

WAR CRIMES TRIAL  
Hearing on charge framing against Nizami today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal is scheduled today to hear a charge framing against Jamaat-e-Islami leader Motiur Rahman Nizami in connection with crimes against humanity committed during the 1971 Liberation War. Nizami, who has been detained and faces more than 15 charges of crimes against humanity, will be produced before the tribunal today, Prosecutor Zeed Al Malum told The Daily Star yesterday. Meanwhile, Tajul Islam, a counsel for Nizami, said the defence will move a petition today seeking preparation time to defend the accused.

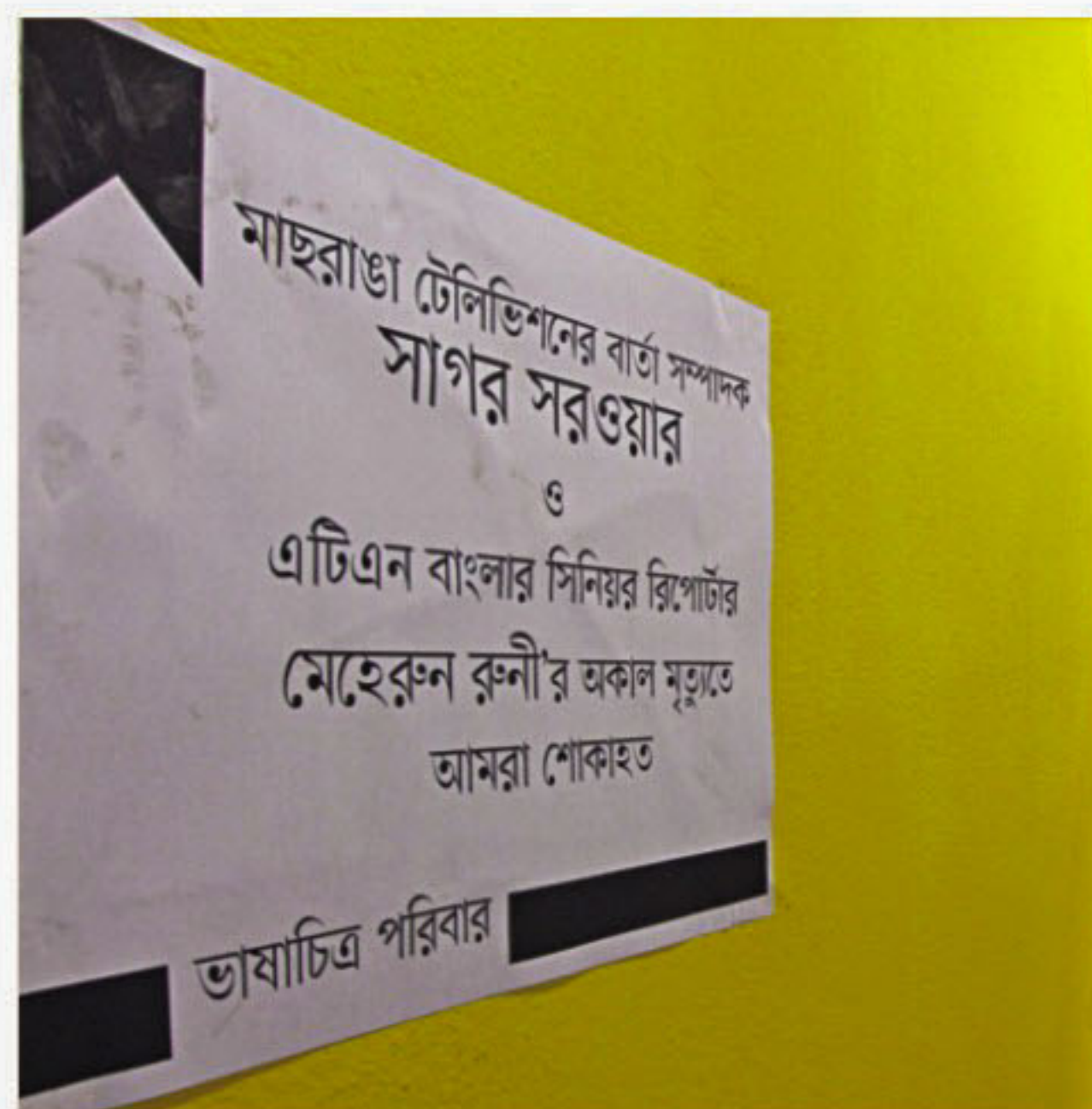


PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

A book stall at Amar Ekushey Boi Mela bears a message expressing grief at the death of Sagar Sarwar, a news editor of private TV channel Maasranga Television, and his wife Meherun Runi, a senior reporter of ATN Bangla, yesterday. Inset, a visitor at the stall holds a book, Colonel Ke Ami Mone Rekhechi, which Sagar wrote and published last year.



Nation condemns murder of journalist couple

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Citizens from all walks of life and socio-political organisations yesterday strongly condemned the brutal murder of Sagar Sarwar, a news editor of private TV channel Maasranga Television, and his wife Meherun Runi, a senior reporter of ATN Bangla. Expressing deep shock and sorrow, they demanded the immediate arrest of and exemplary punishment to the murderers and ensuring the security of the couple's family. They also prayed for the salvation of the departed souls and conveyed their sympathies to the bereaved families. The journalist couple were stabbed to death inside their West Rajabazar residence in the city in the early hours yesterday. President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in their condolences, prayed for the eternal peace of the departed souls and conveyed their deepest sympathies to the bereaved family members. The president said the country had lost two devoted journalists of potential. The prime minister, in a separate message, instructed the authorities concerned to investigate the murder and immediately arrest the culprits. Condemning the killing, opposition leader and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia