Be careful of

'traitors and

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

yesterday urged all to be aware of traitors and killers so that they could

not play with the fate of Bangladesh

Mir Jafar and Khandaker Mushtaque

Ahmed were born on Bangladesh's soil time and again or killers like Zia

came [to power] again and again. So, it is the people of Bangladesh and our

young generation who will have to take

responsibility to make sure that none

can play ducks and drakes with the fate

organised by the Awami League

at the city's Krishibid Institution

Bangladesh, marking the Martyred

The PM was addressing a discussion,

of Bangladesh anymore," she said.

"We have seen that traitors like

killers': PM

UNB, Dhaka

anymore.

Perfect home for freedom fighters

Sharifunnessa tells how she helped fellow freedom fighters in her secluded house in Keraniganj



MOHAMMAD AL MASUM MOLLA

The tin shack was almost hidden behind a bush. A thick canopy of mango and coconut trees kept it under a blissful shade. Behind its backyard was a wide canal that separated it from the rest of the village.

It was a perfect place to sneak in and out of without being noticed.

In 1971, the shack in Ahadipur area of Dhaka's Keraniganj belonged to Mobarak Hossain, a respected village elder. It was just 15km away from the capital. But 48 years ago, when there was no proper road, the village was quite hard to reach.

During the Liberation War, this shack served as a hideout to many freedom

"My father was an avid supporter of the Awami League. This wasn't something one would openly brag about at the time. But our family was well respected. That's why we managed to support the freedom fighters almost throughout the war without anyone ratting us out to the Pakistan army," Mobarak's eldest daughter Sharifunnessa told The Daily Star at her home in Keraniganj.

A recognised freedom fighter, she was 19 during the Liberation War. She used to cook and arrange accommodation for the freedom fighters who stayed in their house while on the way to different areas of the country. She also used to hide the arms and ammunition the freedom fighters carried.

"One day, my father told me that some people would drop by and asked me to cook for them. I had no idea who was coming," she said.

The people who came to their house that night were war heroes Abdur Razzaq, Sirajul Alam Khan, Borhanuddin Gagan and Shahjahan Siraj. At the time, they were young politicians fighting for their country.

They slept there that night and left the next day. They were the first of many

the Citizenship Act, appealed for calm

and warned tough action against those

government says the he amended

citizenship law will save religious

minorities such as Hindus and

Christians from persecution in

neighbouring Bangladesh, Pakistan and

Afghanistan by offering them a path to

Indian citizenship. But critics say the

law, which does not make the same

provision for Muslims, weakens the

strike in Nagaland that crippled normal

life, the situation in northeastern states

yesterday remained largely peaceful

leading to easing of curfew in Guwahati

protests against the contentious law,

curfew was relaxed from 9:00 am to 4:00

pm local time, a police spokesperson

said. Schools and offices, however,

authorities extended an internet ban

across Assam till Monday. Most shops

(NSF) enforced a six-hour strike.

further

unrest,

remained shut.

Anticipating

Dividing India".

In Guwahati, which saw violent

and Shillong, Meghalaya state capital.

Barring a peaceful 10-hour flash

secular foundations of India.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's

indulging in violence.

Protests rage on for fourth day

Muslim

protest today.



travelling freedom fighters who would take refuge in their house.

"Since I had to take care of the arms

sometimes, the freedom fighters gave me a basic training on how to use short machineguns, throw cocktails and place landmines. My father also went on guerrilla operations. Some of my cousins joined the war too. I also wanted to go on operations. "But then I realised that what I was

I decided to fight the war from home. I hardly slept at night during those nine months. There were always some freedom fighters at our house." Their house had five rooms, four of which were used by the freedom fighters. Sharifunnessa and her three

doing at home was no less important.

younger brothers slept in one room. One of the rooms was used to keep the arms. She always kept the key to that room with her. One night, a freedom fighter by the name Omar came to their house. It was almost midnight and he looked very

pale and feeble because he hadn't eaten anything for 10 days, she said. The man asked her if she could cook him some rice. Sharifunnessa did and he ate like it was his last meal. Omar

"Since then, if anyone asks for food, I never turn them away."

was killed in a battle the next day, she

Freedom fighters around Dhaka knew the house very well.

