

# Target Friday

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Wishing not to be named, a top police official said, "The intelligence and law enforcers have tracked down and arrested several masterminds of Jamaat's propaganda wing."

He also claimed that they have choked Jamaat's financial channel but didn't elaborate.

Sources in the home ministry say the government is considering restriction on movement of more than three persons in certain areas on the day.

The government through different channels is having dialogues with a dozen small Islamist political parties -- a few of which are members of the BNP-led 18-party alliance.

The government is trying to convince them not to side with Jamaat, as the Shahbagh movement and the government's actions were not against Islamic political parties, but against the crimes committed by some Jamaat leaders during the 1971 Liberation War.

It has told these parties that if Jamaat is banned in the future, it would not be because of its Islamic political ideology, but for the party's anti-liberation role in 1971.

The government has sent them a message that it would remain firm against the war criminals, and would not spare whoever speaks ill of Islam either at the Shahbagh gathering or elsewhere.

The intelligence agencies are yet to have any clear idea about how the Jamaat top leaders, who are in hiding now, have been maintaining contacts with their activists.

"We gather that they are not using their phones, internet or other usual forms of communication. But they are somehow maintaining communication to continue their smear campaign against the Shahbagh movement," said an intelligence official.

All ministers, parliamentarians and leaders of the ruling coalition remain alert following the publication of an objectionable advertisement with anti-Islamic contents to provoke controversy over the Shahbagh movement.

Meanwhile, several policymakers and leaders of the ruling Awami League yesterday gave warnings to the smear campaigners, who are spreading hatred using Islam. They also asked the media not to publish any contents that undermine Islam or hurt religious sentiments.

"Stop publishing false contents or the government will be compelled to take tough action," Prime Minister's Special Assistant

Mahbubul Alam Hanif said at a discussion at Osmani Memorial Auditorium, referring to the publication of objectionable advertisements.

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury said, "They killed Rajib and then hacked into his blog to post anti-Islamic contents to hurt religious sentiments. Those who are doing all these are akin to beasts. We cannot allow them to be involved in politics."

LGRD Minister Syed Ashraf Islam, Jute Minister Latif Siddiqui and Presidium Member Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim also gave similar statements.

**SMEAR CAMPAIGN**  
Jamaat has employed a tactic of not using its name in the smear campaign against the Shahbagh activists. Instead, the party with its sympathisers in the last few days formed several new platforms such as Islami Dal comprised of six Islamist parties led by Islami Oikya Jote, a component of the 18-party alliance, to carry out the campaign.

Nejame Islami and Khelafat Majlish -- both members of the 18-party alliance -- are backing this campaign.

Abdul Latif Nejami, chairman of Islami Oikya Jote, told The Daily Star yesterday, "We are planning to gather at least one and a half lakh to two lakh madrasa students from Dhaka and its outskirts. We shall give the government an ultimatum: either the atheists at Shahbagh are punished or else we will call hartal."

Requesting anonymity, a Khelafat Andolan leader told The Daily Star that Jamaat is wholeheartedly helping them shape up the smear campaign with funds and manpower.

He said Jamaat was also trying to rope in little known Islamist parties to strengthen the campaign.

"Jamaat wants to have a gathering on Friday [tomorrow] to counter the Shahbagh demonstrations. But we are not sure whether it would be possible," he said.

In the capital, Islami Andolan Bangladesh and Islami Oikya Jote yesterday brought out processions, demanding capital punishment to the bloggers, who "insulted Prophet Muhammad [SM] and Islam in their posts on the internet."

They threatened to go for a tougher movement unless the government moves to pass a law in the current parliament session to stop "such blogging."

They also announced holding rallies at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram mosque

after the Jumma prayers on Friday.

**Islami Andolan** Bangladesh staged a demonstration at around 3:00pm yesterday at Baitul Mukarram's north gate.

Islami Oikya Jote held a rally at Purana Palatan at about 5:00pm. Its Secretary General Moulana Abdul Latif Nezami said if the government fails to give exemplary punishment to the alleged bloggers, they will consider the government a supporter of "the atheists".

