



**IN THE COMFORT OF HOME:** Father of the Nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman having dinner with family on the first floor of his Dhanmondi-32 residence in the capital.

PHOTO:  
FILE

## Nation in mourning

FROM PAGE 1

already entered the passage downstairs. He was shot at close range. A young boy who worked as a servant was killed as well. Meanwhile, Mujib was frantically trying to contact the army chief. Finally, when he got through to him, he told him tersely that his family was under attack from soldiers and needed security. General Shafiullah proved unable to help his president. The next call made was to his security chief Colonel Jamil. The colonel, who had only been repatriated from Pakistan the previous year, rushed out in his dressing gown and pyjamas, got behind the wheels of his car and drove toward the president's residence.

Meanwhile, Abdur Rab Serniabat, Bangabandhu's brother-in-law and a minister in the cabinet, called to say that his residence on Minto Road had also come under attack. At Sheikh Moni's residence, a similar situation prevailed. The soldiers were running amuck everywhere. Bangabandhu's helplessness was complete when the telephone lines at his residence soon went dead. The commotion downstairs prompted the president to emerge from his bedroom, in his white kurta and lungi. As he stood at the top of the stairs, a major was seen running up. He suddenly stopped when he saw Bangabandhu standing there, a looming presence. The officer, suddenly nervous, stared.

Mujib demanded, 'Where is Kamal? What do you want?' The major, Bazlul Huda, stammered, 'You have to come with us, Sir.' Suddenly, another major, Noor by name, rushed up and shot Bangabandhu in the chest and stomach. The president rolled down the stairs, coming to rest at the landing that led to the ground floor. He was dead. One of the bullets had gone right through his stomach and emerged from his back. Blood streaked the walls and the staircase. The sound of the gunfire brought the president's wife Fazilatunnessa running out of the room. She was immediately shot. Her lifeless body lay sprawled between the room and the corridor.

Once Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his wife were dead, the soldiers ran riot all over the residence. They stormed the rooms of the house looking for the other members of his family. Some of them had lined up a few individuals, one of them a personal employee of the president, by the wall near the gate and in due time Mujib's youngest son, Russell (who had been named by

the president after the British philosopher Bertrand Russell) was brought there. The ten year-old boy, shivering in fright and wailing to be taken to his mother, was made to stand in the line.

In the house, the remaining members of the president's family comprising his second son Jamal (a lieutenant in the army who had recently returned after completing a course at Sandhurst in the United Kingdom), Mujib's newly-wed daughters-in-law and his younger brother Sheikh Naser) took shelter inside the bathroom attached to the main bedroom of the residence. It did not help, as the soldiers soon broke down the door and sprayed them all with machine gun fire. The bodies fell in a heap. Outside, as Russell kept asking to be taken to his mother, one of the soldiers, in a moment replete with unmitigated cruelty, brought him upstairs, over the body of his father on the stairs and to the spot where his mother lay dead. Without further ado, the soldier pumped a round of bullets into the boy's head.

Across town, the group of soldiers which had earlier made its way to Minto Road, finished off Minister Abdur Rab Serniabat and his family. In another part of Dhanmondi, soldiers rushed into the home of Sheikh Fazlul Haq Moni and shot him and his pregnant wife Arzoo, before their two young children. When they left, one of Moni's brothers rushed him and his wife, both of whom were still barely alive, to hospital. They died there. Meanwhile, Mujib's chief of security, Colonel Jamil, who had earlier left his home when he heard of the attack on the presidential residence, approached Road No. 32. He certainly did not know that by then the whole family had been wiped off. Soldiers stationed there by Farook Rahman stopped him at the entry to the road and asked him to turn back. He refused. The soldiers murdered him in his vehicle.

The killings were over before dawn broke. As the Islamic call to prayer was heard in the mosques of the city, the assassins went about ransacking Bangabandhu's house and laying hands on everything of value they could find. At sunrise, Farook Rahman and a band of the men who had taken part in the killings, made their way back to the cantonment. Colonel Rashid, in the company of another group of soldiers, rushed to the residence of Khondokar Moshtaq Ahmed in the old part of Dhaka to inform him that Mujib and his family were all dead and that it was time for

him to take over.

In the cantonment, Farook Rahman and his fellow plotters marched into the office of the army chief of staff and ordered him to go with them to the radio station. Elsewhere, similar action was being taken in the case of the chiefs of the navy and air force. At the Bangladesh Rifles, whose chief was away on a trip abroad, his deputy was collected and taken to the radio office. Some of the plotters made their way to the offices of the chief of general staff, Brigadier Khaled Musharraf, and acquainted him with the details. Likewise, Colonel Shafaat Jamil was informed of the coup. When some officers with no link to the coup turned up at the home of the deputy chief of army staff, Major General Ziaur Rahman, to inform him of the violent change that had taken place, they found him shaving. He coolly responded that the vice president was around to take charge.

