



# The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



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## An attack on free speech, secularism

*A tribunal observes about Ansarullah Bangla Team's violent campaign; 8 given death sentence for Dipan murder*

**"Those who can kill people for publishing books are the enemy of the state and the society."**

JUDGE MD MAJIBUR RAHMAN OF THE ANTI-TERRORISM SPECIAL TRIBUNAL



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"Banned militant outfit Ansar al Islam, also known as Ansarullah Bangla Team, waged jihad against bloggers, writers, and publishers to muzzle public voice, violate people's right to freedom of expression and destroy the secular harmony of the nation."

Judge Md Majibur Rahman of the Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal made the observation yesterday while handing capital punishment to eight ABT men for murdering publisher Faisal Arefin Dipan on October 31, 2015.

"Dipan, owner and publisher of Jagriti Prokashoni, was killed because he published a book by [slain] blogger Avijit Roy," the court said, adding, "Those who can kill people for publishing books are the enemy of the state and the society."

Forty-three-year-old Dipan was hacked to death at his office inside Aziz Super Market in the capital's Shahbagh area. The back of his neck and head was stabbed haphazardly by militants, who left him to bleed to death by locking his office from outside after the attack.

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Razia Rahman, left, the wife of slain publisher Faisal Arefin Dipan, breaks down in tears as a family member tries to console her after a Dhaka court yesterday sentenced eight militants to death for killing Dipan in 2015.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



**THANK YOU**

It has been our custom to thank our readers, patrons, advertisers and well-wishers on every anniversary since we began our journey in 1991. Today, on the occasion of our 30th anniversary I do the same, on behalf of our board of directors and every member of The Daily Star family. We remain grateful to each and every one of you for the enormous support and

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### BLOGGER-WRITER KILLINGS

## Wait now is for verdict in 6 other cases

SHARIFUL ISLAM and EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

Six other cases filed over the killings of secular bloggers, writers and LGBT rights activists are either awaiting verdict or under trial.

A Dhaka court set February 16 for delivering the judgment for the murder of blogger and writer Avijit Roy in February 2015.

The trials are ongoing in the cases filed for the murder of bloggers Oyashiqur Rahman Babu, Ananta Bijoy Das and Niladri Chattopadhyay Niloy, secular activist Nazim Uddin Samad and LGBT rights activists Xulhaz Mannan and his friend Mahub Tonoy.

Police have already submitted charge sheets in those cases against banned militant outfit Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT), which is also known as Ansar Al

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### MASS VACCINATION DRIVE

## Govt to engage pvt hospitals

*1,58,451 more, including eminent personalities, foreign diplomats take jabs*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is taking steps to engage the private healthcare sector in the mass Covid-19 vaccination campaign, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said yesterday.

He made the comment when the mass inoculation against Covid-19 gained momentum for the fourth consecutive day yesterday.

"We are taking steps to engage the private healthcare sector in the vaccine campaign. We will seek the prime minister's permission to allow them through due process," Zahid said.

He was addressing an event titled "National Covid-19 Vaccination Campaign: Involvement of the Private Health Sector" organised by Bangladesh Private Medical College Association in a city hotel.

Talking about the ongoing vaccination, he claimed that Bangladesh is among the first six countries in the world to have started the mass vaccine inoculation.

Praising the private health sector in fighting Covid-19, the minister said this sector would also be allowed to be engaged in the vaccination soon.

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## Sikder Group chief Zainul Haque Sikder no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Zainul Haque Sikder,

chairman of the renowned Sikder Group of Companies, passed away early yesterday in a hospital in Dubai, said a press release of the company.

He was 91. Sikder was suffering from heart complications and the Covid-19 infection, Syed Qamrul Islam, chief operating officer of Sikder Group, told The Daily Star over phone yesterday.

He was undergoing treatment at the Saudi-German Hospital in Dubai.

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### STRIPPING ZIA OF BIR UTTAM

## 'We will now look into the legal aspects'

*Says Muktijoddha Council*

RASHIDUL HASAN

A probe body of Jatiya Muktijoddha Council will meet soon to look into the legal aspects of revoking gallantry awards given to late president Ziaur Rahman and killers of Bangabandhu and their patrons.

The council at a meeting on Tuesday decided in principle to revoke the gallantry awards of Zia and four self-declared killers of Bangabandhu: Shariful Haq Dalim, Nur Chowdhury, Rashed Chowdhury, and Mosleh Uddin.

Zia, the four others, and their families would not get any state facilities or benefits for their role in the country's Liberation War, the council decided.

Zia is the founder of the BNP. He was awarded the Bir Uttam title for his role in the Liberation War. He was commander of one of the 11 sectors of the Liberation War.

Presided over by Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque, also chairman of the council, the meeting formed the probe body with Awami League MP Eng Mosharraf Hossain as its chief.

Minister Mozammel yesterday told reporters that the probe committee was also tasked with finding out how the names of Zia and the four killers of Bangabandhu

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On the occasion of The Daily Star's 30th anniversary, we are pleased to present to our readers the first of a five-part 184-page special supplement series beginning today.

The first part of the series titled "FROM CHALLENGED BEGINNINGS TO STANDING TALL" which is out today, features a collection of articles on the many economic and social achievements of Bangladesh in the last 50 years, as well as the challenges that still lie ahead.

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