

BANGLADESH
UPDATE

 **273**
New cases in 24hrs

 **15,76,284**
Total cases

 **27,981**
Deaths

 **15,40,965**
Recoveries

GLOBAL
UPDATE

 **5,228,963**
Deaths

 **262,656,063**
Total cases

Germany jails Iraqi jihadist for life for Yazidi genocide

AFP, Frankfurt

A Frankfurt court yesterday handed a life sentence to an Iraqi man who joined IS for genocide against the Yazidi minority, in a historic first verdict worldwide to use the label.

Taha Al-Jumailly, 29, was found guilty of genocide, crimes against humanity resulting in death, war crimes, aiding and abetting war crimes and bodily harm resulting in death after joining the so-called Islamic State group in 2013.

Proceedings were suspended as the defendant passed out in court when the verdict was read out.

The Yazidis, a Kurdish-speaking group hailing from northern Iraq, have for years been persecuted by IS militants who have killed hundreds of men, raped women and forcibly recruited children as fighters.

In May, UN special investigators reported that they had collected “clear and convincing evidence” of genocide by IS against the Yazidis.

The unbridled joy of freedom

FROM PAGE 1

a camp called Camp Pukur. The next day, they were sent to a school at Bangitola, where they stayed for about a month.

Later, they were transferred to Kutub Shohor camp in Malda where Hemrom, then in his mid-20s, met Sangram Majhi, an indigenous community leader from Rajshahi's Godagari area. This chance meeting changed the course, and the way Hemrom sees it, the meaning of his life.

“One day he [Sangram] held a meeting with indigenous youths like me and called upon us to join the Liberation War,” Hemrom told The Daily Star recently.

Immediately, Hemrom and five other indigenous young men went to the Muktiyoddha Camp at Gour Bagan area in Malda, where they took basic training for about 15 days. The camp authorities then sent them to Shiliguri where they took training on guerrilla warfare.

After the training was over, they were sent to the frontline under Sector 7 under the leadership of Birshreshtha Captain Mohiuddin Jahangir, one of the seven greatest war heroes.

Born in Barisal, Captain Jahangir incidentally fought his last battle in Hemrom's hometown in Chapainawabganj, on December 13, 1971. Shot in the head while trying to attack the Pakistani military camp in Rehaichar Moholla, he breathed his last the next day.

“He [Captain Jahangir] always inspired us. I feel proud that I fought under his leadership,” said Hemrom, a listed freedom fighter.

In one of his most memorable

battles, he said, their group attacked a Pakistani military camp in his home town in Chapainawabganj and killed a collaborator.

On that day, one group of 14 freedom fighters led by Commander Abdus Samad and another group of equal number of freedom fighters led by Commander Idris entered Bangladesh crossing Kolabagan border of Sonamasjid area of Chapainawabganj, some 70-80km from his home.

The two groups attacked the Pakistan forces and their collaborators simultaneously from two sides at Argara Hat of Shibganj upazila, forcing the occupation army to retreat, he said.

Their group also launched multiple attacks on the Pakistan forces in Gomostapur, Bholahat, Krishtopur and Rohonpur and drove them away.

After the war was over, Hemrom and all his family members, including his parents and siblings, returned home.

“I cannot express how I felt on the day I returned home. When we left the country, our land was occupied by Pakistan forces. But now our land was free,” said Hemrom, now 75.

Memories of the war are often filled with dread, but it makes him proud, he says.

But sometimes Hemrom gets frustrated because of the growing communal intolerance, inequality and rights violation of minority communities.

“Sometimes, it feels like our country is independent, but we are not,” he said.

After 50 years of the country's independence, Hemrom says he wants everyone to live in peace and harmony.

More deaths, more outrage

FROM PAGE 1

a college student was killed after a truck and a motorcycle collided on Station Road, Chattogram, early yesterday.

Joydwip Das of Cox's Bazar was a student of Mirsarai Degree College. He was supposed to sit for the coming HSC exams.

Sub-inspector Belayet of Kotwali Police Station who visited the scene told The Daily Star that Joydip and his two friends were on the motorcycle.

