

Bangabandhu

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 launch their first attack in the evening. The Mukti Bahini, a guerrilla resistance movement formed by the Bangladeshis during the war, retaliated and won.

In the evening, Bangabandhu was flown via helicopter from the cantonment, where he was detained, to the Tejgaon Airport. Afterwards, he was flown to Karachi by a special military aircraft.

That night about 100 Bangladeshi East Pakistan Rifles (EPR) men, who had turned against the Pakistan army, were barbarically murdered near the Ramna Kalibari.

Police officers were executed in Mohammadpur and elsewhere as the army considered them to be potential threats. 800 policemen were killed in surprise attacks. The EPR camp in Pilkhana had 1000 men present. 700 of them were killed, 200 were overpowered, while 100 had managed to escape.

Searches had begun from house to house, and any Bangalee policeman was shot at sight.

Around the world, the spread of news regarding Bangladesh's fight for liberation had gained momentum.

New York Times (NYT) published a report headlined "Sticks and spears against tanks".

"The people of East Pakistan, armed with sticks, spears and home-made rifles, are mounting a resistance movement against a military force from West Pakistan that is armed with planes, bombs, tanks and heavy artillery. It seems certain thousands of Bengalis will be killed, but their dedication to the self-rule movement and to their leader, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, is deep..." they wrote.

NYT said 5,000-7,000 people were killed in Dhaka. The Sydney Morning Herald said 10,000 - 100,000 were killed. While there was already confusion over the death-toll, in Dhaka, rain exposed two mass graves -- one at Zahurul Huq Hall and the other at Rokeya Hall.

The US department of State's secret memo predicted India's future response to the situation:

"A. Tolerate privately provided cross-border assistance to the East Bengalis; this assistance could range from propaganda support to weapons and explosives.

B. Permit East Bengal dissidents to use India as a refuge and to conduct crossborder activities from within India.

C. Covertly provide supplies, including weapons, and perhaps some training to East Bengal dissidents."

Ambassador Keating, the then US ambassador to India, expressed his dismay and concern at the repression unleashed by the Martial Law administrators with the use of American military equipment. He called for the U.S. to "promptly, publicly, and prominently deplore" the brutality.

Source: The Daily Star archive, Bangladesh Genocide Archive, US Department of State Archive

Stamp out

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 these challenges in a coordinated way."

Reiterating her government's zero tolerance policy against terrorism, Hasina said, "We've taken massive measures to create awareness among the youth, families and educational institutions about terrorism and extreme violence."

She also reaffirmed her government's firm stance not to allow anyone to use Bangladesh's soil for terrorist acts against other countries.

Regarding problems with neighbouring countries, the PM put emphasis on solving the problems bilaterally. "If there is a need to do more, we could solve those multilaterally."

She also stressed the importance of united efforts of the Bimstec countries for maintaining economic development and sustainable growth of the region.

As a founding member of Bimstec, Bangladesh attaches priority to regional cooperation. "We're firmly committed to deepening our relations with Bimstec member countries, and we're very much active to strengthen this process."

Hasina underlined the need for signing and ratifying some conventions of security cooperation. "These framework agreements will ensure security of trade, economy and investment in this region, and help increase the economic growth of people."

She pointed out that the Bimstec countries, including Bangladesh, will arrange some programmes like ministerial-level meeting in 2018 to further strengthen their cooperation.

The PM's Security Adviser Major General (ret'd) Tarique Ahmed Siddiq apprised the Hasina of different aspects of the meeting of the national security chiefs of the Bimstec countries.

Bimstec Secretary General Shahidul Islam, Indian National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, Tarique Ahmed Siddiq, Thang Tun of Myanmar, Nepalese Ambassador Chop Lal Bhusal, Brig HKACR Kodi Phuwakkul of Sri Lanka and Chhalida Chochai of Thailand were, among others, present at the meeting.



Hello from the inside

Tangail jail now allows inmates to call relatives

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Shahadat Hossain, a convict of Chuadanga serving life, has been in Tangail District Jail for the last two years. His family members could not meet him in jail on more than a handful of occasions as it was far from Chuadanga.