All the three services chiefs as well as the heads of the police and Bangladesh Rifles were soon brought to the Radio Bangladesh centre in Shahbagh, where each one of them read out a statement of loyalty to the new regime. Khondokar Moshtaq then addressed the country, telling them that he had taken over as president of Bangladesh in what he described as a moment of historical necessity. He made no mention of Bangabandhu and his family, but he did not forget to salute the soldiers who had carried out the coup d'etat as children of the sun who, in his view, had done the country proud.

Early on the morning of 16 August, the soldiers collected the bodies and placed them in rough, makeshift coffins. Except for Bangabandhu's body, all the other corpses were hastily buried in the cemetery in Banani. The bodies were placed in one single, long grave and covered over without the rituals of an Islamic burial.

Late in the afternoon, the body of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, founder of the independent state of Bangladesh and its president, was laid to rest beside the graves of his parents in the village where he had been born fifty five years earlier. Before leaving Tungipara, the army officers who had helicoptered to the village with the body made sure that soldiers and policemen would stand guard at the grave and allow no one to approach it.

It rained in the evening.

## Japanese PM arrives on Sept 6

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other countries," a diplomat in Dhaka told The Daily Star yesterday.

During an official tour to Japan on May 25-28, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had invited Abe to visit Bangladesh.

This will be the first visit to Bangladesh by any head of government since the Awami League was reelected through the January 5 one-sided polls. This will also be the first Bangladesh tour by any Japanese PM in last 14 years after the visit by Yoshirō Mori in 2000.

Diplomatic sources said the Japanese PM will also visit Sri Lanka after Bangladesh apparently to mobilise support for his country's candidacy for a non-permanent seat at the UN Security Council (UNSC) for 2016-17 period.

Abe is expected to discuss Japan's candidacy as an UNSC member with the leaders of the two South Asian countries as only one UN member state from the Asia-Pacific region can win a seat at the council and Bangladesh has expressed its interest to contest the seat.

According to a highly placed source, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is likely to announce withdrawal of her country's candidacy for the Security Council seat.

Speaking at a news conference hosted by the Japan National Press Club, Hasina had hinted that Bangladesh would withdraw its candidacy before the election to the Security Council in 2015, saying, "Bangladesh is ready to make any sacrifice for a trusted friend."

### TWO DELEGATIONS DUE

Ahead of Abe's visit to Dhaka, Tokyo is sending two high-powered delegations to discuss with Bangladesh officials the mega projects proposed by Hasina during her trip to Japan nearly three months ago.

The Japan Economic Mission will hold a meeting at Economic Relations Division on August 18 to discuss the projects to be implemented with ¥600 billion Japanese assistance.

The mission will also discuss a range of specific projects including construction of Ganges Barrage,

multi-modal tunnel under river Jamuna, dedicated railway bridge over the Jamuna, multi-modal Dhaka Eastern Bypass and ecological restoration of four rivers around the capital.

Led by the secretary of Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industries, the other delegation will hold a dialogue at the Prime Minister's Office on August 21 on Japanese investment in Bangladesh. A senior secretary at the PMO will lead the Bangladesh delegation at the meeting.

Sources said the Japanese side will discuss the Bangladesh government's commitment to provide Japan with an Exclusive Economic Zone. Japan wanted a big area near Dhaka or Chittagong for setting up industries.

The world economic giant has already secured some industrial plots from Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority.

Meanwhile, an inter-ministerial meeting at the foreign ministry yesterday discussed preparations for Abe's ensuing visit to Dhaka.

## History would have been different

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Bangabandhu. It was perceived that he would succeed Gen Shafiullah as army chief.

In such a situation, Zia went into hectic lobbying to stop the government move from being implemented. He understood that his military career would come to an end if he was sent out on a diplomatic posting. Therefore, he sought help from his friend and course mate Lt Col MA Hamid, who was station commander of Dhaka cantonment at the time.

"Please meet Osmani and do something for me now. Otherwise, official order [on civil posting] will be issued."

Hamid had close relations with veteran freedom fighter Saidur Rahman, who was closely linked the young AL leaders Abdur Razzaque and Tofail Ahmed. Hamid met Saidur and informed him about the matter. He also introduced Zia to Saidur, younger brother of Petrobangla's first chairman Dr Habibur Rahman.

