

# War criminals' trial must continue: PM

UNB, Dhaka



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said trial of war criminals involved in genocide and killing of intellectuals and who opposed the country's independence must continue.

"No one will be able to save them. Whatever the tactics and conspiracy they devise, the trial will go on," she told a discussion at Krishibid Institution, Bangladesh organised by the Awami League marking Martyred Intellectuals Day.

She said trying war criminals who guided the Pakistani occupation forces to the grassroots and kidnapped intellectuals on the eve of victory was the only path to justice. "Truth and the just always win and this will be the same in the future," she said.

Hasina said it was very much unfortunate that people had to witness war criminals being allowed to enjoy state power and fly the national flag in their vehicles.

"The flag that we earned in exchange of millions of lives were hoisted in the vehicles of war criminals, disgracing the national flag," she said.

She said those who let this happen would also have to face trial.

"I think the time has come, people will have to be vocal. Those who nurtured war criminals, allowed them to do politics in the country, gave them the flag, are also criminals. They did not want the country's independence and they also do not like the development of the country," she said.

"I always have the courage to face any sort of adverse situation, and my courage and power is the people of this country and the activists of the Awami League and its associate organisations. The soldiers of Mujib's ideals are my main strength," she said.

Hasina mentioned that the trial of war criminals of World War II was still going on.

Eminent journalist, columnist and poet Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury, son of Sirajuddin Hossain Shaheen Reza Noor and daughter of Dr Alim Chowdhury Nuzhat Chowdhury also spoke.

A one-minute's silence was observed paying respect to martyred intellectuals and freedom fighters, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the four national leaders.



(Anticlockwise from top) President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stand in solemn silence paying tribute to martyred intellectuals after placing wreaths at the Martyred Intellectuals Memorial at Mirpur in Dhaka yesterday morning marking Martyred Intellectuals Day. They are followed by BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique.

## VICTORY DAY 30 FFs leave for Kolkata, Indian war veterans arrive in capital

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Freedom fighters from Bangladesh and Indian war veterans, who fought for the independence of Bangladesh, will jointly celebrate the country's Victory Day in Kolkata.

A delegation of 30 freedom fighters and six serving officers, along with their spouses and companions, left for Kolkata yesterday for a five-day visit at the invitation of the Indian government.

Similarly, 28 Indian war veterans and four serving officers accompanied by spouses and companions arrived in Dhaka yesterday. The delegation is being led by Lt Gen GS Sihota (Retd), a veteran of 1965 and 1971 wars.

Led by Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan, the delegation from Bangladesh has three sitting MPs, serving justice of the Supreme Court, retired officers from Bangladesh Armed Forces, diplomats, senior bureaucrats and prominent personalities from the civil society.

The delegation will join the Vijay Dibas functions at Fort Williams and also interact with Indian veterans of Bangladesh's wars.

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# Baloch facing atrocities like '71

Say 2 exiled leaders in Dhaka; seek help to make Balochistan independent

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Pakistani government is carrying out atrocities in the Balochistan province the way it committed crimes against humanity and genocide in Bangladesh in 1971, two exiled Baloch leaders told a seminar in Dhaka yesterday.

They urged the United Nations and the international community including Bangladesh and India to help stop the ongoing atrocities and support their struggle for an independent Balochistan.

Mir Suleman Dawood Jan Ahmedzai, the khan of Kalat, and Munir Mengal, president of Baloch Voice Association and Foundation in France, were speaking at a seminar titled "1971 to 2016: Justice and Genocide in the World" in Dhaka.

The Center for Genocide Studies of Dhaka University organised the seminar at TSC with its director Prof Delwar Hossain in the chair.

Suleman, who represents the khans of Kalat, who ruled Balochistan for more than 600 years since 1385, said the human rights, economic and social conditions were very bad in Balochistan.

He, however, said there was no accurate data about the number of killings and victims of forced disappearance.

"In General Musharraf's era, his interior minister acknowledged 4,000 [people] disappeared... and the interior minister of People's Party Zardari's government acknowledged 1,500," said Suleman, now living in exile in the UK.

"The Pakistan authorities have

barred national and international journalists from reporting on Balochistan. But according to Pakistani newspaper reports, more than 1,000 dead bodies have been discovered. The Baloch believed the number of killed and dumped persons by the state security agencies are much higher than that have been reported. According to the local sources, more than 25,000 people are missing and over one million displaced so far," he said.

Paying deep tributes to the martyrs of the Liberation War in 1971 and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, he said the atrocities the Punjabi army of Pakistan unleashed on the Bengalees had been carried out on the Baloch since 1948.

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Mir Suleman Dawood Jan Ahmedzai, who represents the khans of Kalat who ruled Balochistan for over 600 years since 1385, addresses a seminar, "1971 to 2016: Justice and Genocide in the World", organised by the Centre for Genocide Studies at the Teacher-Student Centre of Dhaka University yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Shafik Rehman gets bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday granted bail to senior journalist and pro-BNP intellectual Shafik Rehman in a case filed over an alleged attempt to kidnap and kill the prime minister's son Sajeeb Wazed Joy.

Metropolitan Magistrate Sadbir Yasir Ahsan Chowdhury gave him bail until submission of police probe report as he surrendered before it as per the Supreme Court order of December 8. The SC asked the lower court to consider bail for Shafik.

Shafik was arrested at his Eskaton house in Dhaka on April 16.

Lower courts denied his bail several times on different excuses. Moreover, the High Court also on June 7 rejected his bail.

Shafik then challenged it with the Appellate Division and secured bail on August 31. He walked out of Kashimpur Jail in Gazipur on September 6. After expiry of his bail term, he moved for an extension at the top court, but the SC said the trial court would consider his bail.