Shahadat yesterday talked to his wife Swarna over the phone with one of the four phones set up inside the jail for the inmates.

"A prisoner's life is very helpless and I was very gloomy for not being able to get information about my home and family members over the last few months. Today, I am feeling happy after talking to my wife over the phone ...," he said.

After talking to his brother, inmate Sazzad Hossain of Ghatail upazila, said none from his family had met him over the last three months he had been in jail. He had five more months to serve for possession.

"Now I feel good after talking to one of my family members and apologising for my wrongdoings," he said.

He thanked the jail authorities for the opportunity.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal inaugurated the pilot project Prison Link Smart Communication System "Swajan" yesterday morning.

In a press briefing later on, he said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, while inaugurating the Keraniganj Central Jail on April 10, 2016, had promised the phone facility for inmates.

The facility will be introduced to all jails in the country if this project was successful, he added.

The inmates are allowed to make a 10-minute call twice a month. They are asked for two phone numbers of their relatives and the relatives get text messages a day before, letting them know to expect the call.

The calls are recorded and jail guards are present beside the inmates during calls.

Militants, members of outlawed and extremist organisations, and people detained for abduction and extortion, are not allowed to make calls.

No less than a movie

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35-year-old Selim took the bait.

He surrendered before the District and Sessions Judge's Court on March 11, and the court sent him to jail in a drug smuggling case filed against Hannan, general secretary of Akhaura Municipal Swachhasebak League, on December 13, 2014.

Two weeks went by, but Selim's family didn't receive any money or communication from Hannan or his lawyer Dolonara Begum.

Helpless and scared, Selim disclosed everything to the jail authorities that communicated the matter to the District and Sessions Judge's Court.

Judge Ismail Hossain of the court came to know about the matter during hearing of the case on March 25.

The judge then talked to Selim in his chamber where the rickshaw-puller confessed impersonating Hannan and offered apology, according to court sources.

The court then asked the chief judicial magistrate to file cases against both Hannan and Selim. It also issued arrest warrant against Hannan, also member of Akhaura Dakkhin Union Parishad.

As per the court directives, two cases were filed with Brahmanbaria Sadar Model Police Station against the duo the same day.

Shah Alam, president of Akhaura Municipal Swachhasebak League, said, "We have just learnt about the incident. We will take action against him [Hannan]."

This correspondent went to Hannan's house in Noorpur village yesterday, but found it locked. His neighbours said he had fled to India.

According to court sources and a number of lawyers, Dolonara allegedly played a key role in the deception.

The District and Sessions Judge's Court issued a show cause notice to her on March 25, saying it was tantamount to deception to seek bail by making someone impersonate an

accused.

She was asked to reply in 10 days why the matter would not be conveyed to the High Court and Bangladesh Bar Council.

Brahmanbaria Bar Association on Tuesday formed a sub-committee comprised of 10 lawyers to look into the matter. The committee found another such case involving Dolonara.

In that case, domestic help Hazera Begum, wife of Kawsar Mia in Razapur village, was offered Tk 50,000 for impersonating Shuva Begum, 32, an alleged drug peddler of the same village.

As Hazera appeared before the District and Sessions Judge's Court on March 6, it sent her to prison in a drug smuggling case filed against Shuva, wife of Antu Chowdhury, on November 23, 2015.

On Tuesday, scores of lawyers from Brahmanbaria Bar Association quizzed Shuva's husband Antu and recorded it.

Antu told them that Dolonara had taken Tk 1.80 lakh for securing bail for his wife.

He also claimed he didn't know that Hazera impersonated his wife.

"It's a conspiracy by Dolonara Begum," Antu said.

This correspondent visited Shuva's house yesterday, but found it locked.

Contacted, Dolonara said she didn't know Hannan and Shuva in person.

Claiming innocence, she said, "It is a conspiracy by a section of lawyers."

Shaful Alam Liton, secretary of Brahmanbaria Bar Association, said the sub-committee is now trying to find out whether more such cases of deception had taken place.

Brahmanbaria Superintendent of Police Mizanur Rahman said they are yet to find out Hannan's whereabouts.

