

## Lt Col Qadir's anniversary of death today

CITY DESK

Today is the 50th death anniversary of valiant freedom fighter and intellectual Lt Col Muhammad Abdul Qadir.



On this day in 1971, he was killed by the Pakistan army, says a press release.

Qadirabad Cantonment in Natore was named after him for his contributions to the 1971 Liberation War.

The government this year listed him as a martyred intellectual. A few years ago, a postal stamp was also issued recognising him as one of the martyred intellectuals.

Qadir's grave was found in 2007 and he was reburied with full state and military honour at Qadirabad Cantonment in 2011.

He is the father of journalist Nadeem Qadir, currently the editor-in-charge of The Asian Age.

His family urged all to pray for the eternal peace of the departed soul.

## Mobarok Hossain passes away

CITY DESK

Mobarok Hossain Chowdhury (Samir), former general manager of BASIC Bank, passed away on April 9.



He was also secretary of Gulshan Azad Mosque and former treasurer of Gulshan Society, said a press release.

Mobarok, a philanthropist, was involved with various charitable organisations.

He was also an avid traveller. All are requested to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

## Nine years

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Ilias' wife Tahmina Rushdir Luna on April 19, 2019 had filed a writ petition with the High Court claiming that law enforcers illegally kept her husband detained. She sought HC orders on them to produce her husband before it.

Following the writ petition, the HC issued a rule upon law enforcement agencies to explain within 10 days why they should not be directed to produce Ilias before it or prove that he was not detained by them.

The HC is yet to start holding hearing on the rule as neither the petitioner nor the state has taken any initiative in this regard and therefore, the matter remains unresolved.

However, five law enforcement agencies submitted reports to the HC claiming that Ilias was not in their custody since they did not pick up or detain him, said sources at the attorney general's office.

The reports, prepared by the offices of the inspector general of police (IGP), Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Special Branch (SB) and Banani Police Station, claimed that they were making all kinds of efforts to find Ilias.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Tahmina's lawyer AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon yesterday said he did not take any initiative to hold hearing on the HC rule considering that his client would not have a remedy as the law enforcement agencies told the court that they did not detain Ilias.

"If we take an initiative for holding hearing on the rule, law enforcers will tell the court that they have not detained Ilias Ali," he said.

Khokon, also a joint secretary general of BNP and a former lawmaker, said family members of Ilias and Ansar have been waiting anxiously for their return home.

There are no programmes now from the BNP regarding this issue, he added.

Contacted, Attorney General AM Amin Uddin refused to make any comment.

"I don't know anything about the case [writ petition] involving Ilias Ali. I was not the attorney general when the case was filed. Therefore, I cannot make any comment on this issue," he said.

## Mujibnagar government sworn in

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appealed for recognition by foreign powers.

Nazrul Islam told a crowd of applauding Bangalees that he was proclaiming the independent Democratic Republic of Bangladesh on behalf of its leader, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The Indian authorities played a major part in the ceremony, and a contingent of Indian troops was on hand just across the frontier.

The troops of Pakistan's central Government were but 30 miles away. YAHYA'S LETTER TO NIXON

In a letter dated April 17, 1971, Pakistan President Yahya Khan expressed his gratitude to US President Richard Nixon for the US government's unconditional support to the East Pakistan crisis. He wrote, "I am deeply gratified that your Government has made it clear, to all those who have raised the question, that the United States recognises the current events in East Pakistan as an internal affair, for whose solution the responsibility rests with the Government of Pakistan."

Yahya further informed that the process of transferring power to the

lected representatives would be resumed soon.

**HOURS OF TERROR FOR A TRAPPED BANGALEE OFFICER**

The New York Times today published the following account of a Bangalee army officer, pseudonym Dabir, who escaped brutal killing of Bangalee military men in Comilla Cantonment: On the night of March 25 Dabir recalls, he and the two other Bengali officers in the 53d Field Artillery Regiment were standing outside when they heard their commander tell the West Pakistani officers he had summoned to his office: "All of you go now to the city, and by morning I want to see the whole of Comilla filled with corpses. If any officer hesitates to do so I'll have no mercy on him."

