



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



www.thedailystar.net

Your Right to Know

RABIUL AWAL 4, 1437 HUIJI

20 PAGES PLUS SHOUT PRICE: Tk 12.00

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XXV No. 329

POUSH 3, 1422 BS

Confusion over Saudi coalition

Bangladesh's quick response under question; Pakistan surprised by its inclusion

AGENCIES

Western nations welcomed Saudi Arabia's new Islamic coalition against terrorism, but confusion over its role, even among its own members, may undermine its ambitions of tackling militancy and deflecting international criticism of Riyadh.

"We look forward to learning more about what Saudi Arabia has in mind in terms of this coalition," US Defence Secretary Ash Carter said on Tuesday, a comment that underscored the uncertainty over how Riyadh's new initiative would work.

Comments from several of the countries that signed up to the initiative appeared to reveal a lack of preparation by Riyadh, which approached partners with an invitation to join a coordination centre but then announced a military alliance.

That confused approach to the project may undermine its goal, not only of creating an effective group to fight militancy, but of assuaging Western fears that Muslim countries are indifferent to the threat posed by Islamic State (IS).

In recent weeks, media and politicians in Western countries have complained about what they see as Saudi Arabia's failure to match their own focus on destroying Islamic State militarily or to combat its militant Islamist ideology.

They have painted Saudi Arabia's Wahhabi school of Islam as the ideological wellspring of jihadism and said its decision to wage war in Yemen instead of deploying more force against jihadists shows it does not see that threat as a priority, reports Reuters.

Riyadh has always disputed such accusations.

"The kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been subject to criticism in Europe, and France in particular, with regard to extremism and Daesh, and I think

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Freedom debt being repaid

People happy with war crimes trial progress as country celebrates V-Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Buoyed up by the progress in war crimes trial being held to heal the wounds of the 1971 Liberation War, the nation yesterday pledged to make strides towards a prosperous future on its 45th Victory Day.

Dressed in red and green, the colours of the national flag, people from all walks of life poured on to the streets to celebrate the day.

On this day in 1971, the Pakistani Army had surrendered to the Allied Forces of Bangladesh and India at the Suhrawardy Udyan in the capital, after nine months of war that left three million people killed, two lakh women raped, and caused around 10 million people to take refuge in neighbouring India.

Sharforaz Newaz, an official of Brac Bank in Jatrabari, was in high spirits

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CONSPIRING EVEN AFTER SURRENDER

It was ZA Bhutto whose machinations were behind the brutal genocide in Bangladesh. Even before the blood had dried on his hands, Bhutto wanted to form a confederation with Bangladesh. But Bangabandhu gave him a befitting reply.

Let's stay together, Bhutto's last trick

INAM AHMED and SHAKHAWAT LITON

Yahya had left Dhaka on the evening of March 25, 1971 after giving the nod for Operation Searchlight that started the genocide in Bangladesh but Bhutto had stayed on and "slept" in his room throughout the night. "Pakistan has been saved" was his comment to the press. Did he realise the magnitude of the ruthless monstrosity he had unleashed on the millions of unarmed Bangalis mean anything to Bhutto? Did the trail of death and destruction, tears and lamentations affect him in anyway? Apparently not as Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the villain behind the breakup of Pakistan and the political mastermind of genocide in 1971 had come up with a ludicrous proposal even before the blood of the martyrs had dried on the soil of Bangladesh.

He wanted Pakistan and Bangladesh united again into one Pakistan!

Four days into Bangladesh's birth and

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Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, centre, takes over as the president and chief martial law administrator of Pakistan from Yahya Khan, right, on December 20, 1971.



Of war's taboo front

Odyssey of 15 'lucky' war babies made headlines; existence of many others disappeared from history



A rare photo of 21 war babies at Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity in the capital's Islampur in the second week of July 1972. Fifteen of them were allowed for adoption and flown to Canada through a team led by Rev Fred Cappuccino and Bonnie Cappuccino. Below, a photo published in The Montreal Star on July 21, 1972, showing the arrival of a war child there from Bangladesh. PHOTO: COLLECTED BY MUSTAFA CHOWDHURY

MD MAHAMUDUL HAQUE

I think I'm pretty lucky to be adopted and brought to Canada I get a lot of choices and I know my mom loves me a lot.

These lines are from a Mother's Day poem, "How I got Here", composed by 12-year-old Onil Mark Mowling in May 1984 for his class to share his life story.


He was among the 15 Bangladeshi war babies embraced by their adoptive parents in Canada in 1972.