said the gruesome murder once again proved that the country's law and order situation had deteriorated severely. She termed the murder a result of the government's misrule and demanded the immediate arrest of the culprits and their exemplary punishment. Law Minister Shafique Ahmed and State Minister Qamrul Islam, in separate statements, gave out assurances that stringent punishment would be ensured for those involved in the brutal murder. Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad said the murderers would be punished through proper investigation. Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof

AAMS Arefin Siddique visited the residence of the deceased and conveyed his sympathy to the family members of the murdered couple. The nation had lost two devoted newsmen, he said, demanding that the authorities find the culprits and ensure their exemplary punishment. Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid, Industries Minister Dilip Barua and Environment and Forest Minister Hasan Mahmud also expressed profound shock at the deaths. Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman HM Ershad, JP presidium member Kazi Firoz Rashid, BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, Communist Party of Bangladesh, Bangladesher Workers Party, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ), Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ), Jatiya Press Club, Commonwealth Journalists Association, Bangladesh, Dhaka Reporters Unity, Diplomatic Correspondents' Association Bangladesh, Bangladesh Bank, Bangladesh National Awami Party, Independent Television, Crime Reporters Association of Bangladesh, Dhaka Sub-Editors Council, Peshajibi Samannay Parishad, National Democratic Party, Bangladesh Nari Sangbadik Kendra, Rangpur Division Journalist Association, Progressive Art and Mass Media Workers' Forum, Bangladesh Film Directors Association, Sammito Sangathan Samannay Parishad, Crime Reporters Multipurpose Co-operative Society Ltd, Rajshahi Metropolitan Press Club, Rajshahi Press Club, Rajshahi Union of Journalists and Reporters Against Corruption also expressed condolence at the deaths. BFUJ and DUJ will form a human chain before Jatiya Press Club in the city at 11:00am today to protest the murder and demand punishment of the killers.