Asked about the rumours of Hannan's escape to India, the police official said they would alert the immigration police about Hannan.

Probe if there is any flaw

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The AL senior leader said there were allegations that the pilot of the ill-fated US-Bangla aircraft, Capt Abid Sultan, was fatigued and stressed as he flew four flights between Dhaka and Chittagong before leaving for Kathmandu on the day of the crash.

"We asked CAAB chief to enquire whether the management made the pilot to operate the Kathmandu flight and whether the pilot was overworked in light of the International Civil Aviation Organisation rules."

On Tuesday, former pilots and aviation experts at a discussion on aviation safety criticised CAAB and accused it of failing to monitor safety measures on private airlines.

They also criticised private carriers for overworking their pilots and cutting corners in terms of safety. They alleged that CAAB officials often took undue benefits provided by airlines companies.

Referring to the fatal crash of US-

Bangla aircraft on March 12 in Kathmandu that killed 50 people including 27 Bangladeshis, Faruk said the causes of the crash was not confirmed yet.

"But we don't want any accidents taking place due to safety issues. That's why we have asked top CAAB officials to strictly monitor and oversee safety of aircraft, pilots and crews."

CAAB Chairman Air Vice Marshal M Naim Hassan, however, told the meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban that it was unlikely that CAAB inspectors would be negligent in their duties.

"[Job of a CAAB inspector] is a highly paid and sensitive job. If it is proven that any inspector compromises aircraft safety, he has a risk of losing his job," a person who was in the meeting quoted the CAAB chief as saying.

The CAAB chief also told the committee that there was no evidence suggesting that the pilot or the aircraft were at fault.

Iraq's winged

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It recreates a Lamassu -- a winged bull and protective deity -- that stood at the gates of Nineveh, northern Iraq, from around 700 BC. It was destroyed by the Islamic State (IS) group in 2015.

The new statue is part of a wider project to recreate more than 7,000 objects looted from the Iraq Museum in 2003 or destroyed at archaeological sites in the aftermath of the Iraq War.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan said the artwork was an "act of resistance" against Islamic extremists and philistines.

He claimed that 20 million people would walk past the statue during its two-year run, making it the world's most visible piece of contemporary art.

"It sends a message loud and clear: we will not be defied, scared or cowed, we will stay united," Khan told AFP.

"Your past defines the future. The idea that you can blow up statues and somehow rewrite history I find appalling."

The statue stands 4.5 metres high, weighs 6,000 kilogrammes and is made from 10,500 empty Iraqi date syrup cans, representing a once-renowned industry laid low by the wars in Iraq.

"The statue, for me, symbolises a lot of things," Rakowitz told AFP. "It's about the dehumanisation of the Iraqi people and the loss that they incurred."

Rakowitz said dates were put into the mouths of newborn babies in Iraq so that their first taste of life was sweet.

Now the number of date palms has dwindled from 30 million in 2003 to around three million, he claimed, adding that Iraqi date syrup now gets packaged under the label of other countries.

Dhaka to send

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authorities. There has been no progress regarding their repatriation.

Myanmar authorities informed Dhaka that they had so far verified around 600 people.

On January 21, the UNHCR gave a draft of a Memorandum of Understanding to the government for signing.

In order to ensure that the return is voluntary, foreign ministry officials said Bangladesh has incorporated provisions for involvement of the UNHCR and other relevant international organisations in the process.

Failing to get

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of its chairperson Khaleda Zia. The DMP informed the BNP that they could not permit the rally on security grounds.

The BNP then rescheduled the rally for March 19. Having failed to get the permission the second time, BNP postponed it to March 29.

A three-member BNP delegation, led by its standing committee member Nazrul Islam Khan, met Home Minister Asaduzzam Khan on Tuesday and requested him to allow the rally.

The home minister told them that the law enforcers would decide on the permit.

"We had hope that the government would allow us to hold the rally after our three-member delegation met the home minister," Rizvi said.

Rizvi said their planned rally at Rajshahi city will be held on April 15 instead of April 4 for unavoidable reasons.

3 sons jailed

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punishment to the six after the court found them guilty beyond doubt, said the victim's lawyer Habibur Rahman Azad.