“The motorcycle was overtaking the truck when the latter hit it near the Riazuddin Bazar area. The incident happened around 3:30am,” he said, quoting witnesses. Joydip died at the scene and the others were seriously injured.

Joydip's elder sister Srabontee Das said the family would not file a case and her brother's body had been cremated without an autopsy.

In the capital, students demonstrated for safer roads at several places throughout yesterday.

The Rampura intersection was where Mainuddin was crushed to death by a bus of Anabil Paribahan on his birthday.

As students started stopping vehicles and checking the licences and registrations at Rampura intersection after 10:30am yesterday, it became apparent just how many vehicles did not have fitness certificates.

At least six police vehicles had no

valid papers.

The discoveries resulted in an uproar as the students chanted: “Shame, shame! Police don't have papers!” They also sprayed graffiti to mark the vehicles.

The on-duty traffic police seized vehicles of their own. “Police seized a [policeman's] car and brought it to Rampura traffic police box in response to the students' demands,” said Khilgaon Zone Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police Mohammad Nurul Amin who was present at the scene.

The driver informed police that the car belonged to an additional SP of Police Headquarters.

The demonstrators later stopped a rented police bus and four motorcycles used by policemen for not having valid papers.

The students also stopped a vehicle bearing a sticker of the Ministry of Information because the driver had an expired licence.

Sohagi Samia, a student of Khilgaon Model College, said she and her fellows would continue the demonstration until the demands for safer roads are realised.

Mainuddin was killed by one of two buses racing to get passengers, witnesses said.

It has been reported many times that bus drivers and conductors are not paid a steady salary. Instead, they are given a cut from the

fares collected every day. So they routinely compete with each other to get the highest number of trips and passengers.

One of the main demands of the 2018 road safety protests was an end to this practice. Bus owners agreed to this on paper but the reality remains the same.

Khandaker Enayet Ullah, general secretary of Dhaka Road Transport Owners' Association, admitted that “some” buses were still being operated in the old way. The association is working to stop it, he added.

Students protesting at Motijheel's Shapla Chattar vandalised a bus of Midline Paribahan. They demonstrated for almost two hours, bringing traffic to a standstill.

Traffic Inspector Fazlur Rahman said normal traffic resumed by lunch.

HALF-FARE FOR STUDENTS

Transport companies yesterday agreed to accept half-fare from students with identity cards between 7:00am and 8:00pm in Dhaka city from today.

However, the benefit can't be available on weekends and holidays.

Enayet made the announcement at a press briefing at the association's office. The decision comes after weeks of protests by students in the face of a hike in bus-fares.

He urged the government to consider the association's demand for an incentive in exchange for giving students the benefit.

Nat'l professor

FROM PAGE 1

civilian honours, for his contribution to education.

The 87-year-old breathed his last at the capital's Evercare Hospital yesterday. He was on life support since Thursday, said Rafiqul's son Borshon Islam.

He was admitted to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) with abdominal pain on October 7. Doctors had confirmed that water had accumulated in his lungs, and it was extracted, added Borshon.

The first namaz-e-janaza of the eminent educationist was held at Uttara Sector-10 mosque last night. His body was kept at the hospital mortuary.

The mortal remains of the national professor will be taken to the Bangla Academy about 1:00pm today and Shaheed Minar about 2:00pm for paying last respects.

He will be buried at Azimpur graveyard in his father's grave.

Rafiqul took photographs of the Language Movement when it reached the pinnacle on February 21, 1952 and portrayed the history of the movement and Liberation War in his writings, paving a way for the next generation to know about them.

He also actively took part in the Liberation War.

“My father was held captive by the Pakistan occupation army for two months during the Liberation War,” Borshon Islam told The Daily Star.

A former vice chancellor of University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB), Rafiqul had been the Bangla Academy president until death. He was made national professor in 2018.

Rafiqul, a teacher of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, was the chairman of the National Implementation Committee for Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's 100th Anniversary Celebration.

A pall of gloom descended on the academic arena and well-wishers of the national professor soon after the news of his death spread.

President Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, ministers, distinguished personalities, top leaders of different political and socio-cultural organisations, Bangla Academy as well as educational institutions, including Dhaka University and ULAB, expressed deep shock at the demise of the cultural personality.

