



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina poses for photographs at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital with foreign friends of Bangladesh who were honoured on the eve of the 41st Victory Day for their outstanding roles in our war for independence.

PHOTO: BSS

## Thank you all

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too, the cause they had stood for. So honouring you in this month of victory makes the occasion more special," she added.

In absence of President Zillur Rahman, who could not attend the function due to illness, Hasina presented the "Muktijuddho Moitri Sammanana" [Friends of Liberation War Honour] awards to them at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital.

The premier offered the nation's deepest sense of gratitude to the foreign friends of the Liberation War as they had inspired people around the globe and played the leading role in mobilising support for the birth of Bangladesh.

"Each and every freedom fighter who joined Bangladesh's Liberation War in 1971 felt that they were fighting for justice and human rights," said former army officer and Ambassador of India Jagdish C Sharma Sena Medal, who spoke on behalf of the recipients.

Sharma recalled Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who gave birth to Bangladesh's independence. Ambassador Sharma provided training to the soldiers of 1 Mujib Battery Artillery of the Mukti Bahini and played an important role in preparing them for military operations.

He also actively took part in the battles of Kasba, Bhairab, Akhaura and Brahmanbaria. Three of his brothers also fought in the Liberation War as members of the Mitra Bahini.

Twenty-two recipients received the honour by themselves, while representatives of the remaining 40, mostly deceased, took the award on behalf of them.

Indian Minister for Law and Justice Ashwani Kumar received the honour on behalf of his father former minister and author late Prabodh Chandra. State Minister of Health and Family Welfare of India Abdul Hossain also received the award on behalf of his father former minister and politician Abu Barkat Aatur Ghani Khan Choudhury.

This was the fourth phase of awarding foreign friends as the government had earlier honoured 145 foreign nationals and organisations in three phases.

The recipients, mostly from India, include prominent communist leader late Ila Mitra and her husband Ramendra Mitra, music legend late Salil Chowdhury, singers late Hemanta Mukhopadhyay and late Manna Dey, acclaimed filmmaker Ritwik Ghatak, writers late Sunil Gangopadhyay and Tara Sankar Bandyopadhyay and famous painter late Maqbool Fida Husain.

Other recipients are from Australia, Bhutan, France, Nepal, Russia, Sri Lanka, Sweden, the UK and the USA including late William AS Onderland of Australia and Syed Asif Shahkar, a Pakistani origin Swedish.

Onderland, the only foreigner to have been awarded Bangladesh gallantry award, Bir Protik, was also honoured for his support to the cause. He was the General Manager of Bata Shoe Company in Tongi during the Liberation War.

He secretly dispatched pictures of genocide to the western media and supplied important information on the Pakistani army to the freedom fighters ignoring the risk of his life. For this great contribution he has been awarded with the Friend of Liberation War Honour posthumously.

Australian High Commissioner in Dhaka Gregory A Wilcock received the award on behalf of Onderland.

Pakistan origin Swedish judge Syed Asif Shahkar, who was joint secretary of Punjab students union in Pakistan, had mobilised public opinion against the genocide and distributed leaflets and organised demonstrations in West Pakistan.

Shahkar was arrested, tortured and given long-term jail sentence. The Pakistan government also branded him as a traitor. Later he migrated to Sweden. For his great moral contributions to the Liberation War, Shahkar has been conferred with the honour.

Each of the awardees received a citation on a piece of silk cloth and a gold-plated silver plaque in which the replica of the national mausoleum is engraved.

Earlier, the government had conferred honour to late Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi, who was the first foreign friend presented with this honour. Her daughter-in-law and Congress President Sonia Gandhi received the honour on her behalf on July 25, 2011.

In the second phase, Bangladesh awarded 83 foreigners with "Bangladesh Liberation War Honour" and "Friends of Liberation War Honour" on March 27 and 61 received the state honour in the third phase on October 20 this year.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni and State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Captain (retd) AB Tajul Islam spoke on the occasion, while Cabinet Secretary M Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan read out the citation of the recipients.

## Govt asked

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members of the ruling party or the opposition," he added.

Ittekhuzzaman made the remark at the TIB conference room during the launch ceremony of Young Professionals against Corruption (YPAC), a TIB initiative to "spearhead anti-corruption social movement across the country", said a press release.