Dr Kamal stresses healthy politics

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday stressed the need for establishing a sound and healthy political culture in the country to protect the people's rights and build a repression-free society. "We have gained freedom through a lot of sacrifice, but its fruits are yet to be taken door to door. Now mass awareness should be created through sound politics to finish the incomplete job", he said. Because of the non-transparent and irresponsible activities of one percent people, the rest are deprived of their rights and justice, he noted. Dr Kamal, also president of Gono Forum, made the observations at a condolence meeting on former Chhatra League leader Syed Mazharul Haque Baki, organised by Praktan Chhatra League Foundation. Baki's contribution in different democratic movements during the pre-liberation period was recalled.

Tofail Ahmed, a former Chhatra League leader, said the quality of student politics has changed for the worse due to the state of national politics. Criticising the opposition BNP, he urged the party to place its demand for interim government in parliament. Former Awami League general secretary Abdul Jalil, among others, also spoke at the programme with Praktan Chhatra League Foundation convener Nur-e-Alam Siddiqi in the chair.

Call to punish reckless drivers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a human chain programme yesterday demanded exemplary punishment of the drivers responsible for road mishaps. They also requested the authorities concerned to formulate a new law so that these drivers could not get bail easily and instead got stern punishment. Families United Against Road Accident (FUARA) organised the human chain demanding exemplary punishment of the driver who killed a child at Mirpur-10 on February 1.

Sagar's last wish

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Khandaker Sohel was unable to find something to console himself over the death of his former colleague Sagar Sarwar. Publisher of one of his books, Sohel thinks an unfulfilled desire will haunt him throughout his life. "Sagar, days before the launching of the Amar Ekushey Boi Mela, asked me whether I would take his manuscript to publish another book. I thought he was joking and thus did not take it seriously," Sohel told The Daily Star yesterday at his bookstall Bhashachitra on the fair premises. "It will haunt me all my life since I could not publish his manuscript," said a sobbing Sohel, formerly a co-worker of Sagar at the Bengali daily Jugantor. Sohel published Sagar's 'Colonel Ke Ami Mone Rekhechi' last year. A news editor at the private TV channel Maasranga, Sagar, and his wife Meherun Runi, a senior reporter of ATN Bangla, were stabbed to death at their West Rajabazar residence in the city.

'BSF chief's remarks to encourage killing'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

India's Border Security Force (BSF) will go more desperate and border killing would increase for the recent remarks of the BSF chief that it would never be possible to totally stop firing along border, leaders of some left-leaning parties said at a human yesterday. They also slammed the government for its subservient foreign policy and demanded the removal of LGRD Minister Syed Ashraful Islam for his careless comments over border killing. The BSF made commitment to Bangladesh that it would not fire at Bangladeshis, but BSF chief UK Bansal's comment is a "sheer infringement of the commitment", they added. The left leaders also called upon the people to get united against the aggression of India and mount movement against the Bangladesh government. Ganotantrik Bam Morcha, a coalition of some left-leaning parties, organised the human chain, followed by a procession, before Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday. Central leaders of the coalition Saiful Haque, Prof Abdus Sattar, Azizur Rahman, and Badrul Alam, among others, addressed the programme, says a press release.

HATHAZARI CLASHES Arrest of culprits demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different political and socio-religious organisations yesterday demanded the arrest of the people involved in a series of clashes between two groups at Hathazari in Chittagong on Thursday and Friday centring a religious event. Strongly criticising those responsible for the clashes, leaders of the organisations said the clashes were aimed at materialising the evil design of a vested quarter trying to destroy the country's communal harmony. A brawl between two groups broke out on Thursday centring on a religious event and escalated into a full-fledged clash that continued in phases until Section-144 was imposed on Friday afternoon. Ekatturer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee Vice President Mohammad Gholam Rabbani and General Secretary Kazi Mukul, in a statement, said Jamaat-e-Islami and Bangladesh Chhatra Shibir provoked the unwanted incident. They said it was now clear that Jamaat and BNP were trying to foil the ongoing war crimes trial through their provocative statements and destructive activities for the last couple of months. Communist Party of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal, Gonosanghati Andolon and Bangladesh Hindu Buddha Christian Oikya Parishad, in separate statements, strongly criticised the people responsible for the clashes.

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