One of them is Mostafa Mohsin Mintu, commander of the Dhaka District Liberation Force in 1971. He said that the contribution of Sharifunnessa's family was crucial.

"They sacrificed everything they had for us, for the country. They gave us their house. They gave us food. They didn't hesitate to risk their lives. Their house was one of the safest places in Dhaka district," said Mintu.

Sharifunnessa now lives with her children and grandchildren at her husband's ancestral home in Keraniganj

In India's most populous Uttar

(AMU),

Pradesh state, in the north of the

country, students at the Aligarh

prominent institution set up in 1920,

protested against the citizenship

law and were mobilising Muslims

via doorstep invitations for a bigger

other towns and cities of Uttar

Pradesh, including in the Hindu holy

city of Prayagraj, whose former name

Allahabad was changed by the state's

Hindu nationalist government in 2018.

summit between Modi and his Japanese

and Canada warned their nationals to

"exercise caution" if travelling to the

rights organisations say the law is a part

of Modi's Hindu nationalist agenda

to marginalise India's 200 million

from the three countries are not covered

by the legislation because they have no

He denies this and says that Muslims

Islamic groups, the opposition and

counterpart Shinzo Abe.

wider northeast region.

The protests has already postponed a

Yesterday, the United States, Britain

Protests were also staged in several

University



President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paying tributes at Martyred Intellectuals Memorial in the capital's Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: BSS

No strength left to seek justice

SI Jahid's mother convinced Momtaz to marry Jahid's younger brother. She married the man and left home around three years ago, leaving her two children.

"After this, her [Momtaz's] stance changed dramatically. A few months later, she told the court that SI Jahid was not involved in Sujan's murder but the court did not accept it as we also gave witness statements," said Md Shamim, elder brother of Sujan.

a stay on the trial proceedings, family and court sources said. Of the accused, only Jahid, who

petition with the High Court seeking

Later, SI Jahid's family filed a writ

was suspended and arrested in the case, is behind bars.

This correspondent did not find any contact number of Momtaz. Her current address also could not be

A CASE TOO PUZZLING

known.

On February 2 this year, police raided Shaheda's residence -- House-16, Road-9, Block-E, Mirpur-1.

A DB team received a secret information that some members of a drug syndicate were hiding at the house to sell yaba smuggled in through Teknaf, according to the case filed by DB SI Harun ur Rashid.

When the officers reached the spot, the case statement reads, seven to eight members of the syndicate tried to flee. Police arrested Shaheda along with four alleged yaba dealers -- Lokman Hossain, Md Ranju and two teens aged 13 and 14.

The case documents show that 8,000 pieces of yaba pills were seized from Lokman, Ranju and the teens in front of two local witnesses -- Rafigul Islam and Naju Mia -- and Assistant Sub-Inspector Jahangir

Alam. SI Md Eshak Ali investigated the case and submitted two separate charge sheets, including one for juvenile crime, before the court on April 28.

The complainant mentioned in usually remains closed. Her family the case that in front of the three witnesses he searched the bodies of the accused, recovered the yaba pills and made a seizure list. He then took signatures of the witnesses. But both the witnesses -- Rafiqul

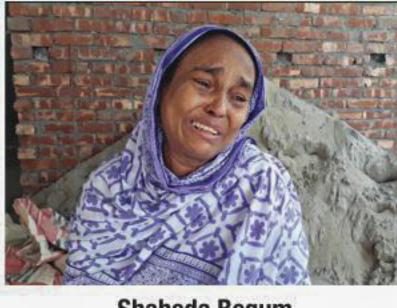
and Naju -- told this correspondent

a different story. While talking to

The Daily Star on September 18,

they opposed what police claimed in the case and charge sheet. "I did not see anything," said Rafiqul, a local trader.

He said he was having tea at a local stall and noticed a gathering near Shaheda's house.



Shaheda Begum

"As I went there, Siraj Daroga [SI Siraj of Shah Ali Police Station] who was known to me asked me to sign a paper. I could not turn down his request. Actually, I did not see anything at all."