The three unarmed Bangalee officers were called in and placed under what amounted to house arrest although the commander said they were being given office duties. During the next three days as Dabir and the two others, both captains, answered telephones and shuffled papers under the watch of sentries they heard the sounds of machine gun, small arms and artillery fire in the distance.

Through a window they saw the 60 Bangalee soldiers of the regiment being taken behind a building, their hands in the air, by West Pakistani troops. Then the three heard a sustained burst of firing and assumed that the Bangalees had been killed.

All pretense was dropped on March 29 and the three officers were locked in a room together. They passed the night in fear.

On the afternoon of March 30, a West Pakistani officer walked up to the door and broke the glass with the barrel of a submachine gun.

One Bangalee captain fell to his knees and begged for mercy. The answer was a burst of fire. The West Pakistani then fired a second burst into the other captain.

Dabir pressed himself against the wall next to the door. The West Pakistani tried the locked door, cursed and went away for the key.

Dabir threw himself under his cot and covered his head with his hands. The man returned. "I shrieked," Dabir said. "He fired. I felt a bullet hit me. I made a noise as if I was dying. He stopped firing thinking I was dead, and went away."

## 100 spl flights for migrants

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The meeting also decided that ground handling charges at the airport for the special flights will remain the same as for normal flights to keep the price of special flight's tickets affordable for expatriate workers.

If any Bangladeshi is stuck in those five countries and if they want to return to the country, they can return by fulfilling certain conditions. Covid-19 negative certificate is a must for them. Besides, they will have to stay in a 14-day mandatory quarantine.

According to the decision, the special flight will be operated only from Dhaka. Those who had bought tickets from Chittagong will be brought to Dhaka on a connecting flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines.

According to Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira) and Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh (Atab), about 20,000 to 25,000 aspiring migrant workers were supposed to catch their due flights in a week starting from Wednesday.

Last year, the number of overseas employment dropped significantly to a little over 2.17 lakh from the previous year's over 7 lakh employment, says data from the BMET.

On the other hand, about 1.44 lakh migrant workers found employment in the first three months this year, Expatriates' Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad told a discussion on April 5.

Remittance sent by migrant workers

is considered one of the main pillars of the country's economy.

In 2019-2020 fiscal, migrant workers sent home about \$18.2 billion (about Tk 1,54,352 crore) in remittance whereas it stood at about \$18.6 billion (Tk 1,57,774 crore) as of March in the ongoing fiscal, showed Bangladesh Bank data.

At present, over one crore Bangladeshi migrant workers live in more than 160 countries.

In another development, the meeting also said passengers from Qatar and Oman can be allowed to enter the country since the number of Covid-19 patients in those two countries was going down.

Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) on April 1

said passengers from the European countries, except for UK, and 12 other countries will not be allowed to enter Bangladesh.

The 12 countries are: Argentina, Bahrain, Brazil, Chile, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Peru, Qatar, South Africa, Turkey and Uruguay.

This ban came into effect from April 3 and will continue till April 18. **US-BANGLA TO OPERATE 21 SPL FLIGHTS**

US-Bangla Airlines will operate 21 special flights to Dubai, Muscat, Doha and Singapore for seven days starting from today.

Of the 21 flights, nine will fly to Dubai, seven to Muscat, four to Doha and one to Singapore, the airlines said in a press release yesterday.

## A milestone in our history

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witness to history on April 17, 1971.

Tawfiq, then a sub-divisional officer of erstwhile Meherpur subdivision, indeed witnessed the momentous occasion, a red-letter day in the history of the country: the oath-taking ceremony of the Mujibnagar Government, which performed all of the wartime tasks and led the Bangladesh War of Liberation.

It was on this day, 50 years ago, when the provisional government-in-exile took oath at a mango grove in Baidyanathala, a border area in the present Meherpur district. Baidyanathala was later named Mujibnagar.