Ittekhuzzaman termed the debates ill-motivated and unacceptable and criticised the government's "move to create confusions about the identities of the murderers".

Bishwajit, a 24-year-old tailor, was beaten and hacked to death by activists of pro-Awami League organisation Bangladesh Chhatra League during the early hours of a nationwide road blockade enforced by the BNP-led 18-party alliance on December 9.

YPAC members condemned the killing and, after the launch ceremony, demanded a judicial inquiry into the murder.

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Under German law either the government or any of the two houses of parliament can apply to the Constitutional Court to get a political party banned.

Germany's domestic intelligence agency says the party takes a favourable view of historical Nazism.

It obtained 1.5 percent of the vote in the 2009 general election and is not represented in the federal parliament.

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Charley fell violently ill, and doctors discovered she was suffering from a placental abruption: each twin had its own placenta, and William's had ruptured, which could have killed him in minutes.

The twins were born by emergency Caesarean section on February 7. William emerged first, weighing 4.5lb, followed by Ellenita at 5lb.

It was a terrifying time for the couple: William had swallowed a large amount of blood and was severely jaundiced, and both babies had to remain in incubators for the next three weeks, before the couple finally came back to England in June.

With the twins' clean bill of health, it wasn't long before the sporty couple started to think about introducing their children to their way of life.

"I was desperate to get them in the water, but they were so little. I knew they would get cold really quickly," says Charley. "So we had to wait until they were about four months old and had all their inoculations."

The first time they went to the pool she admits she clung on to the babies, just like every other protective mother. It was only when the couple visited Cyprus, where Victor has family, in October, that the twins' astonishing talent was revealed.

One afternoon, they swam five metres, then a width at seven metres, and then a length of 12 metres of the baby pool.

Now, they are mini celebrities at the Cotswolds Leisure Centre where they go with their parents for a twice-weekly splashabout.

Asif said he wanted to contribute for Bangladesh through whatever means he has for the rest of his life.

Syed Asif, now a justice and citizen of Sweden,

## Stabber captured

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television. I knew that my son was involved in student politics but I didn't know he became such a dangerous man."

Relatives said Ansar was too shocked to bear the pain of what his son's misdeed.

Taking Bishwajit for a pro-blockade activist, a group of Chhatra League activists of Jagannath University (JNU) swooped on him around 9:00am on his way to work, witnesses said.

The victim was declared dead at Mitford Hospital around 10:00am.

### SHAKIL'S ARREST

With the arrest of Shakil around 5:00am yesterday, the number of arrestees in the murder case rose to 10.

Shakil is a second-year student of Islamic history at JNU. Photos and video footage of the murder scene show Shakil hacking Bishwajit with a machete, which detectives recovered from a shop on the JNU campus last night.

Police said they caught Shakil from a relative's house in Barguna through tracking his mobile calls. He was brought to detective headquarters in Dhaka after the arrest, and would be produced before a court today.

Shakil's admission is in total contrast with the government and Chhatra League claims.

Mahbubul Alam Akand, a sub-inspector of Sutrapur Police Station and also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, produced the duo before the Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate's court that gave the remand order.

The remand petition said Saiful and Shaon swooped on Bishwajit and indiscriminately beat him. The IO also said police identified the duo from their photographs and video clippings run in the media.

During primary interrogation, Saiful and Shaon also

confessed to their involvement in the killing, police officials told The Daily Star.

Speaking in the BBC Bangla dialogue yesterday, State Minister for Law Quamrul Islam said Bishwajit's killers would be tried under speedy trial.

### COPS-DOCS UNDER FIRE

Meanwhile, National Human Rights Commission Chairman Mizanur Rahman has blamed police members and hospital authority's negligence for Bishwajit's death.

Bishwajit was attacked in front of the police but they did not save him while the hospital authorities failed to play their due role when the victim was taken to the hospital.

The Jet Airways flight carrying the body was scheduled to reach Mumbai early yesterday. It would then be flown to Mangalore on Sunday for funeral.

The Guardian reported that one of the three handwritten notes left behind by Saldanha criticised the hospital staff in the wake of the hoax call from two Australian radio presenters who posed as the Queen and Prince Charles to obtain medical details of the Duchess of Cambridge, Kate Williams.