Born on January 1, 1934 in Chandpur, Rafiqul completed graduation and post-graduation from Dhaka University. He earned MA in Linguistics at Cornell University, USA.

He taught Bengali and linguistics at Dhaka University from 1957-1958 and 1961-2004. He had his PhD degree on the thesis on “Life and Poetry of Kazi Nazrul Islam”.

He had been the director general of Bangla Academy from April-December 2001.

Rafiqul, also the former chairman of the Nazrul Institute Trustee Board, has authored more than 30 books on the Language Movement, Liberation War, history of Dhaka University, language, literature, culture of Bangladesh and other topics.

He was the chief editor of Nazrul Rachanabali (Nazrul Omnibus) published by Kabi Nazrul Institute and Nazrul birth centenary edition of Nazrul Rachanabali published by Bangla Academy. He was also the co-editor of the academy's Pramita Bangla Bhashar Byakaran.

Some of Rafiqul's notable books include Nazrul Nirdeshika, Bhashtottya, An Introduction to Colloquial Bengali, Bangladesher Swadhinota Sangram, Bhasha Andolan O Shahid Minar, Dhakar Kotha, Bhasha Andolan o Muktiyuddher Shahitya, Swadhinota Sangrame Dhaka Biswabidyalaya, Dhaka Biswabidyalayar Ashi Bosor and others.

He also edited several books -- Adhunik Kobita, Kazi Nazrul Islam: A New Anthology, Gitee Sangkalan: Kazi Nazrul Islam, Collections of Abul Mansur Ahmad, Hajar Bochorer Bangla Shahitya and A Documentation of the Bengali Language and Literature of the last millennium by ULAB.

For his immense contribution to education and literature, Rafiqul received several prestigious awards including, Nazrul Academy Award, Churulia, West Bengal (1987), Nazrul Institute Award (1987), Bangla Academy Award (1994), Ekushey Padak (2001), Shwadinota Purushkar (2012), Bangla Academy Shommanona (2017). Rafiqul is one of the recipients of the first-ever International Mother Language Award, introduced by International Mother Language Institute. He was given the award for his contribution to preservation and promotion of mother language nationally and internationally.

Khaleda starts bleeding again

FROM PAGE 1

unpredictable. “Doctors said clearly that her treatment is not possible in the country. She must be sent abroad for treating her and it should not be delayed.”

Saying that the physicians are concerned about the health condition of Khaleda, Fakhrlul said the former premier was still fighting for her life in the Critical Care Unit of the hospital.

Issuing a note of warning, the BNP leader said if anything happens to Khaleda, the people of the country will not spare the ruling Awami League.

“You [government] are talking about the law. It is a lie. According to 401 provision of CrPC, only government can send her abroad.”

The BNP leader said now the responsibility of Khaleda lies with the Awami League. “If she does not get proper treatment and anything harmful happens to her, you would be blamed for everything.”

Centring the rally, thousands of party leaders and activists thronged at the meeting venue and chanted slogans demanding the release of Khaleda Zia.

Regarding the foreign minister's statement that medical documents of Khaleda were sent abroad, Fakhrlul said, “He [foreign minister] made such comment before the diplomats. Diplomats have already mounted pressure on the government to send Khaleda abroad for better treatment.”

The BNP leader urged the people of the country to get united to mount pressure on the government to release Khaleda and send her abroad.

Meanwhile, in Chattogram, BNP organised a protest rally where BNP standing committee member Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain said the AL destroyed all institutions of the country only to stay in power.

Today, judges cannot judge independently. The police cannot function independently. The

administration cannot do their work rightly, he said.

He made the remarks at a BNP gathering that demanded the release and medical treatment of Khaleda at the KB Convention Hall in Bakalia Kalamia Bazar in the city.

The 76-year-old former prime minister was diagnosed with liver cirrhosis and to treat her she needs to be sent abroad immediately.

Khaleda has long been suffering from arthritis, diabetes, as well as dental and eye problems. She was admitted to the hospital on November 13 and moved to the CCU on the following day, nearly a week after she was discharged from the same healthcare facility.