Tawfiq-e-Elahi, who is now an advisor to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and was one of the organisers of the management of the oath-taking ceremony, recalled the inauguration ceremony in his book titled "Chariot of Life: Liberation War, Politics and Sojourn in Jail".

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was declared president of the newly born republic. The oath of office was administered to Syed Nazrul Islam as vice president. Tajuddin Ahmad was sworn in as the prime minister as well as other ministers.

The crowd burst into cheers and applause, raising full-throated slogans of "Joy Bangla..." he wrote.

Just seven days before the oath-taking ceremony, the Mujibnagar government was formed with the aim of smoothly conducting the Liberation War, and the official announcement declaring the independence of Bangladesh, known as the Proclamation of Independence, was also issued. The MNAs and MPs present in India also formed a constituent assembly.

But forming a government in exile was no easy task as there were numerous challenges and oppositions to overcome.

Barrister M Amir-Ul Islam, then

a young lawyer and politician who drafted the Proclamation of Independence, recalled the efforts to find an ideal place for the formal inauguration of the new government.

"The oath-taking ceremony was first planned to be held in Chuadanga. But the plan had to be changed because the Pakistanis had an air strike there," Barrister Amir-Ul Islam told The Daily Star yesterday on the eve of Mujibnagar Day.

"Then, we decided to hold the inauguration ceremony at a mangrove at Baidyanathala in Meherpur on April 17. We took the BSF into confidence. We asked for air cover and they agreed to do so and set up anti-air craft guns there," he said.

At the place, the canopies of mango groves were like a natural camouflage. The place was easy to reach from the Indian side by a dirt road that connected the border post and any unlikely air raid would involve crossing Indian airspace -- a risky choice for the Pakistani Air Force.

Amir-Ul Islam, also the whip of the Awami League parliamentary party in the constituent assembly, said the oath-taking ceremony had to be done quickly and with utmost secrecy.

Therefore, no one except Tajuddin Ahmed and Golok Bihari Majumder, the then director general of BSF (Eastern Command), was informed about the plan, he said.

Because the new government's inauguration needed the attention of people across the globe through international press, Amir-Ul Islam and Abdul Mannan, co-whip of the constituent assembly, went to Kolkata Press Club on April 16 to mobilise the media.

"We thanked them for their support to circulate news [on Bangladesh] across the globe, and we told journalists that you will get a message from the Bangladesh government tomorrow [April 17, 1971]," Amir-Ul-Islam said.

## Jimmy Lai among five activists jailed

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latest in a relentless and successful campaign by China since the protests to silence dissent.

Lai and four other campaigners were initially sentenced for leading a rally that organisers said attracted up to 1.7 million people.

Nine of Hong Kong's most prominent democracy campaigners had been found guilty of organising and participating in it. Many of them have spent decades advocating non-

violence in their ultimately fruitless campaign for universal suffrage.

Among the other defendants was Martin Lee, 82, a respected barrister known as the "father of democracy" in Hong Kong, who was once chosen by Beijing to help write the city's mini-constitution.

They also included Margaret Ng, a 73-year-old barrister and former opposition lawmaker.

Lee and Ng were given prison terms, but their sentences were suspended.

At one point on the night of April 16, they suddenly found that there was no appropriate uniform for Col MAG Osmani, commander-in-chief of Mukti Bahini. They found a tailor and had a new uniform stitched for Osmani.

They organised and hired a number of taxis. Leaders, foreign journalists, and others were boarded in those taxis headed towards Baidyanathala.

Amir-Ul Islam said he reached Baidyanathala with the journalists. Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury and Mahboobuddin Ahmed, then sub-divisional officer of police (SDPO) at Jhenaidah, were already present there.

People were not mobilised due to secrecy but still came in large numbers, he recalled.

Hundreds of people from nearby villages gathered at the venue, but they were not sure what would take place. Some even climbed up to the branches of mango trees for a better view.

Giving an almost similar description of the oath-taking ceremony in his book, Tawfiq wrote: "The VIPs mounted the dais and took their seats."

Thronged by scores of media people, following recitation from holy books, Professor Yusuf Ali, chief whip of Awami League parliamentary party in the constituent assembly, began reading out the Proclamation of Independence.