Three days after answering the call, which she took to be genuine, Saldanha committed suicide by hanging herself in her house, close to the hospital.

"One note deals with the hoax call by the DJs from 2Day FM, another details her requests for her funeral, and the third addresses her employers, the hospital, and contains criticism of staff there. The Guardian understands from two separate sources," the newspaper said.

The police said they were looking at a number of Saldanha's e-mails and her telephone contacts as part of their investigation.

## Royal hoax call nurse's body flown to India

THE HINDU ONLINE

The body of nurse Jacintha Saldanha was on Friday flown to India, the Indian High Commission here said, as a fresh controversy erupted over the circumstances leading to her death following a newspaper report that a suicide note she left behind contained criticism of the Edward VII hospital staff, though details were not known.

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## Democracy

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Tariqul Islam chaired the meeting, which was addressed, among others, by party leaders RA Gani, Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, MK Anwar and Rafiqul Islam Mia.

Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain said the government wants to grab power for a long time and is hatching conspiracy to hold the election themselves. "But people won't accept it. Election must be held under a non-party government.

"The BNP will not take part in any election held under a political government and people won't allow anyone to hold a blueprint election," he added.

### ILLEGAL ARMS IN AL'S HAND

Tariqul Islam, also coordinator of BNP's agitation programmes, alleged the ruling AL is using illegal arms in its attempt to subdue the opposition.

"Awami League men have started using illegal arms against the people. They killed Bishwajit Das in broad daylight," he said while addressing a human chain in front of the National Press Club.

Jatiyatabadi Forum of Charfashion-Monpura organised the programme in protest against an attack on former lawmaker Nazim Uddin Alami during road blockade in the city on December 9.

## 4 victims of 'cover-up'

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Two days after the killing of Bishwajit by a group of Chhatra League goons on December 9, Home Minister Muhimuddin Khan Alamgir announced the "arrest of eight persons" in the much-talked-about case.

But no law enforcement agency confirmed a single arrest.

Police sources say his statement was based on a briefing by Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Wari division. Some high officials pointed out the mistake as the claim popped up in the media.

But the Kotwali police made the wrongful arrest on December 11, sources say.

The 10 were released the same day after their relatives and friends contacted law enforcers.

But the ill-fated four -- Mamun-ur Rashid, Faruk Hossain, Nahiduzzaman Tuhin and Mosleuddin Muslim -- were shown arrested and produced before a court.

Mamun and his friend Faruk were picked up in the Old Dhaka court area as they came out of a lawyer's office.

They had gone there in the morning to file a bail petition for a relative of Mamun, his cousin Obaidul Haq said.

Residents of Dakshinkhan, the two are cloth traders in Uttara and both are innocent, he said, adding the family came to know about the arrest from Kotwali police the next day.

One afternoon, they swam five metres, then a width at seven metres, and then a length of 12 metres of the baby pool.

Now, they are mini celebrities at the Cotswolds Leisure Centre where they go with their parents for a twice-weekly splashabout.

Asif said he wanted to contribute for Bangladesh through whatever means he has for the rest of his life.

Mahbub claimed they were arrested as they "behaved suspiciously".

"From video footage of the killing, we have identified 21 persons whom we will ask about the four. We will then decide whether to interrogate the arrested," he said.

The IO declined to answer further questions.

You are practising politics of anger  
Rahul to Modi

Pti, Bhuj

In a veiled attack on chief minister Narendra Modi, AICC general secretary Rahul Gandhi yesterday accused him of practising "politics of anger" and said it was time people switch to the power of "love", preached by the Mahatma, to ensure progress of Gujarat.

"Common man dreams are not looked at ... it is just one man's dream that prevails in the state and who is doing politics of anger," Gandhi said without naming Modi.

"What's the problem here ... this one man who claims to run Gujarat and having changed the entire state is full of anger ... and with anger the state cannot progress ahead," Gandhi said, while addressing a rally here ahead of the second phase of polling on December 17.

The Amethi MP said it was "love of the people" that could help the state progress and not anger.

"This state can only progress ahead with love ... a path shown by Mahatma Gandhi ... this is what I wanted to tell you ..." Gandhi said asking people to vote for change.

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