

# Efforts on to bring back fugitives

FROM PAGE 1  
"I hope we will be able to bring back at least one fugitive killer within the Mujib Borsho," Foreign minister AK Abdul Momen told journalists on August 7.

Abdul Majed, a self-confessed killer who had long been hiding abroad, was hanged on April 12 this year while five other convicts -- Syed Farooq Rahman, Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, Bazlul Huda, AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed and Mohiuddin Ahmed -- were executed on January 28, 2010.

Convicted killer Aziz Pasha died in Zimbabwe in 2001.

The five fugitives are Col (dismissed) Khandaker Abdul Rashid, Lt Col (relieved) Shariful Haque Dalim, Maj (ret'd) Nur Chowdhury, Maj (ret'd) Rashed Chowdhury and Risaldar Moslehuddin Khan.

Nur Chowdhury is in Canada and Rashed Chowdhury in the US.

The US government recently reopened a case against Rashed, signalling that he could face deportation and death sentence, according to a Politico magazine report.

Amid these developments, the nation today will observe the National Mourning Day and pay tribute to Bangabandhu and his family members brutally murdered on this day in 1975.

Contacted for details about the case against Rashed in the US, Law Minister Anisul Huq and Foreign Minister Abdul Momen refrained from making any comment to this newspaper.

"I don't know about this [case against Rashed in the US]. I have read reports about it in newspapers. I am observing it now," the law minister told The Daily Star on August 12 over the phone.

On April 12, he told the media, "Once again, I am promising in the Mujib Borsho that the government will bring all the fugitive killers back from abroad and execute their death sentence."

This correspondent contacted Momen over the phone on August 11, to know the progress in bringing other fugitive killers back to the country. But he refused to give any details, saying he is making statements on this issue every day.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam, a member of the taskforce formed to bring back the fugitives, told this correspondent on August 12 that he did not know about the case proceedings against Rashed in the US.

He said the foreign ministry can provide details about this issue.

"If the US deports Rashed Chowdhury to Bangladesh we will feel that the US believes in the rule of law and we will be happy," he added.

**WHAT POLITICO SAYS**  
US Attorney General William Barr has reopened a sprawling case against Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's fugitive killer Rashed Chowdhury, signalling that he could face deportation and death sentence, the US magazine reported on July 24.

Bangladesh Supreme Court upheld the High Court verdict that had given death sentences to 12 killers of Bangabandhu, including Rashed, in 2009. Rashed and his family went to the US in 1996 from Brazil on visitor visas and later got political asylum.

The Bangladesh government has been demanding that the US send back the convicted killer for many years to implement the court verdict.

The Politico, in the report titled "He thought he had asylum. Now, he could face a death sentence" said Attorney General William Barr quietly reopened the case that spans four decades and two continents.

It involves the killing of a president, a decades-old death sentence and a hard-fought battle for asylum pitting a former Bangladesh military officer against the US Department of Homeland Security.

"For almost 15 years, the case was closed. But now, thanks to Barr, it's back. And immigration lawyers say the move sends a chilling message to people who have received asylum in the US. It signals, they argue, that even after years of successful legal battles, any protection could still be revoked out of the blue," Politico reports.

They also say the move's timing is inscrutable.  
"It's purely a favour the Trump

administration is doing for Bangladesh," said Marc Van Der Hout, a lawyer for Rashed Chowdhury.

The Bangladesh government has for years been open about its efforts to persuade the US to extradite Rashed -- whom it calls a cold-blooded assassin, it said.

"For years, the effort bore no fruit. But under the Trump administration, the government of Bangladesh has sounded optimistic notes," the report said.

Last November, Bangladesh's foreign minister said a senior US diplomat -- Alice Wells, a career official who has since left government -- asked him for documents related to Rashed's trial so the US could review them.

In April this year, the foreign minister reportedly pressed the US ambassador in Dhaka, Earl Miller, on the case against Rashed.

And, on June 17, Barr directed the Board of Immigration Appeals to send Rashed's case to him for review -- making clear he would reopen the matter that had been decided more than a decade earlier.

The document in which the attorney general made this move doesn't mention Rashed. But it refers to "the matter of A-M-R-C," using his full initials. And the details of the case described in Barr's announcement match Rashed's.

Politico wrote that a spokesperson for the Bangladeshi embassy declined to comment for this story. A US Department of Justice (DOJ) spokesperson also declined to comment, noting the department does not confirm the identities of people in such proceedings.

A lawyer for Rashed, however, shared DOJ communications with Politico confirming that his is the case Barr reopened. Barr's move is the first step in a process that could result in Rashed losing asylum after more than a decade and potentially facing deportation, it says.