The Proclamation of Independence stated that the objective of the government was to ensure equality, human dignity and social justice for the people of Bangladesh.

"The crowd fell silent. He [Prof Yusuf Ali] was quickly done with it as I stood dazed, aware of being a witness to a momentous occasion," Tawfiq wrote in the book.

Acting President Syed Nazrul Islam, with MAG Osmani, newly appointed commander-in-chief of Bangladesh Defence Forces, standing beside him,

took the salute at a smart presentation, which was followed by the inspection of the guard.

The national flag was hoisted and a small group sang the national anthem, "Amar Sonar Bangla Ami Tomay Bhalobashi...". A scene from the pages of history was being played out in real life in a remote village, Tawfiq wrote in the book.

Syed Nazrul and Tajuddin spoke at the programme and went through a narration of Bangladesh's democratic struggle spanning decades, which had now turned into the Liberation War in the face of the Pakistani regime waging armed aggression and genocide on the unarmed people of Bangladesh.

The inauguration reminded many that during 1757's Battle of Plassey, Bengal lost its independence at the battleground of the mango grove in Plassey. Now another mango grove, not far away from Plassey, became the site where the government of the sovereign state of Bangladesh was inaugurated.

During the first days of war, it was difficult to organise civil administration and the freedom fighters, secure arms for the latter and train them, mobilise international support for the Liberation War through intense diplomatic action.

"As the international media was present there at the oath-taking ceremony, it went all over the world, it had worldwide publicity," Amir-Ul Islam told this newspaper while talking of the significance of the ceremony.

He said after the government was formed it became easier to make government-to-government dealings.

"We could correspond with India as well as other friendly countries and they gave us due respect," he said.

The Mujibnagar Government led the Liberation War and mobilised global support. The nation was freed on December 16, 1971.

## Three land

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Sohag Sarkar, 22, Abdul Khalek, 50, and Dulu Sheikh, 32, of the same upazila.

All four accused are rickshaw pullers by profession, the case statement read.

According to the case statement, the victim, a resident of the district's Dhunat upazila, came to Sherpur bus stand area in search of work. The four accused started following her from there.

At one point, one of the accused lured her with work and took her to an isolated area. The four men then started raping her one by one around 8:00pm on Thursday.

Hearing the victim scream, locals rushed to the spot and held three of them red-handed. Dulu, another accused, however, managed to flee the scene.

Later, locals handed the three accused to police, said Shahidul Islam, officer-in-charge of Sherpur Police Station.

Mohammad Gaziur Rahman, additional superintendent of police in Sherpur, said, "Police are trying to arrest the fourth accused. We'll send the victim to the hospital tomorrow [today] for medical tests."

## Another top

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A DB official said they were looking into the cases filed against him and would produce him before the court today in connection with one of those.

The recent spate of violence from the Qawmi madrasa-based organisation erupted during Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bangladesh and the subsequent hartal called by Hefajat on March 28.

On May 5, 2013, thousands of members of Hefajat, a Qawmi madrasa-based Islamist organisation, clashed with law enforcers and ruling AL men, turning Motijheel and Paltan areas into battlefields.

A total of 83 cases were filed in seven districts, including in Dhaka, accusing 3,416 named and 84,796 unnamed people. Many of the accused were from Hefajat, Jamaat-e-Islam and the BNP.

Police have pressed charges in 18, and gave final reports in two other cases. Investigations of 62 others have been stalled.

Recently, police officials were directed to complete the investigations within upcoming one or two months, said officials.

## UN positive

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completed at the soonest to reduce the risk of storm surges and flooding.

"To further mitigate risks, the UN believes it would be critical to also put in place an emergency management plan in the case of severe weather events, including the pre-positioning of essential supplies and goods on the island."

The UN team recommended that any future relocations are undertaken in a gradual and phased manner to help ensure that the governance structure, facilities and services available on the island are commensurate to the needs of Rohingya refugees living there.

It also has proposed further discussions with the government regarding its future operational engagement on Bhasan Char.

