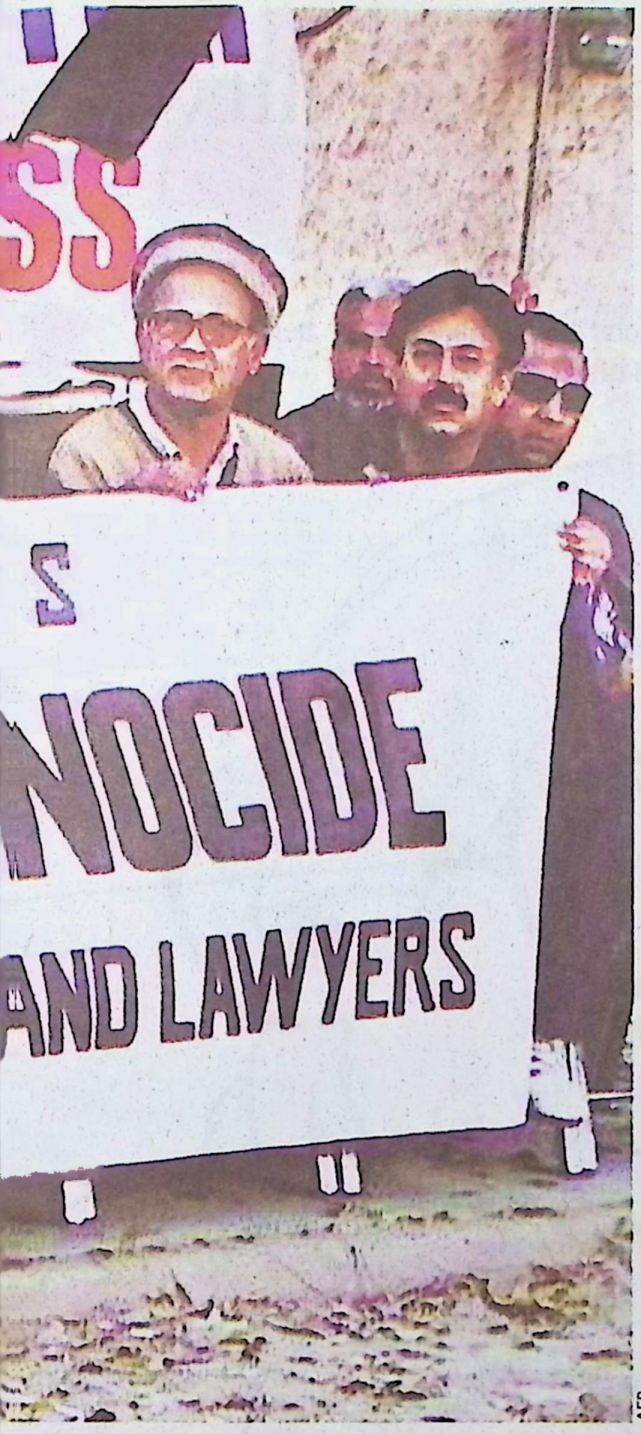


AFP

of Islami Chhatra Sangha, announced the pledge of "Badr Day": (A) We will resist Indian attack, (B) We will eliminate all miscreants, (C) We will establish an Islamic society (*The Dainik Pakistan*, November 8, 1971).

Matiur Rahman Nizami, the Commander-in-Chief of the Badr Bahini, wrote in the *Sangram* on November 14, 1971, "Days are not far off when our Al-Badr youths fighting alongside the Pakistani Army will trample and humiliate the Indian Forces, demolish India and will have the Islamic flag hoisted all over the world." The two other leaders of Al-Badr Bahini, Ali Ahsan Muhammad Mujahid and Mir Kashem Ali, in a statement, published on November 23, 1971 urged all members to "get ready as a soldier". Around this time, one of their pamphlets said, "Remember, you are fighting not only to save Pakistan; this war is also geared towards saving Islam. Please follow instructions given by our Amir (Ghulam Azam) to save our motherland from the evil hands of 'Namrud'."

The people, who were branded as miscreants and Indian agents, "Namruds" and bastards by the leadership of the Jamaat, were, in reality, the "pride sons" of this country, the heroes among heroes, the freedom fighters. It is through their life-risking struggle, indomitable, enviable sacrifice and human blood that the independence of Bangladesh was achieved.

Those who perpetrated one of the most brutal atrocities since the dawn of history went unpunished. Just after the war the government led by Bangabondhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman started the trial of local collaborators under the law popularly known as "Collaborators Act". After the assassination of Bangabondhu and his close associates, General Ziaur Rahman assumed power and stopped the trial process that had started since 1972. Gen. Zia also accommodated a huge number of war criminals and collaborators of Pakistani occupation army in his party named Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). Since then, the family members of the victims of war along with the members of the civil society have been crying for justice.

Finally, after 39 years of the holocaust of '71, International Crimes Tribunal was formed in Dhaka, at old High Court building on March 25, 2010 under International Crimes (Tribunals) Act enacted in 1973, for the trial of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated in Bangladesh during the nine-month-long liberation war of 1971.

If we want to stop genocide or any kind of war and crimes against humanity, the perpetrators must be brought to book in order to ensure justice and peace as well as to protect human civilisation.

Shahriar Kabir is a writer, journalist, filmmaker, researcher on the liberation war and genocide of 1971 and a human rights activist.