Mustafa Chowdhury, a Canadian citizen of Bangladeshi origin, for the

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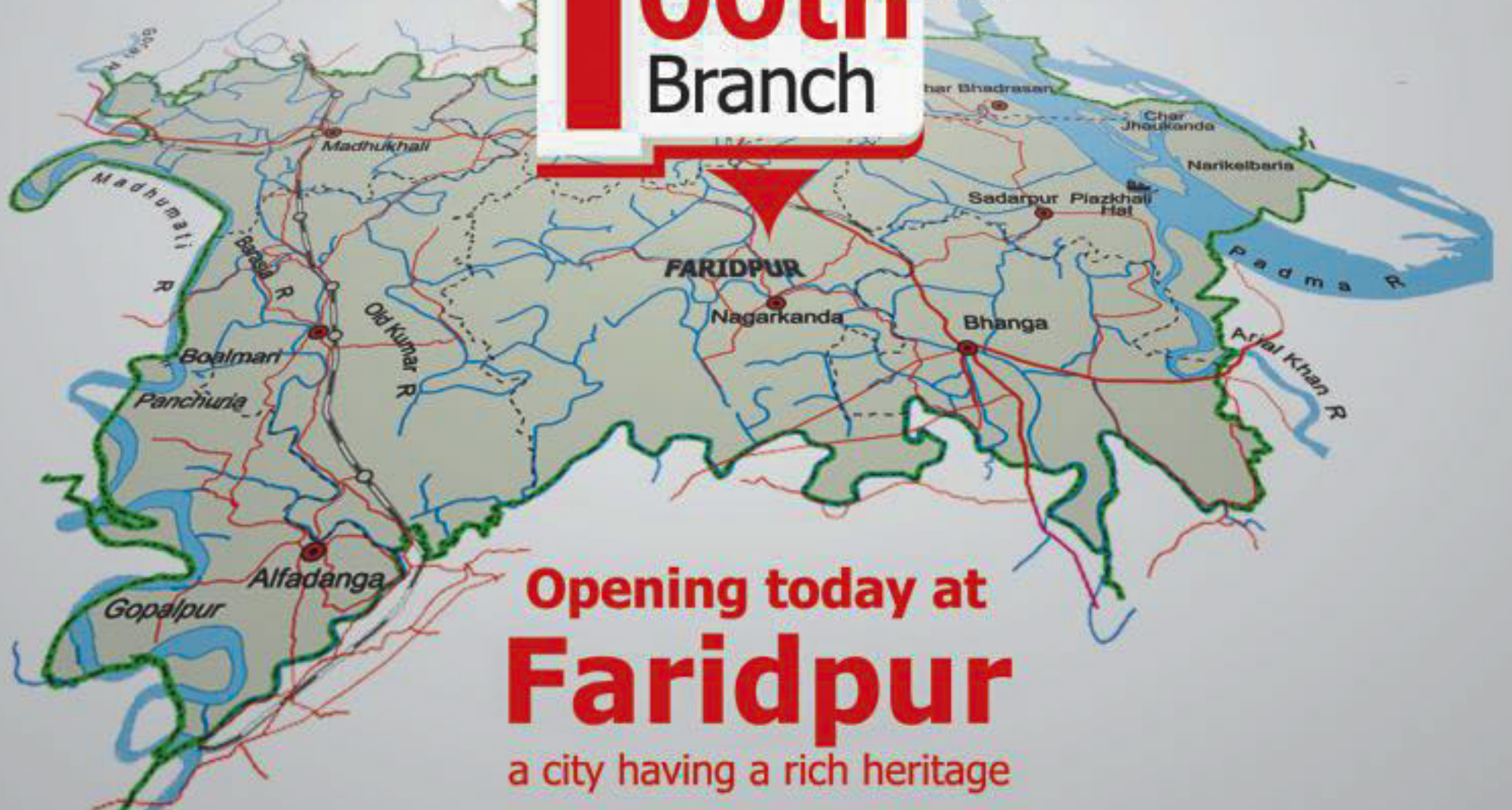


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Mir Quasem Ali next

SC likely to hear his appeal in war crimes case in January

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The Supreme Court is likely to start next month hearing the appeal of war crimes convict Jamaat leader Mir Quasem Ali.

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 on November 2 last year sentenced Quasem to death after it found him guilty on 10 charges of abducting, confining and torturing people during the Liberation War.

Around four weeks later, he filed an appeal with the SC challenging the tribunal's verdict.

Quasem, a member of Jamaat's Central Executive Council, in his appeal cited 181 reasons for his acquittal on all the charges.

Talking to The Daily Star, Attorney General Mahubey



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TOP QUOTE

"It is a very special 'Victory Day' for us, as some notorious razzakars, who had committed crimes against humanity in 1971, have been hanged."

BANK OFFICIAL
SHARFORAZ NEWAZ
DURING VICTORY DAY CELEBRATIONS ON DU CAMPUS

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