**STATUS OF NUR**  
In September last year, the Federal Court of Canada in a judgement said Bangladesh's application for information about the status of Bangabandhu's killer Nur Chowdhury is valid and the disclosure of such information would not hamper the public interest.

This verdict is one step forward for Bangladesh High Commission in Canada to get pre-removal risk assessment (PRRA) information from the Canadian government. Judge James W O'Reilly delivered the judgment.

Nur and his wife were reportedly granted visitor status in Canada in 1996. Later, they applied for refugee protection.

In 2002, Nur and his wife were found to be excluded from refugee protection for having committed a serious non-political crime. Then, they were found to be inadmissible to Canada for serious criminality in 2006. In 2009, Nur requested a PRRA.

The Bangladesh government has been in discussions with Canadian officials about Nur's status and has expressed concern about the delay relating to his PRRA application since 2010.

In 2018, the high commissioner of Bangladesh to Canada wrote to the minister of immigration, refugees and citizenship requesting to disclose, in the public interest, information about the status of Nur's PRRA application and immigration status in Canada.

But the minister refused to do that saying that there was no information-sharing agreement between the two countries.

Bangladesh sought judicial review of the minister's decision to disclose the status of Nur's PRRA application. In response, the Canadian minister as well as Nur said Bangladesh's request was premature and non-judicial.

But the justice rejected Nur and the Canadian minister's claim in the verdict.

"In my view, Bangladesh's application for judicial review should be allowed because the minister failed to give serious consideration to the public interest that would be served if the information sought were disclosed," the justice said in the observation of the verdict.

# Working to ensure justice

FROM PAGE 1  
organised the programme marking the National Mourning Day today.

The PM recalled that seeking justice for the killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was barred through enacting the infamous indemnity ordinance.

She said some derailed junior officers, along with some high-ranking army personnel, were involved in the August 15, 1975 massacre that left the Father of the Nation and most of his family members dead.

Hasina said Bangabandhu's military secretary Colonel Jamil Uddin Ahmad was a member of the army and her brother Lieutenant Sheikh Jamal was a serving officer of the army. Both were killed brutally.

She mentioned that her younger brother Sheikh Russell was only 10 years old at that time. His dream was to join the army.

"But the cruelty of the fate is he [Russell] was killed brutally by army members. What was his guilt? I'm still looking for the answer."

Elaborating the August 15 killing, the PM said the greatest Bangalee of all times Bangabandhu, Bangamata Fazilatunnesa, and most of their family members were killed.

Hasina said her younger sister and she herself could not file a case against the killers and even could not demand justice.

**'MATERIALIZING BANGABANDHU'S DREAMS'**

The premier pledged to stay beside those, including orphans and distressed

children, who are left behind to make sure their life is meaningful.

She called upon all concerned to work with honesty, dedication, and integrity to this end.

She said the government was working round the clock for the welfare of the people of all sections to materialise the dreams of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The PM also urged all to stand beside the people like orphans, elderly citizens, autistic and especially abused persons as well as beside those who are still left behind.

Describing the steps taken by her government for the welfare of the orphans, she said various training and vocational education programmes have been taken up so that they can stand on their own feet.

She clarified that orphans should not think like they do not have parents or guardians, rather the government stands by them to ensure their better livelihood.

In this regard, Hasina mentioned about the previously introduced "Shanti Nibash" for the aged people, saying this project would be reintroduced in future.

Social Welfare Minister Nuruzzaman Ahmed also spoke on the occasion. State Minister for Social Welfare Ashraf Ali Khan and senior officials of the social welfare ministry and its various departments were present.

Ahead of the National Mourning Day today, a special munaajat was offered seeking eternal peace of the departed souls of Bangabandhu and his other family members.



# The man, the murder and his destiny

FROM PAGE 1  
In between, he spent nearly 13 years in jail, which amounted to almost one-third of his adult political life. To think that he organised, prepared and led his people to an armed struggle within a period of only two decades is nothing short of a miracle of achievement for any leader anywhere.

It is quite amazing how from the start he evolved into a people's man.

Public concerns always seemed to attract him. He almost instinctively converted what would start off as a demand of this or that group into his own, and within no time was able to bring all the votaries together and guide them to do something about it -- be it a matter pertaining to his school, his local football club and the like.

His taking charge of a situation came naturally and given his personality he would in no time become the central figure of any situation. What attracted others towards him was his dependability. He would not take up a cause today and forget about it tomorrow. If he made a commitment he would honour it. Along with dependability came the question of trust. He exuded trust because of his nature. Young boys who would gather around him, and later in life when people would flock to him, one of the main reasons would be the trust factor -- they could always count on him.