Rafigul said police picked up Shaheda's son Sabuj from somewhere and brought him handcuffed near their home.

Naju Mia, a guard of a nearby under-construction building opposite Shaheda's house, said, "Police asked me to put my signature and I did it without knowing actually what was that."

rooftop on February 2 afternoon when he too saw police bring Sabuj handcuffed.

detained his mother, he said.

The one-storey building that

members and tenants need to open the padlock to go in and out. Naju said he did not see anyone coming out of Shaheda's house in

hours before Sabuj was brought handcuffed. A tenant of Shaheda's house echoed his view, saying they did not see anyone going out before the police raided the house in the

SI Siraj was recently transferred to the railway police, according to the duty officer of Shah Ali Police Station. His contact number was also not available. Contacted, DB SI Harun ur

afternoon.

Rashid, complainant of the case, said whatever the witnesses and he mentioned in the case is true. He claimed Sabuj was a yaba trader and the woman used to shelter the yaba dealers. Shaheda said her son Sabuj has

some addiction to yaba, but he was never an yaba dealer. There was no drug case filed against him, she added.

However, Sabuj was made an accused in an arms case filed by SI Jahid in 2013 and he secured bail, according to the family members. SI Md Eshak Ali also says he

stands by the case statement and that "criminals say a lot of things." POLICE 'TOOK AWAY TK 7.5 LAKH During the February 2 raid, police took away Tk 7.5 lakh breaking open the almirah of her room, alleged Shaheda and her family members.

But the amount was not mentioned in the seizure list, they

Shaheda said they got the money He said he was working on the by selling off 1.5-katha land in the city's Paikpara.

"I wanted to construct another floor in my building for the future Later, police freed Sabuj but of Sujan's two children. But it seems that's not to be," she said.

SI Harun denied that police took Shaheda owns has a steel gate which away Tk 7.5 lakh from the house.

Intellectuals Day. Hasina, also the AL president, said Ziaur Rahman had been involved in killings and conspiracy as he killed many army officers, including

freedom fighters, following a series of coup attempts. Zia had tried to erase the name of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from history,

she added. Mentioning that the 1974 famine was a man-made disaster, the premier said then food secretary Abdul Momen, who was later inducted into the cabinet of Ziaur Rahman, had played the biggest behind-the-scene role in the famine.

"Mushtaque had promoted Ziaur Rahman as the army chief as Zia was his most trusted person. Why would Mushtaque have made Zia the army chief if he was involved in the August 15 killing or its conspiracy?" she questioned.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

Nation observes the Martyred Intellectuals Day

UNB, Dhaka

The nation observed the Martyred Intellectuals' Day yesterday paying tributes to a galaxy of intellectuals systematically killed by Pakistani occupation forces and their local collaborators just before the end of the Liberation War.

On this day in 1971, some of the academicians, country's renowned journalists, engineers, artists, teachers and other eminent personalities were dragged out of their homes, blindfolded and taken to unknown places.

Their bodies were later found at Rayerbazar, Mirpur and some other killing fields in the capital.

Pakistani occupation forces and their local collaborators committed the coldblooded mass murder to cripple the emerging Bangladesh intellectually.

Among the martyred intellectuals are Prof Munier Chowdhury, Dr Alim Chowdhury, Prof Muniruzzaman, Dr Fazle Rabbi, Sirajuddin Hossain, Shahidullah Kaiser, Prof GC Dev, JC Guha Thakurta, Prof Santosh Haider Bhattacharya, Mofazzal Chowdhury, journalists Khandaker Abu Taleb, Nizamuddin Ahmed, SA Mannan, ANM Golam Mustafa, Syed

Nazmul Haq and Selina Parvin. The government, socio-cultural, political organisations and different public universities observed the day

with elaborate programmes. President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid tributes to the martyred intellectuals on the occasion of the Martyred Intellectuals

First the President and then the Prime Minister placed wreath at the Martyred Intellectuals Memorial in Mirpur.

were shut and anxious residents were need of India's protection. seen stocking up supplies yesterday. Assam has long been a hotbed of Schools and colleges in Nagaland ethnic tensions. In 1983 some 2,000 remained closed and markets were shut people, mainly Bengali Muslims, were and most vehicles remained off the butchered in what became known as roads as the Naga Students' Federation the Nellie massacre.

