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Your Right to Know

PLUS 16 PAGES TABLOID SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT ON VICTORY DAY
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VICTORY DAY TODAY

Blood, sweat, tears

The Liberation War and victory in the eyes of a bishop whose newsletter from Dhaka comes to light after decades



A pre-Liberation War photo of the Saint Thomas Cathedral on the capital's Johnson Road, where Bishop James Blair was posted.

PHOTO COURTESY:
NATHANIL NOTON HALDER



TAMANNA KHAN and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

"...Then after dark, a tentative 'Joy Bangla' in the back streets. Older men came out and persuaded the lads back into their homes; 'there is still a curfew'. Then a more determined 'Joy Bangla'. The Mukti Bahini had taken over the streets. They tried to keep the shouting to the back streets. But they could not do it for long, and soon all the city was ringing with it. 'Joy Bangla!'"

This is how Bishop James D Blair captured the nerve-racking moments leading to the Pakistan army's surrender to the joint command of Bangladesh

and Indian forces on December 16, 1971.

The description appears in a six-page newsletter by the Bishop of Dhaka Diocese of the then Church of Pakistan for the Anglican Christians of East Bengal. It was penned between December 1971 and January 1972, and a copy was sent to the UK.

Forty-seven years later, the newsletter came back in the form of an email to the land it originated from with eyewitness accounts of the most crucial period in Bangladesh's history.

Written in a personal manner, the newsletter described Bishop's attempts to visit different churches under his diocese (an area under a bishop) immediately after December 16. He also summarised the news he received from different parts of the country during the war.

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SPECIAL VICTORY DAY SUPPLEMENT INSIDE

Of bravery, of Betiara

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

It was a cold winter night. Some 75 freedom fighters were deftly making their way in a quiet village called Betiara; only the whooshing sound of breeze blowing through bamboo bushes and trees and the chirping of insects were disturbing the eerie silence.

With heavy arms and ammunition on their back, they were walking in single file, on narrow ridges of paddy fields and rutted paths. Hours before, they had entered Bangladesh through India's Bhairab Tilla border after finishing months-long guerrilla training.

Around 10:30pm, the fighters reached near Dhaka-Chattogram highway. Some of them started to cross the highway

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Another factory fire, 10 killed in Gazipur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

At least 10 workers were killed and two others suffered burns after a fire broke out at an electric fan and light bulb factory in Gazipur yesterday evening.

Firefighters recovered the charred bodies after dousing the fire on the top floor of the three-storey Luxury Fan and Light factory in Keshorita area of the city, said Mamunur Rashid, deputy assistant director of Fire Service and Civil Defence.

Traumatized family members primarily identified Rashed, 25, Shamim, 26, Faridul Islam, 18, and Uttam, 25, among the burnt bodies, a firefighter said.

Firefighters with four fire engines doused the fire around 7:30pm, over an hour after the fire broke out, he said.

The cause of the fire remains unknown, Mamunur said.

The district administration and police



would hand the bodies to the families after DNA tests, he said.

The tragedy strikes only four days after a deadly fire at a plastic factory in Keraniganj left 19 workers dead.

The Gazipur factory was housed at a building not meant for industrial use. Located in a residential area, it had only

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Govt publishes list of Razakars

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has published the names of 10,789 Razakars who collaborated with the Pakistan occupation army in carrying out mass killings and atrocities against the Bangladeshis during the 1971 Liberation War.

This is the first time the government has made public such a list since the country's independence. It includes at least 127 politicians and influential people, many of whom fled the country immediately after the war.

They include convicted war criminal and former Jamaat-e-Islami ameer Ghulam Azam, Muslim League (convention) leader Fazlul Quader Chowdhury, Muslim League leader Khan A Sabur and Muslim League (convention) leader Khwaja Khairuddin.

Ex-Bangladesh prime minister (April, 1979 to March, 1982) Shah Azizur Rahman, the then Chakma Circle chief Raja Tridiv Roy, BNP leader Julmat Ali Khan and Jamaat leader Moulana Abdus Sobhan are also on the list.

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On this day in 1971

DECEMBER 16

According to the order of General AAK Niazi, Pakistan troops start surrendering weapons from 5:00am.

At around 8:00am, General Niazi requests Indian army chief to

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