It was not in the birth of Pakistan -- in the struggle for which he was intimately involved both from his home town and in British Calcutta -- that he found his calling. It was in the gradual unfolding of the reality within which the Bangalees in East Pakistan lived and his intimate exposure to the oppressions they suffered that would strike a deep cord with his inner feelings thus transforming him from within.

The rights of the class-IV employees of Dhaka University, the founding of the Awami Muslim League, the Jinnah's speech triggering students and public outrage ("Urdu shall be the only state language of Pakistan"), the language movement and the wider issues of cultural identity, democratic rights, the fact of no election being held in the new state, military takeover and marginalisation of politicians and the throttling of almost all major dissenting voices transformed the young supporter of Pakistan of the early and mid-40s into the budding Bangalee nationalist of the late forties and early fifties. It was during this time that he came to instinctively feel that the ultimate solution of a separate country may be the only way for the true emancipation of his people.

The early, clear and powerful articulation of the aspirations of the people of East Pakistan came in the form of Ekush Dafa (21-point programme), the election manifesto of the Jukta Front (United Front) in 1954. The significance of this political programme is that it came within less than nine years of the formation of the new country.

It galvanised the people of the eastern wing and literally led to the obliteration of the Muslim League as

a political party. Seldom the founding party of a newly formed state faced such a massive rejection by the people in so short a time. Writings were clearly on the wall only if anybody bothered to read it. This was especially significant considering that it was the Muslims of Bengal that gave the Pakistan movement its crucial and timely support and consequent credibility.

The coup by Gen Ayub in 1958 and the subsequent 10 years of military rule was the time of the real emergence of the steely, visionary and widely loved leader. His repeated internment, introspection and intellectual maturing while in prison, not to mention the hardening of his core beliefs and developing of his inner strength and the gradual clearing of mind as to steps to be taken next, led to what was his most brilliant move of introducing the famous six-points at the Roundtable meeting convened by dictator Ayub in Lahore.

The beauty of the programme was that it was simple, to the point and incorporated all the important demands of the people. In a short time, it caught the imagination of the people especially when the Pakistani rulers termed it as a secessionist ploy to destroy Pakistan.

What followed in the form of "Agartala Conspiracy Case" turned out to be a classic instance of political miscalculation and a Himalayan blunder. Gen Ayub's plan was to convict Sheikh Mujib of trying to break up Pakistan with India's help, thinking that such a case and its daily one-sided coverage in the pro-regime Pakistani media would distance Mujib from his people. We must remember that radio and TV were state monopolies then.

Here was the "trust factor" in magnificent display. Because people trusted Sheikh Mujib the exact opposite happened to what the military-bureaucratic rulers of Pakistan had expected. Instead of distancing, it galvanised the people behind him and skyrocketed his already huge popularity, firming his grip on public mind, and he, almost overnight, flowered into the Bangabandhu, the idol of his people.

The Pakistani genocide, Bangabandhu's confinement in Pakistani jail, our valiant freedom struggle, the resultant devastation of our country and its people, 30 million refugees in India, the Indian assistance, particularly the brilliant role played by Indira Gandhi, and our independence and complete victory over all odds, international support, and Sheikh Mujib's return at the helm of Bangladesh is well known to be repeated at some length here.

Bangabandhu's spell as the head of the government from January, 1972, onwards spawned many critics. When euphoria of just-earned freedom gave away to the harsh realities of a war-ravaged country, coupled with corruption (Bangabandhu's cry to reign in the "Chatar Dal", the blood suckers of the people) an element of disappointment started to creep in. This added with the post-draught famine of 1974, mis-governance

and the turning of the country into a one-party state gave credence to those who worried about the country's democratic future.

But no failure of the government justified, in the remotest of sense, the nightmare that befell the nation with the brutal murder of Bangabandhu and his family, save his two daughters -- Sheikh Hasina, the present prime minister and Sheikh Rehana -- on the night of August 15, 1975, that we observe today.

Those of us who heard the boastful cries on Bangladesh radio that "Sheikh Mujib ke hattya kora hoyechhey" on August 16 morning, 1975, cannot still believe our ears that such a fate could have befallen a leader but for whose work our independence would not have come when it did.

In paraphrasing Churchill's tribute to the Royal Air Force that "Never in human history was so much owed by so many to so few" we can say that seldom in human history was so much owed by so many to one individual.

In my humble view, it would not be an exaggeration to say that Sheikh Mujib was not only the leader of our independence struggle, he was the conceiver, the designer, the planner, the energiser and the supreme visionary of it all. It is only the people of Bangladesh who have played a greater role, with the wholehearted involvement of the youth. There would not have been an independent Bangladesh in 1971 without the role of that single individual we lovingly call Bangabandhu.

