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WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

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theSTAR
 stories behind the news



CRIMES IN COLD BLOOD

Whether in Palestine or Germany, persecution of the innocent is always condemnable

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THE VULTURE

The life and death of Kevin Carter

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NATION IN MOURNING

SYED BADRUL AHSAN

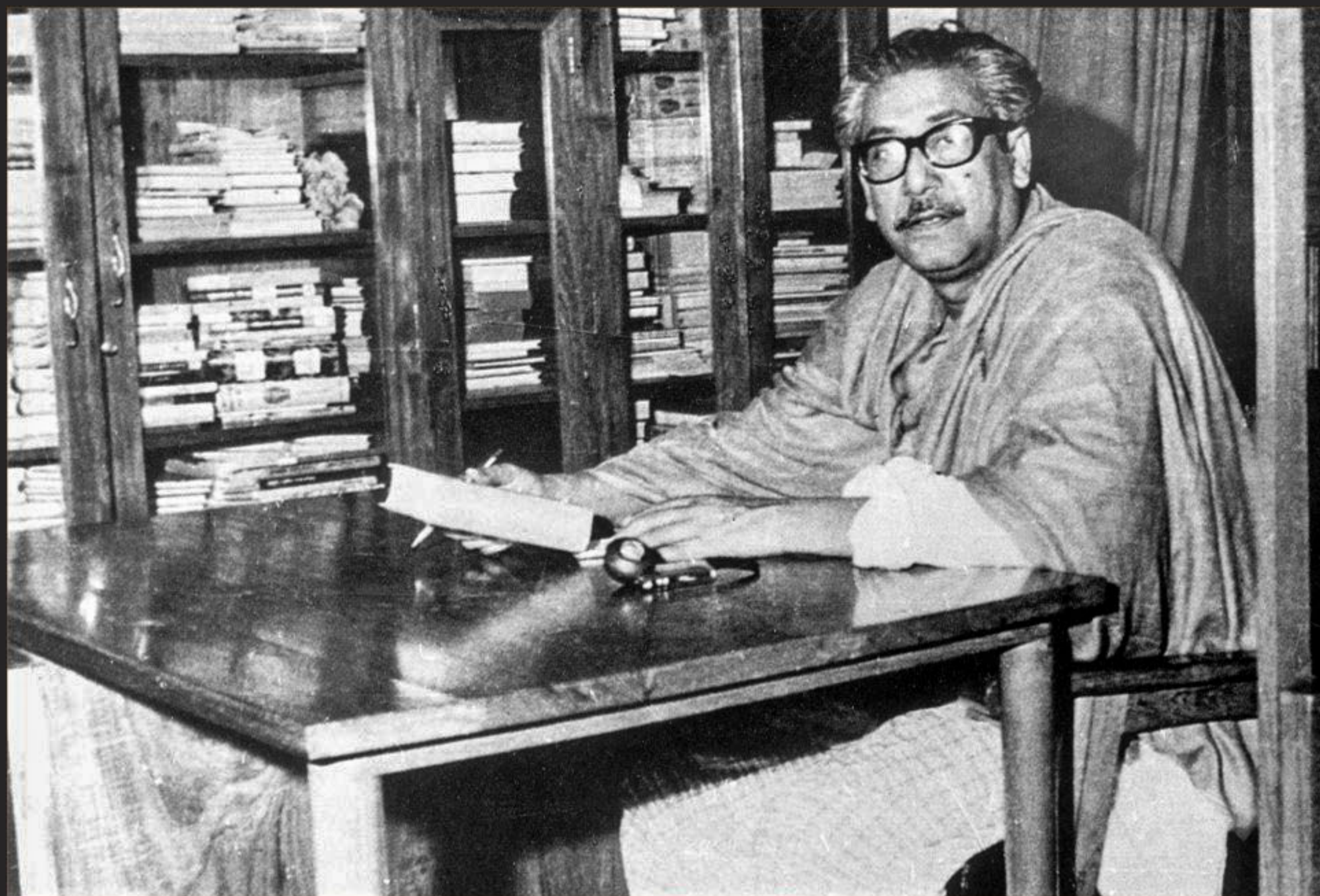
A little after 4:00am on 15 August 1975, tanks of the Bangladesh army rumbled down the empty roads on their way to their destinations. One team would head for Bangabandhu's Dhanmondi residence. Another would move towards Minto Road, the area that housed government ministers and a third would go to another part of Dhanmondi where Mujib's powerful nephew Sheikh Fazlul Haq Moni lived with his family. The tanks headed for Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's residence went past the headquarters of the Rakkhi Bahini.