In the case, police mentioned the name of Mohammad Ullah Mamun, vice-president of BNP's cultural wing Jasas, for his alleged involvement in the "conspiracy to abduct and kill" Joy.

## 45yrs of searching for an answer

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Champa Somaddar still wonders today, after 45 years, why her husband was killed.

Sukharanjan Somaddar was a Sanskrit language teacher at Rajshahi University and had the reputation of a singer. When the Liberation War broke out, he stayed unarmed with his wife and three children. He believed that he was a just a civilian. But probably he was forgetful of his identity.

"Even today I don't know why he should be killed," said Champa, now 70, talking to this correspondent at her Seroil residence in Rajshahi city.

Sukharanjan's life was at risk for being a Hindu and the collaborators of Pakistani forces were at his doorstep, which they did not know, she said, recollecting the dreadful times of 1971. "Hindus were the prime targets of Pakistani invaders at the beginning," she said.

The Pakistani occupation forces entered RU campus on April 13 afternoon. Many teachers left the campus, but only a few stayed, including Somaddar.

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Wreaths placed by teachers, students and staff of Rajshahi University at a memorial south of the central library yesterday, way before the scheduled inauguration in March next year on being built at a cost of Tk 61 lakh in memory of the country's martyred intellectuals, especially three from the university (from left) -- Habibur Rahman, Mir Abdul Quayum and Sukharanjan Somaddar.

PHOTO: STAR

## Miladunnabi observed

BSS, Dhaka

The holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi, marking the birth and demise of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH), was observed in the country and elsewhere on Tuesday with due reverence and religious fervour.

On this day in 570, the 12th of Rabiul Awwal of the Hijri calendar, Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) was born in Makkah of Saudi Arabia with divine blessings and messages of peace for mankind. He also passed away on the same day.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave separate messages on the occasion.

Different organisations, including Islamic Foundation (IF), chalked out elaborate programmes including rally, milad mahfil, discussion and Quran-khwani marking the day.

President Abdul Hamid hosted a milad mahfil at the Bangabhaban which government leaders, religious scholars and distinguished citizens attended in the afternoon.

Awami League central committee, BNP and Jatiyabadi Ulema Dal also organised milad mahfils on the occasion.

Meanwhile, some other organisations including Ashkan Maizvandari Association, Torikate Mawla Group, Bangladesh and Nazrul Academy, Anjuman-E-Rahmania Mainia Maizbhandaria, and Ashkan Gausia Mainia Sahidia Maizbhandaria observed Eid-e-Miladunnabi.

## SC full bench to decide on VAT on English medium school tuition fees

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday upheld until its further order a High Court verdict that declared illegal the imposition of value added tax (VAT) on tuition fees of English medium school students.

The chamber judge of the appellate division did not pass any order on a petition, seeking a stay on the HC verdict of December 12, and sent it to the apex court full bench for its hearing on January 2.

Attorney General Mahbub Alam said the HC verdict will remain in force until further order of the SC.

Imposition of VAT is discriminatory and contradictory to the constitution, the HC said, adding that the VAT cannot be imposed on English medium school students' tuition fees from next January.

## Ensure credible NCC polls

Aspirants, professionals tell Prothom Alo discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expressing concern over whether the December 22 Narayanganj City Corporation polls will be held in a free, fair and neutral manner, mayoral and councillor aspirants and various professionals at a discussion yesterday urged the Election Commission (EC) to take a tough stance to ensure a credible and acceptable election.

Bangla daily Prothom Alo organised the discussion, "Narayanganj City Corporation election: hope and concern", at Narayanganj Club. Joint Editor Sohrab Hossain conducted the programme while Adviser Kamal Hossain delivered the inaugural speech.

All four mayoral candidates, including AL nominated candidate Selina Hayat Ivy and BNP nominated Shakhawat Hossain Khan, said they did not want to see fraudulence and a one-sided election.

They also said if the polls were held in a free and fair way, they would accept the result whatever it may be.

Responding to Shakhawat's demand for army deployment, Ivy said the EC could do so if it deems it necessary for a free and fair polls. "I am not against the deployment," she added.

Shakhawat said the EC was yet to take any measure although it stated that all 174 polling centres were risky. "That is why we are con-

cerned...There are over 1,000 legal arms in Narayanganj but those arms are yet to be deposited," he added. Shakhawat also alleged that the EC was giving advantages to Ivy, the ruling party candidate. Masum Billah, a mayoral hopeful of Islami Andolon, said 250 people were killed in the union parishad elections, held under the present EC. "Untoward incidents might take place anytime as a level playing field is yet to be ensured," he said.

Former Bangladesh Knitwear and Manufacturers Association president Fazlul Haque said the election atmosphere was good till now but the EC would have to maintain it.

Nagorik Committee President AB Siddique said although mayoral candidates were "good individuals", there might be some problems on the part of councillor candidates. "So, election commission will have to be tough," he said.

Cultural personality Rafiur Rabbi said, "We are yet to get rid of local criminals and godfathers, that is why fear is prevailing among people. There are some candidates involved with the seven murder case and drug traders. If action was not taken against them, concern remains."

The mayoral candidate from Biblobi Workers Party, several councillor candidates and Narayanganj Press Club President Mahbubur Rahman also spoke.

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### STAR WEEKEND

in other news...

This week our Spotlight is about 10 songs of victory that provide a source of inspiration to all even today. We also have a piece about eminent filmmaker Zahir Raihan's noteworthy contribution in Bangladeshi film. Don't forget to grab your copy of the Star Weekend, tomorrow, Friday!

### SONGS OF VICTORY

ELITA KARIM  
SKETCH: YAFIZ SIDDIQUE