Meanwhile, Hefazat-e-Islam, a radical Islamist organisation based in Chittagong, yesterday termed the Shahbagh movement a conspiracy against Islam.

The organisation earlier got published a half-page advertisement in three newspapers with anti-Islamic contents, claiming those were posted on the internet by different bloggers.

Its leader Moulana Junaid Babunagari at a press conference yesterday said they would alert people about the anti-Islamic activities in Shahbagh through sermons tomorrow in four lakh mosques and bring out processions demanding trial of "the atheist bloggers".

Banaj Kumar Majumder, additional commissioner of Chittagong Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star that they were yet to get any instructions to counter Hefazat-e-Islam's programmes on Friday.

"But we will remain alert," he said. Law enforcers in Sylhet and Khulna have taken measures to avert any untoward incidents.

"We are staying alert and collecting more information from different sources about the future programmes of Islamist groups," said Nibash Chandra Majhi, commissioner of Sylhet Metropolitan Police.

Rashid Begum, additional deputy commissioner of Khulna Metropolitan Police, told

The Daily Star that a special mobile team along with the regular police force will patrol the whole city this Friday.

Ziauddin Ahmed, assistant police commissioner in Khulna, said at least five check posts will be set up and 500 policemen will be deployed near mosques before the Jumma prayers in the city.

In Jessore, police yesterday arrested 28 Jamaat-Shibir men from a procession brought out under the banner of Olama Mashayekh Parishad.

# JS panel wary

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The recommendation apparently came to avert criticism for giving effectiveness to the ordinances.

Scrutinising the bills, which had been placed in parliament on Tuesday, the parliamentary standing committee on law ministry came up with the recommendation and gave consent to the government's unprecedented move.

"We strongly condemn the martial law regimes," Abdul Matin Khasru, a member of the parliamentary body, told The Daily Star.

Khasru, who had proposed the provision, said people might criticise legitimising of the ordinances. "Therefore, we unanimously recommended inclusion of the new provision in both the bills," he added.

Through the fifth and seventh amendments to the constitution, all actions of the martial law regimes by Gen Ziaur Rahman and HM Ershad were ratified and validated.

But the Supreme Court declared the amendments illegal and void. In June 2011, the House passed the 15th amendment and deleted the provisions incorporated in the constitution through the fifth and seventh amendments.

But the law ministry did not take any step in this regard in the last 19 months.

On January 21 this year, the president promulgated two ordinances to continue the operations of the 546 ordinances.

At yesterday's parliamentary body meeting, members raised question about the law ministry's silence over the period. "The law ministry could not give any satisfactory explanation," committee member Rahmat Ali told The Daily Star after the meeting.

Although the parliamentary body gave consent to

the passage of the bills, it could not even check the names of the ordinances, let alone examine their contents, as the government was in a hurry to pass the bills by February 26 deadline, said a meeting source.

The effectiveness of the two ordinances promulgated recently to give 546 ordinances legitimacy and effectiveness will expire on February 26, as the two ordinances were placed in parliament on January 27.

The committee would place the scrutiny report with recommendation in parliament on Sunday and the two bills might be passed on Monday, said committee sources.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed and Matin Khasru however defended the passage of the two bills.

"We are making new laws," the law minister claimed, "There is no contradiction with the article 93 (2) of the constitution."

He said every ministry concerned will later bring separate bills in parliament for making new laws for the continuation of the activities initiated and done by the ordinances during the martial law regimes.

And interestingly, the parliament is set to pass the two bills next week without knowing the exact number and contents of the ordinances.

The bills placed in parliament on Tuesday came up with lists of 166 ordinances. But according to a report prepared by the law ministry, the two bills however sought to make the special provisions for continuation of as many as 546 ordinances.

The bills did not cite names of the remaining 380 ordinances which were also made during the two martial law regimes to amend the different laws then.

# HC asks for Hall-Mark wealth report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the authorities concerned to submit lists of moveable and immovable properties of Hall-Mark Group before it by April 20.

The court passed the order during hearing on a petition that challenged the legality of granting bail to Hall-Mark Group chairman Jasmine Islam by a lower court in 11 corruption cases.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed the cases against 27 top officials of Sonali Bank and Hall-Mark Group on October 4 last year in connection with a loan scam.