The tanks rumbled past Gono Bhaban, the president's office, and turned left. A few tanks stopped at the head of Road No. 32 while a few others went in, coming to a stop at the gates of Bangabandhu's residence.

The first group of soldiers alighted and ordered the security personnel at the gates to let them in. The presidential guards, completely taken by surprise, refused and were swiftly mown down. Meanwhile, other soldiers arriving before the house began firing into the residence and at the walls, obviously to generate as much panic as possible. The sounds roused Bangabandhu and his petrified family as well as the entire neighbourhood. Sheikh Kamal quickly rushed down the stairs and ran smack into some soldiers who had

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In the world of books: Bangabandhu in his study at home.

PHOTO: FILE

TIMELINE

August 15:

- Early in the morning, some disgruntled army officers lead the pre-planned attack to assassinate and overthrow President Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. They start firing indiscriminately on his residence at Dhanmondi 32.

- Bangabandhu phones army chief General KM Shafiullah and says, "Shafiullah, your forces have attacked my house. Perhaps they have already killed Kamal. Send forces quickly".

- Shafiullah rings his deputy General Ziaur Rahman and chiefs of two other services to mobilise troops to help the president. It is to no avail.

- After killing Kamal, army officer Mohiuddin and his accomplices go around the house hunting for Bangabandhu and they find him standing calmly with his pipe in hand on the front veranda. Seeing him, the killers are taken aback. They cannot shoot Bangabandhu. One of them merely utters, "Sir, please come with us".

- As they bring him down the staircase, Bangabandhu shouts, "Where are you taking me?" At this point, Bazlul Huda asks Mohiuddin to move away and Noor opens

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Funny obituaries

First JS session under Zia regime stated Mujib was 'killed in a political changeover'

- Deaths of four national leaders--Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin, Mansur Ali, and Kamaruzzaman-- not condoled
- Deaths of Bangabandhu's family members and other August 15 victims not mourned
- Mujib was "a notable personality in the political arena"
- Bhasani was "an extraordinary and pro-people leader"
- Jadu Mia was "a selfless, committed patriot"

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Instead of condemning the gruesome assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the second Jatiya Sangsad described as "a political changeover" his assassination and the overthrow of his government by some disgruntled army officers.

In the obituary reference, the House dominated by the then military ruler Gen Ziaur Rahman-led BNP also mentioned Bangabandhu as "former president of Bangladesh".

But in fact, Bangabandhu was the sitting president when he was murdered along with most of his family members on August 15, 1975.

"He [Bangabandhu] had to die as a result of a political changeover on August 15, 1975," reads the

obituary reference passed by the House on April 4, 1979. "Through his death, Bangladesh has lost a notable personality in the political arena."

Parliament, however, was full of praise for BNP senior leader and minister Mashiur Rahman alias Jadu Mia, describing him as "a selfless, committed patriot".

Mashiur was a senior minister in Zia's cabinet and a lawmaker of the second parliament when he died on March 12, 1979.

Interestingly, the second Jatiya Sangsad, which addressed Bangabandhu as former president, did not use the word "former" while addressing Mashiur in the obituary reference.

Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, who

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ZIA'S CIVIL POSTING

History would have been different

SHAKHAWAT LITON

History would have been different had Bangabandhu's government not refrained from carrying out its plan to send General Ziaur Rahman on a diplomatic posting abroad a few months before August 15, 1975.