After much effort, Zia obtained an appointment through Tofail, who was political secretary to the president, to meet Bangabandhu. He convinced Bangabandhu of his loyalty to the

government. The result was that the government shelved its plans of sending Zia abroad.

After the violent August 15 changeover, Gen Zia gradually emerged as the most powerful man in the country. As army chief, he became chief martial law administrator as well. But that was not the end to Zia's ambitions. His desire was to be president of Bangladesh. Major Rashid, who played a key role in controlling the Mushatque government in 1975, said this to Hamid.

"Zia had become desperate to become president. I tried relentlessly to make him understand that he was too young to become president. I told him to wait for sometime. He was fine as the army chief.

"But Zia was desperate. Then I told him, 'Sir I cannot do it for you. You yourself will have to make your path. I will help you as much as possible'," Rashid told Hamid.

Finally, he seized the presidency on April 2, 1977, by forcing then president Justice Sayem to resign. He was only 41 when he became president. And after grabbing the presidency, he stepped into politics, ignoring his pledge to the nation that he would not do politics.

He founded the BNP. He allowed anti-liberation forces, including the Jamaat-e-Islami, to resume their political activities by withdrawing the constitutional ban on them. As part of his move to rehabilitate anti-liberation forces, he made Shah Azizur Rahman the prime minister.

Through martial law proclamations, he frequently amended the constitution, destroying its basic structures. He publicly proclaimed that he would make politics difficult for politicians. And did it.

Many years after these developments, Saidur Rahman made a sudden phone call to Col Hamid and said: "Colonel, the coups of August 15, November 3 and November 7 were staged because of you."

Hamid could not at first understand the meaning of the remarks. Saidur explained: "You used us to have Ziaur Rahman's foreign posting cancelled and that eventually turned out to be a curse. None of the three coups would take place had Zia not been here."

[The story was prepared on the basis of the work, Three Army Coups and Some Untold Tales, by Lt Col (ret) MA Hamid and some independent sources.]

## Funny obituaries

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extended his full support to the regime installed after August 15, also received high praise in the condolence motion.

"His death is an irreparable loss to Bangladesh. The country has lost an extraordinary personality and pro-people leader."

Parliament took up the motion to condole the deaths of 11 other eminent personalities between August 1975 and early April 1979.

As per convention, parliament makes obituary references at the beginning of each session to mourn the deaths of eminent persons and victims of any tragic incident that occurs during its recess.

But the second parliament completely ignored the brutal assassinations of the four national leaders -- Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, Mansur Ali and Kamaruzzaman -- inside Dhaka central jail on November 3, 1975.

It did not even mention their names in the obituary reference, let alone mourn their deaths.

In the condolence motion, there was no mention of Bangabandhu's family members and others who were murdered on August 15.

Before the House took up the motion, Awami League leader Asaduzzaman Khan, the then leader of the opposition, met newly elected Speaker Mirza Golam Hafiz and appealed to him to ensure that parliament paid due tribute to Bangabandhu in the obituary reference.

But the speaker, who was a BNP lawmaker, rejected the opposition's appeal. He placed the proposal for the obituary reference with a half-hearted tribute to Bangabandhu.

Even Bangabandhu's portrait was removed from the chamber of the House before the second parliament started its journey.

In his address at the inaugural sitting of parliament on April 4, 1979, then president Ziaur Rahman also refrained from paying proper tribute to Bangabandhu.

He just said, "I remember those great personalities who inspired the country's people through Bangladeshi nationalism and the ideals of independence. Among them, I mention the names of Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani and Janab Sheikh Mujibur Rahman."

Awami League MPs strongly protested the language of the condolence motion, the president's address and removal of Bangabandhu's portrait from the House.

They said Bangabandhu was still the Father of the Nation constitutionally, and demanded that his portrait be reinstated in the House. But their protests went unheeded.

The AL lawmakers also refused to support the thanksgiving motion on the president's address for different reasons, including President Zia's silence on holding the trial of Bangabandhu's killers.

The BNP placed the nefarious fifth amendment to the constitution bill in parliament minutes after the obituary

reference was passed.

In the bill, the Zia-led government sought to give constitutional protection to the September 1975 indemnity ordinance that granted Bangabandhu's killers immunity from the charge of assassination and unlawful overthrow of his government.

The bill also sought to condone and validate all actions and deeds by the disgruntled army officers and successive governments from August 15 to April 9, 1979.

The next day, on April 5, the House passed the fifth amendment bill amid protests by the AL and some other MPs in the opposition.

The second parliament commenced its journey in an unusual situation, as the country was still under martial law. There was no Speaker or Deputy Speaker to administer oaths to MPs elected at the 1979 parliamentary elections.