Petitioner's counsel Eunos Ali Akond told The Daily Star that the authorities concerned of the ACC, Sonali Bank and Hall-Mark Group would have to submit wealth statements of Hall Mark Group to the HC.

Yesterday, the HC bench of Justice AH M Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik and Justice Mahmudul Hoque also fixed April 20 for further hearing on the rule.

On February 7, Judge Mohammad Zahirul Haque of the Senior Special Judges' Court in Dhaka granted bail to Jasmine on condition that she along with her company would repay Tk 2,600 crore, which her company had swindled, to Sonali bank.

After Nazim Ahmed, editor of weekly Shoptoborno, filed a petition challenging the legality of the bail order, the HC on February 13 issued the rule upon the authorities concerned to explain why the bail of Jasmine should not be cancelled.

Following the HC rule, the court of Zahirul Haque on February 17 cancelled the bail of Jasmine and ordered her to surrender before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court by February 19.

Jasmine surrendered before the same court on Tuesday after complying with the court order.

# New KL offer

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presentation on the bridge construction while the Bangladesh side sought clarifications on various issues.

The delegation will today hold further meeting in this regard with Communications Minister Obaidul Quader. After detailed discussion, the proposal will be sent to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, said official sources.

The finance minister yesterday held a series of meetings on the Malaysian proposal.

Meanwhile, before the talks with the Malaysian delegation a high level meeting was held where the communications minister, foreign minister, labour and overseas employment minister, prime minister's international affairs adviser, Bangladesh Bank governor and secretaries of concerned ministries were present.

Former vice chancellor of Brac University Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury and its incumbent VCAinun Nishat were also present in the meeting. The duo was also present during the presentation of the Malaysian team.

Later, the finance minister held a closed door meeting with Prof Chowdhury and Prof Nishat.

Official sources said there were differences of opinion within the government regarding the Malaysian proposal.

At the minister-level meeting the Bridges Division voiced in favour of the Malaysian proposal while most of the other attendees favoured constructing the bridge with own resources.

Even Prof Chowdhury and Prof Nishat spoke in favour of the latter opinion.

However, neither the finance minister nor the communications minister told anything about what happened in the meeting.

# WAR CRIMES TRIAL Four to defend Kamaruzzaman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 yesterday allowed four witnesses to defend Jamaat-e-Islami leader Muhammad Kamaruzzaman in the charges of crimes against humanity brought against him.

The three-member tribunal led by Justice Obaidul Hassan with members Justice Mozibur Rahman Miah and Judge M Shahinur Islam also continued recording cross-examination of Abdur Razzaque Khan, the investigation officer of the case, for the fourth day.

During the cross-examination, question was raised about the Master's certificate and date of the examination of the war crimes accused.

The tribunal also extended time for three top Jamaat leaders until February 26 to explain why contempt of court charges would not be initiated against them for making provocative and derogatory remarks about the court.

It also ordered Jamaat acting secretary general Rafiqul Islam Khan, Central Executive Council member Hamidur Rahman Azad, also a lawmaker, and its Dhaka city unit Assistant Secretary General Selim Uddin to appear before the court on a fresh date.

**4 TO DEFEND KAMARUZZAMAN**  
On July 15 last year, the defence submitted a list of 1,354 witnesses to defend Kamaruzzaman, who was indicted with seven charges of crimes against humanity he had allegedly committed during the Liberation War in 1971.

The prosecution on Monday submitted a petition for limiting the number of defence witnesses in the case to "avoid unreasonable delay" and the tribunal heard the petition on Tuesday.

The tribunal yesterday allowed only four defence witnesses and asked the defence to adduce their witnesses without any adjournment.

**EXPLAIN PROVOKING COMMENTS**

On February 7, the tribunal on its own asked the Jamaat trio to appear before the court yesterday with their explanation as to why contempt proceeding would not be initiated against them.

The Jamaat leaders' lawyer Shahadat Hossain told the tribunal his clients could not appear before the court due to "unavoidable situations" and sought time.

The tribunal fixed February 26 for their appearance before the court.

