

BIBI MARIAM

A saviour of the city ignored

|| HASAN MEER ||



**DHAKA
VIBE**

The cannon is currently at Osmani Udyan, opposite Nagar Bhaban.

PHOTO: STAR

The bandits came through Buriganga. They were swift and ruthless, stealing goods and cargo from boats in open water and docked along waterfront piers.

This menace was taking a heavy toll on the city.

It was around 1660 and Dhaka, the capital of Bengal -- a Mughal province -- had started to expand rapidly during the reign of Emperor Aurangzeb.

But with prosperity came perils. There had been continuous raids by Magh (Arakanese) bandits.

The emperor knew the issue had to be dealt with and he also knew the perfect person for that.

So he entrusted Mir Jumla II with the task. Time and again, Jumla had proven his worth with his expeditions, warfare skills and counter-insurgency

campaigns. Jumla, the then governor of Bengal (1660-1663), surveyed Dhaka to build some fortresses and gates to protect its residents. He realised protecting the city's inland was important, but at the same time the riverside had to be defended as well.

The governor commissioned two massive cannons to be added to his armoury. It is, however, not known exactly when these cannons were commissioned.

According to Charles D'Oyly, the collector (early 1800s) of Dhaka and a renowned painter, the cannons were built in the city in the 17th century. Local technicians -- under guidance of Mughal engineers -- built it, as it was unlikely to move such heavy cannons on waterway from the empire's capital over a thousand

miles away. Once completed, Jumla named them "Kale Jamjam/Kale Khan" and "Bibi Mariam".

He also ordered to place the cannons on two sides of the Buriganga -- one in Swarighat in front of Bara Katra and the other on a shoal near Jinjira.

It has been said that Jumla also took them with him at the time of his conquest of Assam. But with the passing of time, the necessity to use the cannons also waned.

After the fall of Mughal empire and the nawabs of Bengal, during British occupation in the 18th century, Kale Jamjam was devoured by the river.

Bibi Mariam, however, survived and can still be seen inside Osmani Udyan, opposite Nagar Bhaban, resting on a

concrete saddle support. But the journey to its latest abode was nothing less than remarkable.

This cannon, also known as "Dhakar Kaman" or "Sadarghat-er Kaman", was first salvaged by a British collector from falling into the river and was placed at Chawkbazar in early 1800s.

According to renowned historian Syed Muhammed Taifoor, the cannon measures 11 feet in length. Its bore at the breech is 1.7 feet and at the muzzle is 6 inches.

The mouth at the muzzle was sealed up during the British period, as children used to crawl inside and it often became quite difficult to bring them out, Taifoor mentioned in his book "Glimpses of Old Dhaka".

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'Boycott Myanmar'

Rohingyas plan global campaign as ICJ set to start hearing on genocide case

PORIMOL PALMA

Rohingyas across Europe have planned mass rallies and a global campaign, "Boycott Myanmar", to globally drum up their demands for justice as the International Court of Justice (ICJ) begins its first ever hearing on the genocide case against Myanmar on December 10.

The European Rohingya Council (ERC) and Myanmar Muslim Association Netherlands (MMAN) are organising a Rohingya solidarity rally from December 10 to 12 in front of the ICJ at The Hague, Netherlands.

"Join us at the historic event in the pursuits of long-awaited justice and accountability for Rohingya victims of Myanmar Genocide as ICJ hears the case filed by The Gambia against Myanmar for the gravest crimes it has committed," according to an announcement issued by the ERC on Twitter.

In a video message on Twitter, Rohingya activist Mohammad Eleyas called for international community -- especially the European Union -- to stand for the rights of Rohingyas.

"We are Rohingyas, we are human beings. You know Myanmar committed genocide. We don't have any ability to take precaution against Myanmar military and Buddhist extremists in prudence. So, we need your help and support," he said.

Eleyas urged all to support Gambia, which has submitted a case with the ICJ against Myanmar on November 11, accusing it of violating the UN Convention

on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Since August 2017, some 7,50,000 Rohingyas have fled a brutal military campaign in Rakhine and took shelter in Bangladesh, joining some 3,00,000 others who had fled earlier waves of violence.

According to a report of the Ontario International Development Agency, Myanmar state forces killed nearly 24,000 Rohingyas and raped thousands of women and girls since August 2017.

The UN termed the atrocities a classic example of ethnic cleansing. Over the last two years, UN Security Council took no concrete action against Myanmar mainly because of opposition from China and Russia that have veto powers.

Apart from ICJ, the International Criminal Court at The Hague also approved full investigation into the forced deportation of Rohingyas by Myanmar to Bangladesh.

Human rights groups in Argentina also filed a case against Myanmar's State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and some top officials over crimes against Rohingyas.

ICC can hold accountable the individual perpetrators, while ICJ can hold accountable Myanmar as a state. Legal and international relations experts believe Myanmar will be under huge pressure because of multiple legal actions.