The district court also fined them Tk 500 each, in default of which they will have to suffer ten more days in jail. However, the same court later granted a 15-day conditional bail to the convicts, added Azad.

Rowshonara Begum, wife of late Nur Uddin, also a resident of Madham Halishahar area, filed a case against her sons and their wives with Bandar Police Station on February 26, 2014, after the six physically assaulted her over family property.

The sons and their wives had carried out the assault inside Rowshon's house two before the case was filed.

"Rowshon has a piece of land given to her by her husband at Madham Halishahar area and she used to live alone in a thatched house on the land. The sons live in their respective apartments just near their mother's house. They did not support their mother in any way, but tried to occupy her land instead. When she resisted, they assaulted her," said Azad.

After Rowshon filed the case, a court in Chittagong took notice and issued arrest warrants for the six.

Another district court later framed charges against them on December 30, 2014.

Smith, Warner

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A statement from Cricket Australia (CA) said Smith and Warner had been suspended from "all international and domestic cricket" while opening batsman Cameron Bancroft has been banned for nine months over the ball-tampering incident during the third Test in South Africa.

All three players will also be required to undertake 100 hours of voluntary service in community cricket.

A Cricket Australia spokesman told AFP the players could still play at club level in Australia or in other countries.

Smith, Warner and Bancroft have been sent home from South Africa but coach Darren Lehmann remains in charge because CA says he was unaware of the plot to tamper with the ball.

The CA statement said Smith and Bancroft would not be considered for team leadership positions until a minimum of 12 months after the end of their suspensions, but Warner will be barred from such positions in the future.

Cricket Australia chief executive James Sutherland said the national body would provide details of an independent review "into the conduct and culture of our Australian men's team in due course."

Smith, Warner and Bancroft have been sent home from South Africa but coach Darren Lehmann remains in charge because Cricket Australia says he was unaware of the plot to tamper with the ball.

Sutherland said that Lehmann's furious walkie-talkie exchange with 12th man Peter Handscomb was the crucial evidence that distanced him from the team's ball-tampering plot.

Television footage showed Lehmann relaying a message down to Handscomb after cameras caught Bancroft attempting to alter the ball's condition with what Australian officials have said was sandpaper.

"I want to clarify that specific point. He sent a message to say 'what the hell is going on', except he didn't use the word 'hell'," Sutherland told reporters at the Australia team hotel in Johannesburg.

Smith said after the Test that the Australia team's "leadership group" had been aware of the plan. Former Australian captain Michael Clarke, the man Smith succeeded in 2015, believes there is more to the story than meets the eye.

Meanwhile, former Australia leg spinner Shane Warne branded reaction to the Australian ball-tampering scandal a "tornado of hysteria" on Wednesday and said the punishments meted out to Smith and Warner do not fit the crime.

"We are all so hurt and angry and maybe we weren't so sure how to react," Warne wrote on Facebook. "We'd just never seen it before."

"But the jump to hysteria is something that has elevated the offence beyond what they actually did, and maybe we're at a point where the punishment just might not fit the crime."

"But what are the players guilty of? Cheating via ball-tampering and bringing the game into disrepute."

"Their opposing captain in this series, South Africa's Faf du Plessis, has been charged with the offence twice and opening bowler Vernon Philander once."

North Korea

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said in a statement.

Trump said yesterday North Korean leader Kim Jong Un looked forward to meeting with him, indicating the planned landmark talks between the isolated Asian leader and Republican president will go forward.

"Received message last night from XI JINPING of China that his meeting with KIM JONG UN went very well and that KIM looks forward to his meeting with me," Trump said on Twitter. "In the meantime, and unfortunately, maximum sanctions and pressure must be maintained at all cost!"

Trump also tweeted: "Look forward to our meeting!"

China has traditionally been secretive North Korea's closest ally but ties have been frayed by its pursuit of nuclear weapons and China's backing of tough UN sanctions in response.

China's Foreign Ministry cited Kim in a lengthy statement as telling Xi the situation on the Korean peninsula was starting to improve because North Korea had taken the initiative to ease tension and put forward proposals for talks.

