

# Azhar grilled

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parents. We think he was pretending so that he could avoid answering questions," he said, adding, "We, however, found a lot of information. We will compare those with our findings from elsewhere and then place our probereport."

He also claimed that they had "found evidence" of Azhar's involvement in several incidents of murders, mass killing, and torture committed during the 1971 war.

A five-member team of the agency interrogated the Jamaat assistant secretary general at the Dhanmondi safe home from 10:00am to 5:00pm yesterday with an hour's lunch break. Defence counsel Saifur Rahman was present in the next room.

Following an arrest warrant issued by the International Crimes Tribunal-1, law enforcers

on August 22, 2012, arrested Azhar at Moghbazar in connection with crimes against humanity allegedly committed during the Liberation War.

On February 5, the tribunal allowed the prosecution to quiz Azhar at the safe home and asked the prosecution to submit on March 13 a progress report or a final probe report on the ongoing investigation.

Sanaul claimed that they came to know during the investigation that Azhar was the president of Islami Chhatra Sangha, the then student wing of Jamaat, of Rangpur and "found evidence" of his involvement in the killing of several teachers of Rangpur Carmichael College in 1971.

He also claimed that they have evidence that Azhar was with the Pakistani army when around 1,200 people were killed at Jharuar Beel

and Padmapukur areas of Badarganj in Rangpur.

Asked whether Azhar confessed his involvement to the interrogators, Sanaul said, "He [Azhar] told us that he can't remember."

Sanaul told The Daily Star as per the "Fortnightly Secret Report on the Situation in East Pakistan", a meeting of Islami Chhatra Sangha was held at Rangpur Town Hall on October 17, 1971.

Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, the then president of East Pakistan Islami Chhatra Sangha, addressed the programme while Azhar, "as Al-Badr Commander" presided over the programme, said Sanaul, adding that the meeting urged strengthening of the Al-Badr force.

Defence counsel Saifur Rahman alleged that Azhar was not physically fit and the long interrogation was a "mental torture" for him.

# No 'secret deal'

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there was any "secret dealing" between Jamaat and the government over Quader Mollah's trial. "There is no scope for such confusion."

The veteran politician also said, "We must amend the law in line with the people's expectation and sentiment."

Some even said they were convinced that the government reached an understanding with Jamaat to be at an advantage in the next national polls.

In reply, Matia said the government let Jamaat-Islam to hold rally and procession as a section of civil society members, media and others had advised that the party would not carry out secret attack on police if it was allowed to observe its political programmes.

Hours after the International Crimes Tribunal-2 sentenced Quader Mollah to life imprisonment on Tuesday, a

group of bloggers and online activists started demonstrating at the Shahbagh intersection demanding capital punishment to the notorious war criminals.

Hundreds of people from all walks of life thronged Shahbagh on Tuesday night to join the youths. The gatherings turned into a human sea on Friday with tens of thousands of people demanding hanging of Mollah.

The people's movement at Shahbagh entered its sixth day yesterday.

At the BBC Sanglap yesterday, BNP Vice-Chairman Hafizuddin Ahmed said the youths-led movement will definitely have an impact on the country's politics.

"Every government will have to carry out the trial of war criminals," said the opposition leader taking part in the event at the capital's Biam auditorium.

# BPC report rejected

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state language of Pakistan. The BPC report immediately came under fire in East Bengal, where demands arose for a refashioning of Pakistan into a confederation in line with the original Lahore Resolution of 1940.

A group of individuals actually began distributing leaflets demanding a confederation. They organised a public meeting at Armanitola Maidan in Dhaka on October 13, 1950. A key speaker at the meeting was Ataur Rahman Khan, later to be chief minister of East Pakistan.

Interestingly, even some figures in the ruling Muslim League, such as the acting general secretary of its provincial outfit, Shah Azizur Rahman (who in 1971 would collaborate with the Yahya regime as

the Pakistan army carried out a genocide in occupied Bangladesh and who later would be Bangladesh's prime minister in the Zia regime), and in the Jamiatul Ulema-e-Pakistan, protested the BPC report. Shah Aziz called for protest meetings all over the province, but was soon brought to heel by Moulana Akram Khan, who considered the protests illegal and who saw the personal aggrandisement of many in the anti-BPC agitation.

Meanwhile, the Action Committee for a Democratic Federation met from October 17 to 28, 1950 to chalk out a credible response to the BPC report. Those who attended the meetings of the committee on a regular basis included Ataur Rahman Khan, Tajuddin

Ahmed (later to be the man who would form the first government of Bangladesh in Mujibnagar in April 1971), Kamruddin Ahmed, Mohammad Toaha, Oli Ahad and Abdus Salam. Among the irregular attendees were Kafiluddin Chowdhury, Shamsuzzoha and Mirza Golam Hafiz.

The meetings of the committee came to an end through its members' decision to hold a convention on November 4 and 5, 1950. It went into preparing nine questions which it wished to place before prime minister Liaquat Ali Khan.

A core point among the questions was the demand for autonomy for the provinces of Pakistan with a view to having them run their affairs without interference from the central government.