The tribunal issued the notice on the basis of reports published in The Daily Star and the Prothom Alo on February 5. The dailies published the reports on a Jamaat rally held in the city on February 4.

Bangla Daily Prothom Alo quoted Selim Uddin as saying at the Jamaat rally: "There is no scope for the controversial tribunal to deliver any verdict if the country is to be saved from a civil war."

It quoted Azad as saying at the same programme, "This tribunal cannot exist anymore."

The Daily Star in a report headlined "Jamaat warns of civil war" quoted Rafiqul Islam as saying, "Don't push the country into a civil war by delivering one-sided verdicts against our leaders. If anything happens against Quader Mollah, every house will be on fire."

**QUESTION ABOUT KAMARUZZAMAN'S MA CERTIFICATE**

During around four-hour cross-examination, defence counsel Kafil Uddin Chowdhury asked Razzaque, also the 18th prosecution witness in case, questions mostly about his field level investigations and raised "contradiction" between the prosecution witnesses' statements to the investigation office and their testimonies before the court.

In reply to a question, Razzaque said Kamaruzzaman passed the

HSC examination from Mymensingh Nasirabad College in 1972.

When Razzaque said Kamaruzzaman took part in the HSC exam from jail in 1972, the tribunal did not accept his explanation, as the defence asked the tribunal not to allow his explanation during his cross-examination.

"The HSC examination was held in May in 1972," said Kafil Uddin.

"I don't know," Razzaque replied.

As per the prosecution document, Kamaruzzaman was arrested in Dhaka on December 29, 1971 and at least two newspapers published his name as a detained collaborator on December 31, 1971.

At one stage of the cross-examination, Kafil claimed that Kamaruzzaman had passed MA from Dhaka University in 1975 and said, "It's not true and informed that Kamaruzzaman enrolled at Dhaka University in 1975 and passed Master's in 1978."

Razzaque replied, "It's not true. Kamaruzzaman enrolled for MA [first part] on April 18, 1975, in Mass Communication and Journalism department of Dhaka University and second part on August 10, 1976."

The tribunal also said whether it is possible to pass MA in 1975 by a student who had passed HSC in 1972 and wanted to see his original MA certificate.

The defence submitted photocopy of his certificate saying the original was not in their hand at that time.

"You didn't bring your original copy but you are disputing an original document of Dhaka University [given by the investigation officer]. We can raise question about your photocopy document," said the tribunal.

When the tribunal found the date "June 28, 1978" on the left and lower part of the photocopy certificate, it asked about the spelling "Dhaka" of "Dhaka University".

"Dhaka" was supposed to be written as "Dacca" in the documents before HM Ershad took power in the 80s, said the tribunal.

"This creates a lot of suspicion among us," said the tribunal and asked the defence to submit the original certificate within 4:30pm yesterday.

When the defence submitted the original certificate at 4:10pm, Kamaruzzaman's counsel Shishir Manir said Dhaka University syndicate approved the certificate on June 28, 1978, but the certificate was issued to Kamaruzzaman in 1992.

After 1987, "Dhaka University" was written in this form instead of "University of Dacca," said Shishir Manir.

The tribunal kept the original certificate to them and adjourned the case proceeding until February 24.

# Deadline

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fugitive to death on January 21 convicting him on seven charges of crimes against humanity and genocide.

The expelled Jamaat-e-Islami member, popularly known as Bachchu Razakar, was found guilty of killing 14 Hindus, raping two women, torturing two other persons and setting homes ablaze in Faridpur during the Liberation War.

According to 21 (3) International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973, any convict has the right to appeal within 30 days of verdict delivery.

However, some legal experts believe that if Azad is arrested or he surrenders now and seeks permission of the Appellate Division to file an appeal, the apex court has the discretionary power to consider.

Azad went into hiding hours before the tribunal issued an arrest warrant against him on April 3, 2012. The tribunal held his trial in absentia.

# Promise to the martyrs

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protester at the Shahbagh movement.

Thousands of other letters made similar pledges with similar vigour and spirit.

As the clock struck 4:13pm, the hour the Pakistani forces surrendered on 16 December 1971, demonstrators released the balloons that made a colourful canopy in the sky over the Shahbagh intersection, now known as Projomno Chatter.

Noted writer Muhammad Zafar Iqbal was among those present at the protest venue at the time.

The nonstop movement began in the afternoon of February 5, hours after Jamaat assistant secretary general Abdul Quader Mollah was sentenced to life in prison for war crimes in 1971. Protesters say a life term is too lenient a punishment for Quader Mollah, who is known as the "Butcher of Mirpur" for his notorious role in the killing of hundreds during the war.

Imran H Sarkar, an organiser of the movement, in his letter addressed "to the greatest sons and daughters of the nation," wrote: "Sleep amidst the clouds. The Projomno Chatter is awake, Bangladesh is awake. All the evil forces are bound to fail before the unbreakable shield that we have put up."

Two students of Saint Francis Xavier's Girls High School in Dhaka wrote: "Rest in peace, all martyrs. We keep vigil and we will."

Mili Rahman, widow of Birshrestha Motiur Rahman, wrote, "You [Motiur] must be feeling good. The youths have learned to protest, you see. With all my children [the protesters], I will fight till the last day of my life to rid the country of Razakars."

Throughout the day people from all walks of life thronged the protest venue, chanting slogans demanding death penalty to all the war criminals.

Dhaka University Officers Association, among other organisations, expressed solidarity with the protesters yesterday, the 16th day of the movement.

A group of renowned singers, including Subir Nandi, Andrew Kishore, Kanak Chanpa and Piaru Khan joined the movement around 1:30pm and expressed their solidarity. They also rendered patriotic songs to cheer up the protesters.

People of India's Tripura state have also expressed

solidarity with the protesters. They gathered at the Zero line of Akhaura border where a "Gono Jagaran Mancha" was set up in the morning.

Chief Minister of Tripura Manik Sarkar expressed solidarity on behalf of the people, reports our correspondent.

Also yesterday, a 19-member team of Indian Football Lovers Association joined the protest to express solidarity with the people of Bangladesh. They cycled all the way from India.

**ON FOOT HE COMES**

Iqramul Hasan Shakil, a Bangladeshi youth, yesterday joined the Shahbagh movement, having walked 350 kilometres from Kolkata.

Driven by a unique idea, Shakil, a student of Uttara Engineering College, went to Kolkata on February 8. There he addressed a press conference at the Kolkata Press Club on February 10.

Around 11:30pm the same day, he started his journey to Shahbagh on foot.

"I have done this to draw the attention of the youths and to uphold the spirit of patriotism and the Liberation War in their minds," said Shakil, also a theatre activist.

# Language martyrs

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*Ekushey February*" was solemnly played.

She stood in silence for sometime.

A little later, Hasina, as the president of ruling Awami League, placed another wreath along with her cabinet members, advisers and party men.

President Zillur Rahman, who usually is the first to pay homage, did not show up.

Later, speaker of parliament, Dhaka University authorities, ministers, attorney general, members of the diplomatic corps, various political, cultural and professional bodies paid homage to the martyrs one after another.

Acting secretary general Mirza Fakrul Islam Alamgir of the main opposition party BNP, along with other senior leaders, placed wreath on behalf of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

A representative team of the Shahbagh protesters, who have been tirelessly demanding capital punishment of all Liberation War criminals for the last 16 straight days, paid homage to the language martyrs at the Central Shaheed Minar.

The Central Shaheed Minar was then opened to all.

A website on evolution of Bangla alphabet was unveiled on the eve of this year's Amar Ekushey.

The day is globally being observed as the International Mother Language Day. The song *Amar Bhayer Rakte Rangano Ekushey February, Ami ki Bhulite Pari* would be sung in 193 countries in the world.

Foolproof multi-layer security measures were taken in and around the Central Shaheed Minar.

On this day in 1952, students and people from all strata of society took to the streets in Dhaka to protest against the then Pakistan government's refusal to recognise Bangla as one of the state languages and imposition of Urdu as the only official language of Pakistan.

Salam, Barkat, Rafiq, Jabbar and a few other brave sons of the soil sacrificed their lives on this day to