liberation forces had killed Bangabandhu when he took up various programmes aiming at economic emancipation of the people in the war-ravaged Bangladesh.

"Bangabandhu could not accomplish his tasks of making the country economically free...together we'll accomplish his unfinished tasks."

She thanked the authorities of Dhaka University for withdrawing the expulsion of studentship of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Suranjit Sengupta in his speech criticised Leader of the Opposition and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia for observing 'fake birthday' on the day of national mourning. He said: "The entire nation hates her (for this)."

Suranjit, also co-chairperson of a special body formed to amend the Constitution, said the name of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman would remain in the Constitution as the Father of the Nation.



Absence of passenger buses causes hustle and jostle, putting lives at risk everyday after office hours. The photo was taken from Farmgate yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

People block road for electricity in Gazipur

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

People of Gazipur Sadar upazila blocked the Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway at Bagher Bazar for an hour yesterday demanding uninterrupted supply of electricity.

Witnesses said local people staged a demonstration on the highway and put up barricades on it from 10:45am, creating a 40-kilometre long tailback on both sides of the road.

The agitating people complained that they have been experiencing load shedding 30 to 40 times a day.

Altaf Hossain, assistant sub-inspector of Mawna Intersection Highway Police Station, said the demonstrators removed the barricade at about 11:30am after police requested to settle the matter with power department officials.

Jail sentences of Sahjahan, Aman, 2 others scrapped

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday scrapped the jail sentences of former BNP state ministers Sahjahan Omar and Aman Ullah Aman and two others in separate corruption cases filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) adjudging the convictions against them illegal.

Two others are Aman's wife Sabera Aman and former Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) lawmaker Mufti Shahidul Islam.

Earlier, the HC acquitted 10 people, including seven political leaders, of separate corruption charges for which they were convicted and sentenced to different terms of imprisonment during the regime of the caretaker government.

An HC bench of Justice Syed Muhammad Dastagir Husain and Justice AKM Zahirul Hoque yesterday delivered the verdicts after granting separate appeals filed by Sahjahan, Aman, Sabera and Shahidul against the trial courts' judgments.

On May 14, 2008, Sahjahan was sentenced to 13 years' imprisonment and fined Tk 10 lakh by a special judge's court for amassing wealth illegally and concealing information in his wealth statement submitted to the ACC.

A special court, set up on the Sangsad Bhaban premises, on June 21, 2007 sentenced Aman to 10 years' rigorous imprisonment for amassing wealth illegally and concealing information from the ACC.

Aman's wife was also sentenced to three years' imprisonment by the same court, as she was found guilty of abetting her husband in acquiring wealth through dishonest means.

Another special court on March 19, 2008 sentenced Shahidul to 10 years' rigorous imprisonment for amassing wealth illegally and concealing information from the anti-graft body.

Barrister Rafique-ul Huq and Advocate Shah Monjurul Hoque appeared for the appellants, while Advocate MA Aziz Khan stood for ACC.

AUGUST 15 TRAGEDY Rinto's death anniversary observed

BSS, Dhaka

The death anniversary of Abdur Nayeem Khan Rinto, a victim of August 15 of 1975, was observed in the city yesterday with due solemnity.

Rinto, a promising artist and son of late Abdul Khaleque Khan, founder chairman of Opsonin Group, came to the capital city from Barisal leading a cultural group to perform at a musical function.

A close friend of the second son of Abdur Rob Serniabat, former minister, he went to his friend's residence on that tragic night and fell prey to the bullets of assassins.

In observance of the death anniversary, a milad mahfil was held at the Eskatun head office of Opsonin Group. Special prayers were offered on the occasion.

Besides Chairman of Opsonin Group Abdus Sabur Khan and employees of the company, a large number of relatives, well-wishers, political leaders and cultural activists attended the milad.

Bangabandhu most charismatic personality

Says former Indian governor

BSS, New Delhi

In the eyes of a former governor of India, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the most charismatic personality among the many leaders he had met.