The UN observations come as a significant development, especially as the government has been seeking UN funding for Bhasan Char project, which Bangladesh Navy implemented at the cost of Tk 3,100 crore after some 750,000 Rohingyas had fled a military crackdown in Myanmar's Rakhine state in 2017.

The project has 120 brick-built cluster villages and 120 cyclone shelters, flood protection embankments, facilities for education, farming and fishing, hospitals and playgrounds. Separate buildings for the aid agencies were also constructed there.

The UN had wanted to send an independent technical team to the island to assess the protection measures in the project but that did not happen.

Meanwhile, some 45 NGOs are now providing humanitarian assistance to the refugees on Bhasan Char from their own fund and there were concerns over future funding.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said overall, the UN is positive about Bhasan Char and has made some recommendations, but has not said anything about the funding.

In an interview with UNB, he said the government will demand 10 percent of the fund for Rohingyas from international aid agencies if they do not want to provide assistance to the Rohingyas on Bhasan Char.

"It is not a matter whether the Rohingyas are living in Kutupalong, Cox's Bazar, Barishal or Bhasan Char. That should not be their headache. Their headache should be providing services to the Rohingyas. They are obligated to provide services wherever they stay."

Saiful Islam Chowdhury, coordinator for NGO Alliance for Bhasan Char, said education and livelihood programmes have already begun on Bhasan Char and UN engagement will create momentum to these activities. Major aid agencies will also then start their activities, he added.

**Bangladesh Fisheries Development Corporation**

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**মোয়াদ বৃদ্ধি জনিত সংশোধনী বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

অত্র কার্যালয়ের পত ০৬/০৪/২০২১ইং তারিখে ৩০,০৩,৮৪৮৭.০০৫.০০২.২১-২২৫ নং স্মারকে প্রকাশিত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি কোভিড-১৯ প্রাদুর্ভাব রোধকল্পে লক-ডাউন জনিত কারণে টেন্ডার ড্রপিং ও টেন্ডার গুপেনিং এর তারিখ ১৯/০৪/২০২১ইং এবং ১৯/০৪/২০২১ইং এর স্থলে সমস্ত বৃদ্ধি করে ২৫/০৪/২০২১ইং এর মধ্যে অফিস চলাকালিন যে কোন সময়ে দাখিল এবং ২৫/০৪/২০২১ইং তারিখ ২.৩০ ঘটিকায় "উন্মুক্তকরণ" নির্ধারণ করা হলো। দরপত্রের অন্যান্য সকল শর্তাবলী অপরিবর্তিত থাকবে। কর্তৃপক্ষ এই সংশোধনী বিজ্ঞপ্তি পরিবর্তন, পরিবর্তন বা সংশোধনের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।

**Md. Touhidul Islam**  
Lt. Commander (TAS), BN  
Manager  
BFDC, Rangamati

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## Vaccinations

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develop a combined monthly capacity of up to 35 million doses in the coming months, under the plan.

India had been heavily reliant on the AstraZeneca vaccine, locally made by the Serum Institute of India (SII). It accounts for more than 91% of the 115.5 million doses given in the country. But production ramp-up at SII, the world's biggest vaccine maker, has been delayed by a raw-material shortage.

## Scientists uncover

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paleontologists behind the discovery.

Opposable thumbs are mostly found in mammals and some tree frogs. Chameleons are an extremely rare example of living reptiles with opposable thumbs. Thanks to the use of a small CT scanner, scientists were able to create digital models of the monkeydactyl fossil and determine how the thumbs would have lined up with the other fingers.

Some scientists consider the ability to climb trees a missing evolutionary link which led to pterosaur flight.

The monkeydactyl is unique as it appears to have been able to do both, with a modest 33in wingspan allowing it to fly between trees.

Kunpengopterus antipollicatus, the monkeydactyl's scientific name, is derived from words meaning "opposite" and "thumb" in ancient Greek.

Its unique physical structure places monkeydactyl in a group of pterosaurs known as darwinopterans, named after Charles Darwin due to their advancing contribution to the understanding of evolution.