The government did not have confidence in Zia's loyalty to it. Zia was made deputy chief of army staff but he did not have much of a command role over the army.

Bangabandhu and senior Awami League leaders considered him as a highly ambitious officer.

Zia had exposed his dream of being at the helm of state affairs in Bangladesh when as a major he first broadcast from Kalurghat Radio Station on March 27, 1971, declaring the independence of Bangladesh on behalf of Bangabandhu.

In making the declaration, he initially proclaimed himself as the president of the provisional government. Under pressure, he subsequently changed his announcement.

The government had moved to send Zia abroad as ambassador to either East Germany or Belgium. This move worried Zia. He was clearly disturbed.

He blamed General MAG Osmani, Chief of Army Staff General KM Shafiullah and Chief of General Staff General Khaled Mosharraf for having influenced the government move.

Khaled Mosharraf was very close to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the undisputed leader of the country. He frequently met

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3 cases gather dust for ages

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER and ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Though the nation got justice for the assassination of the Father of the Nation after a 34-year-long wait, justice is yet to be done for three more attacks on the night of August 15 in 1975.

Forty years on, justice for the killing of 25 people in these attacks remains elusive due to inaction and negligence of the government.

Disgruntled army personnel killed Bangabandhu's nephew Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni, founding chairman of Awami Jubo League, and his wife Arzu Moni at their Dhanmondi residence that morning.

In other attacks, Bangabandhu's brother-in-law Abdur Rab Serniabat, then water resources minister, was also murdered at his Minto Road residence while a mortar assault by a group of army personnel killed 14 in Mohammadpur, taking the death toll to 34 on that fateful night.

Three murder cases in connection with these killings were filed in 1996, but two of those are still on the backburner while all the accused of the case filed in connection with Sheikh Moni murder have been acquitted by a lower court.

Law Minister Anisul Huq told The Daily Star that the government would take initiatives for disposal of the two cases filed over the incidents, though most of the accused of these cases have either been convicted or executed in the Bangabandhu killing case.

A petition will be filed with the High Court after it reopens on August 31 after the ongoing vacation, for vacating its stay order on the proceedings of the Serniabat murder case, he said.

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A fisherman fishing on the Buriganga near the second Buriganga Bridge in the capital yesterday. A small window of opportunity for fishing opens for a few weeks during the rainy season when fresh water from upstream flows in. As the window closes, the Buriganga is back to its old self with dark and smelly water devoid of life.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

GPA-5 ACHIEVERS

Number rising, not quality

70pc of GPA-5 holders failed in DU admission test last year

WASIM BIN HABIB and PROTICK CHAKRABORTY

The number of GPA-5 scorers in the HSC and equivalent exams is rising every year, but their performance in the admission tests for universities has dropped alarmingly over the last four academic sessions.

Around 70 percent GPA-5 holders in 2013-14 failed to secure pass marks (48 out of 120) in the admission test for Dhaka University, according to statistics of the admission committee.

The previous three sessions saw around 55 percent, 52 percent and 51 percent students failing in the entry exams to the DU. Most of the admission seekers failed in Bangla and English.

In the Higher Secondary Certificate exams, a GPA-5 scorer obtains 80 percent marks in all subjects on average.

Expressing concern over the poor performance of the highest graders, educationists said the students fail to acquire necessary competence even after completion of a certain level of education.

They also blamed the country's education system as it focuses on quantity rather than quality.

"There is a kind of grade inflation in our country. Grades don't reflect the performance of those students who achieved that particular feat," said Prof Syed Manzoorul Islam of Dhaka University.

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Shinzo Abe

Japanese PM arrives on Sept 6

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will pay a two-day official visit to Bangladesh from September 6 to discuss bilateral issues.

Dhaka is considering the trip highly significant as it comes at a time when Japan is looking for another investment destination after China.

"There is a positive indication that Japan wants to relocate its industries to Bangladesh and make fresh investments here instead of

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