"I have met many charismatic personalities during my service career, including Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and many world leaders, but I must say that among them he was the most charismatic personality I had met," Ved Marwah, former governor of Manipur and Jharkhand, wrote while recounting his memory with Bangabandhu.

Ved Marwah, first secretary in the Indian High Commission in London during the Bangladesh War of Independence, was asked by his High Commissioner to accompany Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to New Delhi on way to Dhaka.

"I got a telephone call from the High Commissioner, the late Apa Pant. I was told to pack up my bag and reach the Heathrow airport immediately. He did not tell me anything more. It was only after reaching the airport that I discovered that I was to accompany Sheikh Mujib to New Delhi on way to Dhaka."

"I could never have imagined that I was going to be a part of this historical journey! We were only five persons in the plane. Apart from Bangabandhu, there were Kamal Hossain, his wife, Bannerjee, an attache in the Indian High Commission, and myself," wrote Marwah. It was in an article titled "My memories with Bangabandhu" on the occasion of the 35th Anniversary of the late leader.

While describing the incidents inside the aircraft after it had taken off, the former governor said, "After about an hour he went round the plane to greet Bannerjee and myself."

"When he came over to my seat I respectfully introduced myself. He put me at ease by speaking to me in a very informal manner. During this brief conversation, he discovered that I could speak Bengali. He was so pleased to know this that he asked me to sit next to him. For the next hour or so I had the privilege of sitting next to him."

"His warm and affectionate personality simply overwhelmed me. He talked of all sorts of subjects. I was an admiring listener. Here was a man who had just come out of the Pakistan prison where he could have met his end if Bhutto had not taken over the reins of power. But he displayed no bitterness or rancour against anyone. He was only thinking of his people in Bangladesh and their problems. He referred to them as 'my people'."

Narrating the experience, he said the Delhi airport wore a festive look as the plane landed in the morning. "Prime Minister Indira Gandhi received Bangabandhu. She by nature was a very reserved person. But this occasion was an exception. I had not seen a bigger smile on her face. She was smiling and prancing like a young girl. One could see an immediate personal rapport had developed between the two."

"I was to travel only up to New Delhi. As I went over to Bangabandhu to say good-bye, he asked me why I was leaving and 'didn't I want to make the journey to Dhaka'. When I explained that my instructions from my government were only to accompany him up to New Delhi, he immediately told me that from then onwards I would be his guest up to Dhaka."

The former governor described Bangabandhu as 'first a very warm human being and only then a great leader.'

Recalling his meeting with Bangabandhu as he visited London as prime minister, Marwah said, "My wife and I were in for a pleasant surprise when Bangabandhu invited us for a tea at the Claridges Hotel where he was staying. I expected a big tea party but to our utter surprise we found that it was an exclusive invitation meant only for my wife and me."

"He had not forgotten me and the tea-invitation was a gesture on his part to express his affection. I, a lowly first secretary in the Indian High Commission being invited by a prime minister of his stature! That in brief sums up for me his personality."

"For me he towered over all the political leaders of his time," he added.



Obituary

METRO DESK

Atif Rahman (Bipu), deputy managing director of Bengal Airlift Group, passed away at Mount Elizabeth Hospital, Singapore yesterday morning. He was 40.

He is the eldest son of Rezaur Rahman, managing director of the same group & former president of Dhaka Club Limited and Koukab Reza, senior teacher of Wills Little Flower School and College.

He left behind his wife, a son and a daughter, parents and only younger brother Arif Rahman and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

His body will be flown to Dhaka today by an aircraft of Bangladesh Biman from Singapore.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held tomorrow at Gulshan Azad Mosque after Zohr prayers.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to attend his janaza and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Najmul Hasan Zahed

Najmul Hasan Zahed, eminent businessman, philanthropist and former MP from Habiganj-2, passed away at Apollo Hospitals in the city at 8:55pm yesterday. He was 80.