Rohingyas now see a ray of hope for

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"We will hold protest rally against Myanmar's genocide. The ICJ case can change things for us. There's a lot of enthusiasm among the Rohingyas all over the world"

'NATIONAL MINORITY COMMISSION'

Nirmul Committee launches draft framework

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pointing out the pervasive discrimination in society, renowned writer Shahriar Kabir yesterday said a society that discriminates people based on their religion, ethnicity, and community cannot be called a civilised one.

In a bid to eliminate discrimination from the country and protect the rights of minorities, it becomes mandatory to form a particular commission for the purpose, he said while discussing the launch of a draft organogram of the proposed National Minority Commission.

Ekattorer Chatak Dalal Nirmul Committee, a platform to promote

secularism in Bangladesh and ensure trial of war criminals, yesterday launched it at a press conference at Jatiya Press Club.

"We have full confidence that the Law Commission will take our proposal into consideration," said Shahriar, president of Nirmul Committee.

He said although minority communities are enjoying unprecedented rights and dignity during the tenure of the incumbent government, people of these communities have been attacked by fundamentalists.

"In absence of an appropriate law, it has become difficult to ensure justice and punish the culprits," he added.

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CLASH WITH POLICE NEAR HC

BNP leader, two activists held from Press Club area

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday arrested a BNP leader and two activists from Jatiya Press Club area, in connection with a case filed on charges of vandalism and police assault during Tuesday's clash near High Court.

Police detained ABM Mosharraf Hossain, training affairs secretary of BNP, and its activists Advocate Alam and Advocate Touhid while they were coming out of the press club after attending a programme around noon, said Abul Hosen, officer-in-charge (OC) of Shabbagh Police Station.

Activists of a pro-BNP organisation locked into a clash with police personnel and blocked a road in the capital's High Court area on Tuesday while demanding immediate release of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

Later, police filed a case with Shabbagh Police Station, naming 20-25 party, its front and pro-BNP organisation leaders and activists, and around 500 unnamed leaders and activists.

Two policemen were injured while a number of vehicles were vandalised during the clash, police claimed in the



Police arrested the BNP men from Jatiya Press Club.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

'Want leaders with clean image'

Quader says at Matsyajibi League Council

Bss, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said actions will be taken if BNP carries out anarchy in the name of movement.

The road transport and bridges minister was speaking at the inaugural session of the national council of Awami Matsyajibi League at Krishibid Institution Bangladesh (KIB) auditorium.

At the event, he said BNP does not abide by the rules of law and court.

"To create pressure on the court for the release of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, the party's leaders and activists carried out vandalism, launched attacks on police and hurled bricks on the court premises," he added.

The AL general secretary urged his party leaders and activists to remain alert, saying conspiracy is being hatched to oust the government.

About Matsyajibi League, Quader said, "We do not want any leader who will be involved with extortion. We want dedicated leaders with clean image."

Awami League presidium member Matia Chowdhury, office secretary Dr Abdus Sobhan Golap, and relief and social welfare secretary Sujit Roy Nandi were present on the occasion, among others.

Matsyajibi League council preparatory committee convener Narayan Chandra Das presided over the event.

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Be vocal against violence on women, children

Speakers urge youths at National Leadership Carnival



Organisers and guests at "National Leadership Carnival 2019" yesterday. Youth Club of Bangladesh organised the daylong event at Institution of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh.

PHOTO: COURTESY

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's youths need to prepare themselves as future nation-builders, taking benefit of technological advancement, speakers said at a programme yesterday.

They said youths can actively participate in social development through creating resistance against drug abuse, preventing harmful use of internet, and also raising awareness on the impact of climate change.

Youth Club of Bangladesh organised the daylong programme, "National Leadership Carnival 2019", at the Institution of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh in the capital.

Addressing as a guest speaker, renowned author Muhammed Zafar Iqbal said youths have to prepare themselves to overcome the "future challenges from machines and

software".

Technology is useful for various purposes. However, before using a new technology, one should know it properly, said Dr Iqbal, also a reputed professor of computer science.

"Don't let technology take advantage of you," he said, urging students to restrain themselves from its excessive usage. "You should get more involved in social activities instead," he stressed.

At the inauguration session, Additional Deputy Inspector General of Police, Haider Ali Khan, said youths need to play their due role in uprooting militancy from the country. They can also play a key role in raising awareness against drug abuse and malpractices in social media, he said.

Judith Herbertson, UK government's Department for International Development country representative in Bangladesh, said

youths are the "powerful agents" of bringing social changes. They have to be optimistic and take action collectively in solving various problems, said Herbertson.

Addressing as the chair of the inaugural session, Manusher Jonno Foundation Executive Director Shaheen Anam called upon youngsters to work for creating a society free of discrimination. "You have to be vocal against violence on women and children as well as resist it," she added.

Dipak Kumar Banik, organising secretary of Krishibid Institution Bangladesh, said in order to bring social changes, the country's young population need to take part in active politics.

Several hundred students from different educational institutions, including public and private universities, took part in yesterday's event, according to organisers.