So the question is why was he killed along with so many members of his family, and in such a brutal fashion that stupefies all civilised sensibilities. What was his crime? Was his leading us to create an independent Bangladesh the crime for which he was so brutally taken away from us? I cannot find any other reason but this. Those who killed him wanted to destroy Bangladesh. Let us have no doubts about that.

As we commemorate Bangabandhu's 45th death anniversary we must strengthen our resolve to build the Sonar Bangla of his dreams, our dreams and one that we have pledged to our martyrs.

But what is that Sonar Bangla? In economic terms we have a come a long way. But our Sonar Bangla is that of freedom, of equality, or cultural flourishing, of human rights, of dignity of individual and groups, and above all, of democracy.

We do disservice to the memory of our Founding Father when we create the artificial democracy vs development debate. Development does not come in the absence of democracy because development is not just building roads, bridges and power plants etc. but of people's capacity to maintain their freedom and independence through self-reliance and self-confidence which comes from a sustained human development which is the only and real measure of development.

To building that Sonar Bangla let us dedicate ourselves in the centenary year of Bangabandhu's birth and on the 45th anniversary of his martyrdom.

# Covid-infected nurse attending patients 'under pressure' from authorities

*Lalmonirhat Sadar hospital superintendent claims to be unaware of the matter*

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

As bizarre as it may sound, a Covid positive nurse has been discharging duties at the children ward of Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital for about a week allegedly due to the pressure from the hospital authorities.

Shamin Afroz, a senior assistant nurse at the hospital, tested positive on August 2. She remained at home until August 8, but had to join the hospital on August 9 "as the authorities insisted." Shamin said she still had fever, sneeze and cough.

"Right now, I need to take rest at home and get treatment, but under the pressure from the authorities, I have to come to my duty regularly," she said.

Attendants who came to know about her infection have already had their patients released from the hospital.

Mominul Islam, a father who had his child admitted to the hospital on August 7.

He got to know about the nurse's infection on August 9 and took her child out of the hospital without informing the authorities.

"It is very risky to treat a child at a hospital ward where a nurse has been infected with coronavirus," Mominul told The Daily Star.

Contacted, the hospital's Superintendent Sirajul Islam said he did not know about the matter.

"Action would be taken against those who allowed the nurse to discharge her duty," he said.

Lalmonirhat Civil Surgeon Nirmalendu Roy said it could not be accepted at all.

He said he would take immediate action in this regard, he said.

# Youth arrested for raping two students

STAR REPORT

Police yesterday arrested a youth for his alleged involvement in the gang-rape of two female students in Pirojpur's Mathbaria upazila.

The arrestee is Abu Bakar Sagar, 20, of the upazila's Uttar Mithakhali village, said police.

AJM Masuduzzaman, officer-in-charge of Mathbaria Police Station, said the girls, along with their two male classmates, went to a college in Banna upazila to submit papers for their admission.

On their way back to home, they planned to visit Hoirinpala Eco Park in Bhandaria upazila. A battery-run three-wheeler, by which they were going to the Eco Park, got damaged on their way.

A group of youths then abducted the girls, took them to a nearby isolated place, and raped them. The miscreants also demanded Tk 15,000 ransom from the girls' relatives.

On information, police recovered the girls from the spot but the criminals managed to flee the scene.

Later, police arrested Sagar in Charkhali area of Pirojpur's Bhandaria upazila early yesterday.

The girls' paternal grandfathers filed a case accusing four named and three unnamed youths under the Woman and Child Repression Prevention Act.

"We have sent the victims to Pirojpur civil surgeon's office for their medical tests," said the OC.

# Infection rate

FROM PAGE 1  
coronavirus tests and new cases were higher in the first half of the 30 days than the last.

Between July 16 and July 30, the total number of new cases was 41,299 while the number of total tests was 183,793.

Between July 31 and yesterday, the total number of new cases dropped to 36,992 whereas the total number of tests to 164,562.

In the last 30 days, a total of 1,134 people died of the virus infection and 51,600 people recovered.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), a total of 2,766 people tested positive for Covid-19 in 24 hours between Thursday and yesterday.

With the fresh cases, the total number of positive cases so far in the country stands at 271,881 and the infection rate is 21.52 percent.

Meanwhile, 34 more people died from Covid-19 in the country in those 24 hours. The total number of deaths has now reached 3,591 and the overall death rate stands at 1.32 percent.

Among the dead, 28 were male and six were female.

Two of them aged between 31 and 40, four between 41 and 50, six between 51 and 60 and 22 were above 60 years.

A total of 12,856 samples were tested in 86 labs across the country in those 24 hours.

Meanwhile, 1,752 Covid-19 patients have recovered in those 24 hours.

The total number of recoveries stands at 156,623 and the recovery rate at 57.61 percent.

Seven hundred and thirty-nine people were put under isolation in those 24 hours, said a DGHS press release.