Zahed is the elder brother of BRAC's founder Sir Fazle Hasan Abed.

He is survived by his wife, son, daughter-in-law and grandson and a host of relatives and well-wishers.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held at 11:00am at Gulshan Azad Mosque. He will be buried in his family graveyard in Baniachang of Habiganj, said a press release.

Jamaat's Iftar for diplomats

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ambassadors, high commissioners, heads and representatives of different foreign missions and organisations took part in an iftar party hosted by Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami at a city hotel yesterday.

USA Ambassador James F. Moriarty, ambassador of Saudi Arabia Abdullah Bin Naser Al-Bussairi, High Commissioner of Pakistan Ashraf Qureshi, Ambassador of Norway Ingebjorg Stofring, Political Secretary of British High Commission Jon Ryan, among others, were present at the iftar party.

Jamaat acting chief Maqbul Ahmad, acting secretary general ATM Azharul Islam and others leaders of the party were also present at the iftar.

Rajshahi div commissioner made OSD for torturing wife

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi Divisional Commissioner M Nurul Islam was made officer on special duty (OSD) yesterday following his wife's allegations against him of torturing her for dowry and marrying her giving false information.

She filed cases with Chittishahar Police Station in Halishahar and Ramna Police Station in Dhaka in this connection.

Refuting the allegations, Nurul Islam told The Daily Star that all the allegations against him are "false and baseless." "Our marriage took place only after she knew my past only after she resigned from her job willingly as I wanted a housewife."

"Rather, I am tortured by her...she made up the allegations only when I divorced her," he said.

Masuma in the letter

alleged that she had to resign from her job at a multinational organisation in Chittagong in 2002 when Nurul married her identifying him as an "unmarried person." Later, she knew that Nurul earlier married two other women and he has a son and a daughter.



Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over Chittagong, Barisal, Khulna, and Sylhet divisions and at a few places over Rajshahi, Rangpur and Dhaka divisions in next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy falls are also likely at places, Met Office said.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:30pm today and rises at 5:35am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 35.4 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 25.2 degrees Celsius at Jessore.

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

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	33.3	27.2	79	85
Chittagong	31.6	25.5	85	89
Rajshahi	34.3	26.6	87	72
Khulna	34.0	27.0	79	83
Barisal	32.3	27.2	82	84
Sylhet	29.4	25.6	96	93
Cox's Bazar	32.5	25.5	83	89

Schoolboy electrocuted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A boy was electrocuted in city's Jurain area yesterday evening.

The deceased Akash Mondal, 12, a class five student of Bangladesh Bank Colony High School, is the son of Hari Chandra Mondal of Khandaker Road of the area.

Neighbours said Akash came out of his house at about 5:30pm and was electrocuted when he came into contact with a hanging live electric wire torn by the wind.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the fourth death anniversary of Priyolal Sarkar, freedom fighter and former vice-principal of Shariatpur Government College, says a press release.

Mahmudur may face another contempt of court charge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained Mahmudur Rahman, acting editor of the daily Amar Desh, is going to face another contempt of court for writing and publishing a commentary involving Supreme Court (SC) in his daily.

A petition in this connection is set to be filed today with the SC as a commentary with the headline "Swadhin bicharer name tamasa" meaning "force in the name of independent judiciary" was published in the daily on May 10.

Earlier on May 2, SC lawyers Riaz Uddin Khan and Mynul Hassan jointly filed a contempt of court petition against Mahmudur and four journalists of the Amar Desh for publishing a report with the headline "Chamber mane sarkar pakke stay" meaning "Chamber bench means stay order in favour of the government" on April 21.

The six-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Mohammad Fazlul Karim observed that the petitioners can file a fresh contempt of court for publishing the commentary.

MK Rahman yesterday told The Daily Star that his clients will file a fresh contempt of court petition with the apex court today, as per his observation.

The jail authorities yesterday again produced Mahmudur before the SC in the morning as per its earlier directive.

The apex court yesterday adjourned hearing on the petition till today.