Muslims.

This year a citizenship registry left Several thousand protesters rallied in off 1.9 million people -- many of them the capital New Delhi yesterday evening, Muslims -- unable to prove that they or urging Modi's government to revoke the their forebears were in Assam before law, some holding signs reading: "Stop 1971, leaving them to face possible statelessness.

Dhaka, Ctg victorious

Kesrick Williams scalped two wickets in to bat and Tamim Iqbal (31) but the pick of Chattogram's bowlers was skipper Mahmudllah Riyad, who gave away just 17 runs in exchange for one wicket in his four overs.

After the exchange, a 34-ball halfcentury from Chadwick Walton and 27-ball 33 from Avishka Fernando got Chattogram going before Imrul Kayes took them across the line with 10 balls to spare with a 33-ball 44.

Later in the day, Sylhet sent Dhaka strung together an 85-run opening stand with Anamul Haque, who scored a 42-ball 62 with the help of five boundaries to make up for a duck in his last outing.

Laurie Evans added a run-a-ball 21 before Jaker Ali, Thisara Perera and Wahab Riaz finished with a flourish and smashed two sixes each. Jaker made 20 off 12 while Perera

scored 22 off 11 and Riaz made 17 off just 7.

Sylhet crumbled in reply, but were still in with a shout as skipper Mosaddek Hossain battled on. However, he could not get the job done and was unbeaten on a 44-ball 60 that featured four boundaries and two sixes as Sylhet reached 158 for seven.

Dhaka captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza took two scalps, as did Hasan Mahmud.

After placing the wreath, both stood in solemn silence as a mark of profound respect to the memories of the illustrious sons of the soil.

A contingent of Bangladesh Armed Forces gave a state salute while the bugle played the last post at that time.

Family members of the martyred, freedom fighters and people from all walks of life paid tributes to the martyred intellectuals by placing wreaths at the memorial in Mirpur and Rayerbazar Killing Ground in Mohammadpur.

On this day in 1971

advance towards Dhaka from Savar in the night. Kaderia Bahini join them on the way. They confront the Pakistan troops at the Mirpur Bridge. The allied force conduct a commando style attack in the first phase. Pakistan troops keep firing from the other side of the bridge. Another group of the allied force attack them from the west bank. A ferocious fight take place all day long. In the battlefield of Chittagong,

Muktibahini free few more regions south to Kumira. In the evening, the freedom fighters attack Vatiari, the first protective defence region of Chittagong city. The skirmish spread out till Fauzdarhat. The allied force advance towards Rangpur.

They cordon the town. They schedule to attack the Rangpur cantonment the next day. But that was not necessary as the Pakistan troops already surrendered. The allied force attack on Kamarkhali

Pakistan army base in Faridpur region. The military start to retreat towards Faridpur town. The allied force chase and corner them. The military, led by a Pakistani major general, eventually surrender.

Dr Alim Chowdhury is an eye specialist. He takes life risks to help the freedom fighters. Al-Badr assassins brutally gouge his eyes and kill him. Maolana Mannan, who used to live at Alim's residence, helped the collaborators to catch Alim.

Indian fighter jets seen in the sky of Dhaka. Governor Malik with his cabinet and military advisors are busy in a meeting in the Governor House. The jets drop bombs on it. Malik runs into a trench to take shelter. General Manekshaw advises the Pakistan

commanders for the final round, saying, "This is the last time; any more attempt of resistance will be meaningless. Dhaka garrison is absolutely under our artillery range." Pakistani troops start surrendering

their weapons in the battlefields. Pakistani division and brigade HQ in Bogra fall within the afternoon. 1,700 Pakistani personnel surrender. The allied force recover huge amount of arms and ammunition.

Captain Mohiuddin Jahangir escapes from Pakistan and joins the Liberation War at sector 7. He takes a bullet in his head while crossing the Mahananda River in Chapainawabganj during an operation. He was posthumously awarded the title 'Birsrestha' after independence by the Bangladesh government.



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