"It is our consistent stand to be committed to denuclearisation on the peninsula, in accordance with the will of late President Kim Il Sung and late General Secretary Kim Jong Il," Kim Jong Un said, according to the ministry.

North Korea was willing to talk with the United States and hold a summit between the two countries, he said.

"The issue of denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula can be resolved, if South Korea and the United States respond to our efforts with goodwill, create an atmosphere of peace and stability while taking progressive and synchronous measures for the realisation of peace," Kim said.

NUCLEAR UMBRELLA
 Kim Jong Un's predecessors, grandfather Kim Il Sung and father Kim Jong Il, both promised not to pursue

nuclear weapons but secretly maintained programmes to develop them, culminating in the North's first nuclear test in 2006 under Kim Jong Il.

The North had said in previous, failed talks aimed at dismantling its nuclear programme it could consider giving up its arsenal if the United States removed its troops from South Korea and withdrew its so-called nuclear umbrella of deterrence from South Korea and Japan.

Many analysts and former negotiators believe this still constitutes North Korea's stance and remain deeply sceptical Kim is willing to give up the weapons his family has been developing for decades.

At first wrapped in secrecy, the announcement of Kim Jong Un's visit soon became the third-most discussed topic on China's Weibo microblogging site, although many state media outlets blocked their comments sections.

Widely read Chinese state-run newspaper the Global Times praised the meeting as proving naysayers wrong about Beijing-Pyongyang relations.

"China and North Korea maintaining their friendly relations provides a positive force for the whole region and promotes strategic stability in northeast Asia," it said in an editorial.

Kim's appearance in Beijing involved almost all the trappings of a state visit, complete with an honour guard and banquet at Beijing's Great Hall of the People.

Kim and Xi also met at the Diaoyutai State Guest House, where Kim Il Sung planted a tree in 1959 that still stands.

State television showed pictures of the two men chatting and Kim's wife Ri Sol Ju, getting a warm welcome from Xi's wife, Peng Liyuan.

A top Chinese diplomat, Politburo member Yang Jiechi, will brief officials, including President Moon Jae-in, in Seoul today about the Beijing talks, the presidential office in Seoul said.

A win for media

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dossier and instead claimed the WMD information "came from a reliable and established source, quoting a well-placed senior officer".

Tony Blair, in his diatribe, told the House of Commons on June 4, 2003, "...it was alleged that the source for the 45 minute claim was an Iraqi defector of dubious reliability. He was not an Iraqi defector and he was an established and reliable source."

Adam Ingram, the armed forces minister, came down heavily on the BBC's claim saying: "That was said on the basis of security service information -- a single source, it wasn't corroborated".

Blair's spin doctor Campbell, who was said to be behind the doctoring, told the foreign affairs select committee: "I find it incredible.... That people can report based on one single anonymous uncorroborated source."

Ironically, the claim made in the dossier was also based on one single anonymous uncorroborated source quoting another anonymous and dubious source.

The BBC's board of governors, in a statement, defended itself by saying it had followed its guideline in reporting on the dossier. "Although the guidelines say that the BBC should be reluctant to broadcast stories based on a

single source, and warn about the dangers of using anonymous sources, they clearly allow for this to be done in exceptional circumstances. Stories based on senior intelligence sources are a case in point." This strong defense did not work in the end for them. The Hutton Commission report, considered as a whitewash for the government's deceptions, blamed the BBC for its reporting, leading to the resignation of BBC top brass.

However, as the government realized that its dossier claim was indefensible, it withdrew the controversial 45-minute claim on October 12, 2004.

Despite all these controversy over the reliability of the information, the British foreign secretary Jack Straw defended his government's decision to go to war as correct.

It was the Chilcot Commission, formed after Blair quit office over Iraq controversy, that finally revealed that the dossier was actually unverified and doctored.

Former Joint Intelligence Committee chief Sir John Scarlett admitted to the Chilcot commission that his dossier should have made it clear that the claim that Saddam's capability of deploying weapons within 45 minutes actually did not refer to WMD. But he said it had not been his intention to mislead.