Khaleda was sent to jail on February 8, 2018, in a corruption case. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, she was given a temporary release on certain conditions on March 25 last year. The term of her release has been extended four times so far.

Moment for PM's magnanimity

FROM PAGE 1

AL chief had an unbelievable escape. Equally condemnable was the farce that the post-event official investigation was turned into. Starting from washing away evidence from the crime scene and inexplicably destroying the grenades that remained unexploded -- all sorts of actions were taken so that the truth couldn't be unearthed. We noticed with increasing incredulity the discussions in parliament at that time trying to suggest that it was a result of Awami League's internal feud, statements of ministers implying the same and the so-called one-person judicial inquiry that came out with the finding that it could be the work of a neighbouring country.

Such was the farce made of the most diabolical attempt to kill a political rival since the brutal murder of Bangabandhu and most of his family members back in 1975.

The miraculous survivor of that day's dastardly event and today's prime minister, Sheikh Hasina, made her sentiments clear during her latest press conference the other day. She said she is a human being and has feelings like everybody else and cannot be expected to set aside everything when attempts were made to eliminate her from politics by murdering her.

We understand and fully respect the prime minister's deep feelings of betrayal, and bitterness.

As everything about the relations between these two rivals is considered through a political prism, then let us politically analyse the implication of what is happening now with the question of Khaleda Zia's medical treatment abroad.

We think politically the government and the ruling party is facing a serious challenge in the public sympathy battle. It had done the right thing by suspending Khaleda Zia's sentence and allowing her to be with the family. By this action the government gained substantial public goodwill, which is now eroding on the treatment issue.

It was said by the law minister earlier and repeated by the foreign minister on Monday that for the BNP chief to avail the opportunity to go abroad, she has to go to jail first and apply from prison for the necessary permission. For argument's sake, this position could have been tenable before she became critically ill. Can it be expected that a patient who is fighting for her life and who is in Coronary Care Unit (CCU) since November 14th actually goes to prison - whose sick prisoners are routinely sent outside to obtain

treatment in BSMMU - and apply from there? How practical is that expectation and with what credibility will such statements be received by the general public?

With each passing day the logic of treatment abroad is getting stronger and the government's resistance to it looking increasingly weak.

What political risks does the government face by allowing the BNP chief to go abroad for treatment? Let us assume Begum Zia would completely recover and then indulge in politics from abroad. Even then what could she effectively do? Hold press conferences and issue statements against the ruling party? The international press would pick it once or twice but would later treat it as déjà vu and spike it as they usually do. How much harm could that cause a government which is being lauded by the international community and recognising whose achievements the UN has just passed a resolution. There are many examples of exiled leaders trying to influence internal situation of their own countries. Their success rate is literally non-existent.

Contrarily, the political cost of not sending Khaleda Zia abroad could be high. It could galvanise the opposition into action which they have miserably failed to do so far. In the event of anything remotely tragic, the government will not be able to brush aside the blame for the eventuality. The international press is more likely to pick such stories than anything Khaleda Zia could do while abroad.

Just as politics is the art of the possible, so also politics is known to be full of unpredictable consequences. What triggers what always remains an open and perplexing question.

Let me end by recollecting an act by Nelson Mandela, who termed the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) of South Africa, as a “surrogate of the apartheid regime” and yet made its chief Buthelezi - a man known for killing many ANC leaders including attempts on Mandela's life - his first home minister in his first cabinet in 1994. This stunned the world and added to Mandela myth.

Politics that make everlasting contribution and which is remembered and quoted the world over is almost always based on forgiveness.

If Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is able to bring herself to forgive Khaleda Zia at this moment, she will be remembered for this act of magnanimity as she will be for leading the country into global recognition.



CONDOLENCE



The ULAB family is deeply shocked at the sad demise of
National Professor Rafiqul Islam, PhD,
President of Bangla Academy, Former Vice-Chancellor and Professor
Emeritus of the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB).
(Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un).

We mourn this irreparable loss and extend our deepest condolences
and sympathies to his grieving family members, friends, students,
and colleagues.

He will be greatly missed.

We pray that his soul rests in eternal peace.