# \$200m Indian grant for Padma

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He said the government will decide by next month whether it would accept the Chinese or Malaysian proposal. And if the government builds the bridge with its own resources, the process of the project's implementation will resume from where it got stuck.

Muhith said he had discussions with the Indian foreign secretary about the release of \$800 million of India's \$1 billion credit, and said India would disburse the money gradually.

The minister also told reporters that he will meet World Bank President Jim

Yong Kim this month.

He said the WB is Bangladesh's largest development partner and the Bank's contribution to the on-going projects is \$4 billion.

Muhith said the global lender had earlier committed \$1.2 billion to the bridge project as part of its Country Assistance Strategy. And since the government withdrew its request for the \$1.2 billion loan, he would discuss with Kim how Bangladesh could get the money for any other development project.

Meanwhile, Indian Foreign Secretary Ranjan Mathai said his country is eager to get involved in the

bridge project, but it is yet to hold any formal talks with the Bangladesh government on the issue.

"We would certainly like to involve those, who can contribute to this in whatever way...whether it is through participation as companies or as financiers or by going to the market to assist such a major infrastructure development project," said Mathai.

"We have not begun any formal discussion on financing Padma bridge. We know Bangladesh is in touch with various international agencies and other international partners," he said.

Mathai was speaking at

a joint press conference with his Bangladesh counterpart Shahidul Haque.

He said Bangladesh could use \$200 million grant of India's \$1 billion credit for financing the bridge or any other project.

"India has told Bangladesh it could use the \$200 million grant in anyway it wishes."

"All I could say is this project is a very large one." Mathai is of the opinion that a single partner would not be able to deal with such a large project.

The Indian foreign secretary said once completed, the Padma bridge would be "a really transformational project".

# DNA test of guard allowed

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Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested Humayun Kabir, a "prime" suspect in the murder case, from Brahmanbaria Railway Station on Saturday.

He is the fugitive security guard of the building where the killing of the journalist couple took place.

The court also allowed the investigation officer of the case to collect DNA sample from the accused Enam Ahmed which would be necessary for profile matching with the other accused.

Earlier, the Rab sent several samples to the USA for DNA test to identify the accused responsible for

the murders.

Metropolitan Magistrate Shahriar Mahmud Adnan yesterday passed the order after Enam Ahmed was produced before the court with a ten-day remand prayer for quizzing him.

Senior Assistant Superintendent of Rab Mohammad Zafar Ullah, also the investigation officer of the case, in his prayer said it was necessary to put Enam on remand to find out motive of the killing and whereabouts of others responsible for the offence.

During yesterday's hearing, the court also rejected a petition filed by the defence lawyer for cancelling the remand

prayer of Enam.

In the plea, the defence lawyer sought respite from the remand saying that Enam's name was not mentioned in the First Information Report (FIR).

However, the court documents showed the name of the "prime" suspect as Enam Ahmed alias Humayun Kabir.

The accused was first picked up for interrogation on the very day the journalist couple was murdered. He was later released.

The elite force was given the charge of investigating the case on April 18, 2012, after it vented frustration over the Detective Branch's failure in identifying the killers.

In October last, Home Minister Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir announced a bounty of Tk 10 lakh on Enam.

He had also claimed to have identified seven suspects including Enam.

The other six accused are: Rafiqul Islam, Bakul Miah, Masum Mintu, Sayeed, another security guard of the couple's residence Palash Rudra Paul, and the couple's "family friend" Tanvir.

Of the suspects, the first four are now in jail in connection with the murder of physician Nitai, while Palash and Tanvir are in Rab custody.

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT



## At the dawn of a new beginning : Towards the next major milestone

A year ago on February 11th, Bangladesh and Japan marked the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. This commemorative year has given us a chance to reaffirm the friendly relationship that has been nurtured through the test of time and to renew the resolution to further strengthen this special bond of friendship that exists today.

Having successfully completed the 40th anniversary, we are now entering a new heightened phase of our bilateral relations towards the next prominent milestone of the Golden Jubilee (which will mark half a century). At this auspicious occasion, I am delighted to announce that the Embassy of Japan and the Government of Bangladesh are working closely to launch a unique project to unveil the true face of Sonar Bangla to the people of Japan and beyond. Such an opportunity will arrive this July, when paintings, crafts and performing arts from Bangladesh will be showcased at the Setouchi Triennale 2013, one of the world's largest art festivals held in Japan. The success of this project will certainly trigger a new image of the Golden Land of Bengal, with which a new chapter in the relationship between Bangladesh and Japan will begin. I would like to welcome you all to join in this special project and be a part of making a new history together.

The year 2013 is also important in its own right as it marks the 40th anniversary of the dispatch of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs) to Bangladesh. More than 1100 JOCVs have been dispatched to Bangladesh so far and as many as 78 JOCVs are currently working in various fields, sharing their expertise and experience for the empowerment of the people of Bangladesh while building the bridges of friendship between the two countries. This year, a series of special events are planned under the banner of "Rongdhonu Mitali", overlapping the image of the rainbow with the bridge of friendship that they have built, connecting the people of the two countries as well as the generations of past, present and future.

By renewing my sincere commitment to further strengthening the wonderful relationship that we enjoy, I wish to conclude my congratulatory message.

Shiro Sadoshima  
Ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh

