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LATE NIGHT DEFENCE MOVE

## Stay stops Mollah execution

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

In a dramatic development late last night, the chamber judge of the Supreme Court stayed the execution of Abdul Quader Mollah just one and a half hours before the convicted war criminal was to hang.

The decision to halt the execution till 10:30am today came following a petition by the counsels for the condemned Jamaat-e-Islami leader.

Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain issued the order at his residence in the absence of the state counsels.

The jail authorities had completed all arrangements for Mollah's execution last night, two days after International Crimes Tribunal-2 issued his death warrant.

Talking to reporters at 12:15am, Md Farman Ali, senior jail super of Dhaka

Central Jail, said the jail authorities had halted the execution after getting the SC order.

The defence counsels yesterday also submitted a review petition to the chamber judge against the verdict of the apex court that sentenced Mollah to death for committing crimes against humanity during the 1971 Liberation War.

Mollah's counsel Shishir Manir told The Daily Star that Justice Hossain did not consult Chief Justice Md Muzammel Hossain about the stay petition since the chamber judge has inherent powers to hear such urgent cases.

Speaking to The Daily Star at 11:50pm, State Minister for Law Qamrul Islam said the government would move the apex court to vacate the stay order.

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When a tribunal sentenced him to life on February 5, Quader Mollah, left, flashed the V-sign. And yesterday his wife Sanowara Jahan made a gesture at the gate of Dhaka Central Jail when she went to visit her husband at 7:45pm.



PHOTO: COURTESY

## Disappointment all around

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Since late afternoon, people from all walks of life waited with bated breath for news of the execution of war criminal Abdul Quader Mollah. Many were seen glued to the television screen. While Gonojagoron Mancha activists sat before the National Museum, many city dwellers rushed to the central jail gate to get the news at the earliest.

But within hours, hope had given way  
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## AL, BNP talk finally

UN upbeat; Taranco extends stay by a day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finally, the ruling Awami League and the opposition BNP yesterday sat down to a discussion of the ongoing stalemate over the election, following hectic efforts by visiting UN envoy Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, who termed it a positive development.

No major decision was made at the rare parley, but the two sides will meet again soon, said BNP Standing Committee Member Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, who was at the meeting.

Taranco was present during the two-hour talks beginning at 2:00pm at the residence of the UN resident coordinator in the capital's Gulshan.

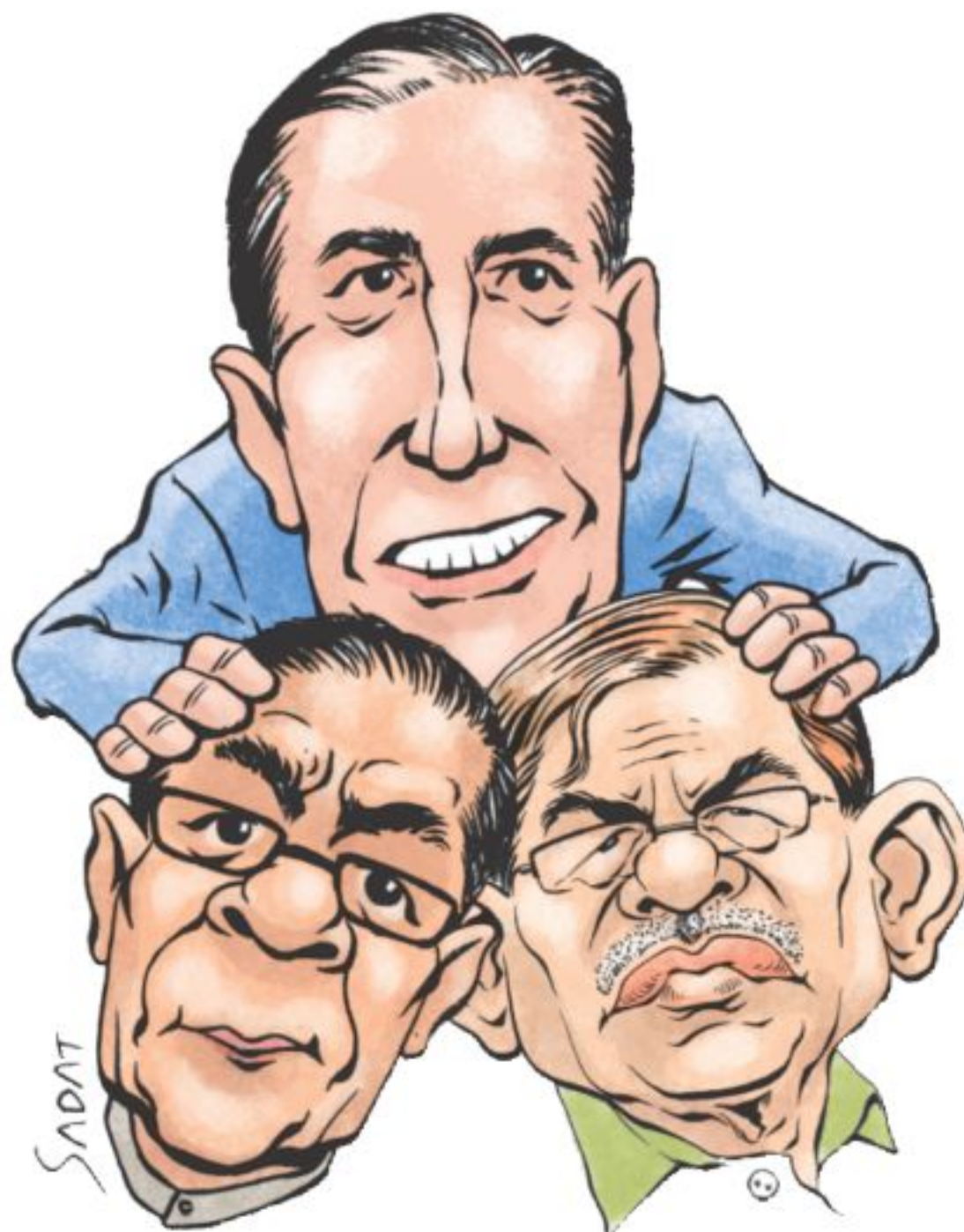
"The two parties have agreed to continue the talks on the polls-time government for holding a free, fair and inclusive election acceptable to all," said a BNP statement hours after the dialogue.