Through a martial law proclamation, the then chief martial law administrator empowered the then acting president, Justice Abdus Sattar, to administer oaths to MPs and preside over parliament's inaugural sitting until the election.

AL lawmakers and some other opposition MPs refused to take oath from Justice Sattar as he was not an elected person. Zia still held the post of chief martial law administrator when he addressed the new parliament.

[The report was prepared on the basis of the second parliament's proceedings]

## Number rising, not quality

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Students who are supposed to be efficient in mathematics, cognitive thinking and language skills after obtaining SSC or HSC certificates very often come up short of expectations, he mentioned.

"We've too many students passing out every year, but only a few of them are cultivated with proficiency in language, maths and other skills," observed the educationist.

Prof Manzoorul thought that emphasis on learning by rote is another major reason behind this sad state of affair. "We've built a nation of rote learners which the worst thing is happening to a young generation.... We've introduced a creative method, but the method has not been utilised properly," he added.

Prof Emeritus of DU Serajul Islam Choudhury observed that poor teaching quality is one of the major reasons behind deterioration in quality of education as the teachers are failing to teach students properly at secondary and higher secondary levels.

Teachers, he said, were not recruited on the basis of quality and they were not even provided with proper training. As a result, they

cannot teach the students properly.

The DU holds a 120-mark admission test in each of the five units -- A, B, C, D and Cha. Students of science take the test under A unit for the Science Faculty, while humanities students under B unit for the Arts Faculty and students of business studies under C unit for the Business Studies Faculty.

Students from every discipline can appear in the admission test under the D (for some selected departments) unit. Besides, all students can take the test under "Cha" unit for the Fine Arts Faculty.

In Arts Faculty, questions comprise of three sections -- Bangla (30 marks), English (30 marks) and general knowledge (60 marks). Admission seekers in D unit also take a similar test.

The admission test in the Business Studies Faculty include Accounting (30 marks), Management (30 marks) alongside Bangla and English. In order to pass the test, each student needs to obtain a minimum of 48 marks.

But the statistics of the admission committee depicts a disappointing picture.

In B Unit, 73.12 percent of 10,768

GPA-5 holders who took the test did not achieve pass marks in the admission test last year. The percentage was 68 and 56 in 2012 and 2011.

As many as 28,454 GPA-5 achievers took the test under D unit last year. Of them, 23,750 failed to secure pass marks, with 19,510 failing in English and Bangla.

Asked if questions in the admission tests were tough, Prof Sadrul Amin, coordinator of B unit admission test, said the questions were meticulously chosen to reflect the standards of class XII and the students who had better concept of textbooks and other contemporary issues came out successful.

Prof Manzoorul said unless students could think themselves, achieve strength in cognitive and logical thinking, and independently write on a topic without being handicapped due to poor language skills, it was not possible to have ideal students for the university.

"We need to start revamping our education system from the primary level with more investment in the sector and ensuring necessary facilities. We must ensure attractive remunerations for the teachers as well," he insisted.

## Jabbar's war crimes trial

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and Mothbaria villages, said Justice Rahim. Of them, 22 were later killed and others injured.

Jabbar abetted and facilitated the killing of two freedom fighters of Phuljhuri, he added. He was also involved in the killing of one person and setting fire to 360 houses of the same village.

Besides, Jabbar was charged for his involvement in the killing of 11 people, and looting of and setting fire to 60 houses at Noli village of Pirojpur.

Accused in a case under collaborators' act, he went into hiding after the war and remained a fugitive till the political changeover of August 15, 1975. Jabbar

then became active in politics and was elected lawmaker from Mathbaria in 1986 and 1988 with Jatiya Party ticket.

Family members of the martyrs of 1971, freedom fighters and locals of Mathbaria protested when he was given grand alliance ticket for the 2008 election.

Jabbar has been on the run since 2009, according to the war crimes investigation agency.

Both prosecutor Zahid Imam and state appointed defence counsel Mohammad Abul Hasan were present at the court room when the charges were framed against Jabbar.

The prosecution on May 11 submitted formal charges against Jabbar.

TRIBUNAL-2

Meanwhile, the International Crimes Tribunal-2 yesterday heard the closing arguments from the defence counsels of former state minister Syed Mohammad Qaisar for the sixth day.

Qaisar's lawyer SM Shahjahan placed arguments on one charge before the three-member tribunal led by Justice Obaidul Hassan.

The case proceeding was adjourned until Monday.

Qaisar, the alleged founder of anti-liberation Qaisar Bahini, faces 16 charges, including genocide committed in Habiganj and Brahmanbaria during the Liberation War in 1971. He, however, pleaded not guilty before the tribunal.