In another statement, the main opposition party demanded the immediate resignation of the election-time cabinet that Sheikh Hasina heads, to make way for the installation of a non-party government for holding a free and fair election.

"The people have rejected the polls schedule. The Election Commission has been a puppet of the government," said the statement signed by BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir. He claimed the opposition's street agitation would be a sure success.

In a third statement, the BNP yesterday protested a news item of BBC Bangla service that on Monday said the UN was looking for ways to forge

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SADAT

## Two more killed in blockade violence

4 cops injured in attack by Jamaat men; 2 schoolboys hit by stray bullets

STAR REPORT

Two were killed and three others, including two children, were injured in Naogaon, Feni and Rajshahi during the Jamaat-enforced countrywide hartal yesterday.

In another incident, four policemen were beaten up by Shibir activists in Rajshahi city.

Shukbor Ali, 65, of Raninagar upazila of Naogaon, was killed when Jamaat-Shibir activists clashed with local businessmen yesterday afternoon, said Abdullah Al Masud Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of Raninagar Police Station.

The local Jamaat unit claimed he was one of its members and called a half-day hartal in Naogaon district for tomorrow protesting the killing.

Twenty others were injured in the incident. At least five vehicles, including a journalist's motorcycle, and seven shops were also damaged.

The clash began around 12:30pm at Abadpukur Bazar of the upazila, as Jamaat-Shibir activists in processions suddenly attacked local businessmen and damaged a tractor, the OC said.

In Feni, Mohammad Salman, a class-X student of Jamiatul Al Salayyha Madrasa, was killed in a clash between Jamaat-Shibir men and police on Trunk Road in the town last night.

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## Angry Jamaat warns of dire consequences

Sets alight house of ex-minister; Jamaat calls hartal again for today

STAR REPORT

Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday threatened of dire consequences if its leader and condemned war criminal Abdul Quader Mollah is executed.

In the wee hours of today, it also called for a nationwide dawn-to-dusk hartal for today protesting the "decision to execute" Mollah.

In a statement, the key component of BNP-led opposition alliance said, "Those who are involved in violating the legal process will have to answer to the people."

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Wife Hasina and son Sharif crying over the body of Mostafa, inset, at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday. Mostafa, who had testified against condemned war criminal Delawar Hossain Sayedee, died early yesterday after he was hacked in his Pirojpur home Sunday night.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



## INJURED WAR CRIMES WITNESS DIES

## 'Who will protect us?' asks his wife

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A key witness in the war crimes case against Jamaat leader Sayedee died from his injuries yesterday, two days after being hacked in his sleep at his Pirojpur home.

The killing of Mostafa Hawlader, 55, exposes the state's failure in ensuring security for war crimes witnesses.

Though justice seekers and campaigners of war crimes trials have kept demanding a law for the protection of witnesses and victims, no such step has yet been taken by the government, leaving over 200 prosecution witnesses under a security threat.

For witness protection, the government only formed national and district committees which reportedly have been failing to assess the threats to the witnesses.

A number of prosecution witnesses received death threats in the last two years and, recently, bombs were exploded near the residences of several prosecutors.

Around 2:30am on Sunday, a man entered Mostafa's house in Hoglebania

village after digging a hole from outside and started hacking away, targeting his head.

Mostafa underwent a two-and-a-half-hour surgery at Dhaka Medical College Hospital around 12:30pm on Monday.

"He [Mostafa] had deep injuries from a sharp weapon that fractured his skull and led to huge bleeding in his brain," said Prof Zillur Rahman, the DMCH surgeon who along with four others conducted the operation.

In his testimony on January 1 last year, Mostafa said he had seen Sayedee and other collaborators looting and burning a number of shops in Parerhat Bazar during the Liberation War in 1971.

Sayedee, nayeb-e-ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami, was sentenced to death on February 28.

At the DMCH morgue yesterday, Mostafa's wife Hasina Begum told The Daily Star, "They killed my husband. Now they will kill me and my children. Who will protect us?"

"We demand the immediate execution of

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