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Ukraine President Zelensky

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Pakistan PM Imran Khan

MARCH 25: REVISITING THE HORROR

Loved ones lost to demons

Families describe the terror that unfolded in Jagannath Hall



BAKUL RANI DAS



GIRIZA RANI ROY

AHMAD ISTIAK

An eerie calm settled over Jagannath Hall of Dhaka University in the evening of March 25, 1971. The uneasiness soon turned into foreboding as the night progressed.

Bakul Rani Das and her two children had their dinner early as her husband Sunil Chandra Das, a security guard of the dormitory, had to leave for his duty around 10:00pm.

Bakul and the children went to bed soon only to be awakened by the sound of shelling around two hours later.

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RAMNA TEMPLE MASSACRE

Dawn shadowed by dark forces

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and DIPAN NANDY

The situation in and around the Ramna Kali Mandir and Ma Anandamoyee Ashram near the Dhaka University campus was frightfully unnerving.

Some 75 Hindu families living there were gripped with fear after hearing heavy gunshots and news of killings of students and teachers at Jagannath Hall, a non-Muslim dormitory of DU, the night before – March 25, 1971.

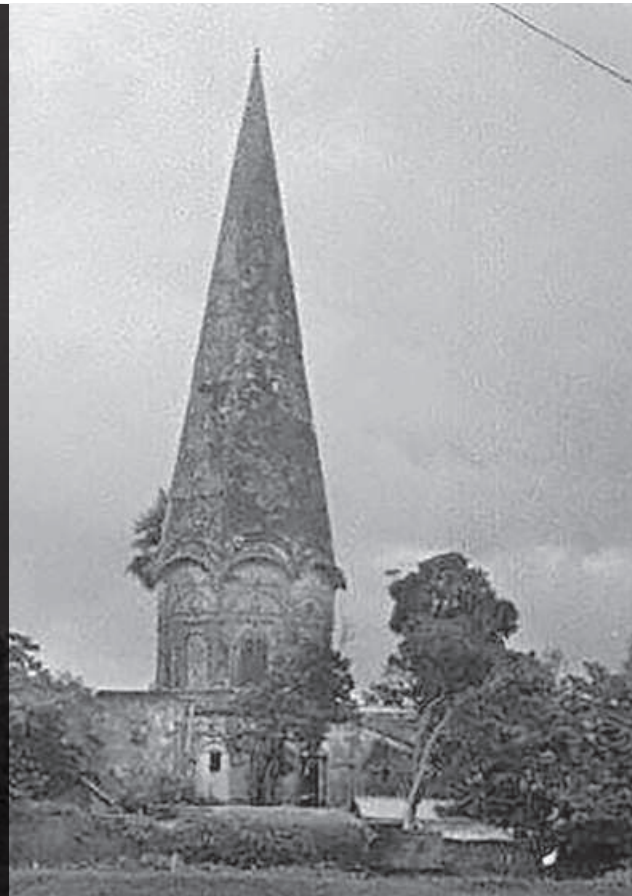
Tension ratcheted sky-high when the Pakistan army visited the temple at the Ramna Race Course Maidan, now Suhrawardy Udyan, around 11:00am the next day. They asked the families not to go anywhere and left.

There was a curfew in place.

Within 15 hours, another group of Pakistan soldiers stormed into the temple. It was around 2:00am on March 27.

The soldiers held Swami Paramananda Giri,

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Ex-MP, another to die for war crimes

BSS, Dhaka

The International Crimes Tribunal yesterday sentenced Satkhira district Jamaat-e-Islami Amir and former MP Abdul Khaleq Mandal alias Jallad Khaleq and Khan Roknuzzaman, who is absconding, to death in a case of crimes against humanity during the Liberation War.

A three-member judicial panel led by Justice Md Shahinur Islam, chairman of the tribunal, handed down the verdict.

Khaleq was produced before the court when the verdict was delivered.

Justice Shahinur read out the main part of the 208 page judgment at 10:30am.

Prosecutors Mokhlesur Rahman Badal, Sultan Mahmud Simon and Rezia Sultana Chaman were present.

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Dhaka, Moscow working on SWIFT workaround

Says Russian ambassador to Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Russia and Bangladesh are working out alternative modalities to keep transactions and trade between the two countries uninterrupted, said the Russian ambassador to Bangladesh yesterday.

The two countries are considering a currency swap, barter and using a third country's banks, said Alexander Mantyskiy, the Russian envoy, at a press conference held at the embassy's premises.

The development comes after the US imposed sanctions left Russia cut off from the SWIFT network, the standard channel for international transactions.

The sanction has left Bangladesh worried as the

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PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION BILL DRAFT

Law enforcers won't have to comply

ZYMA ISLAM

The Information and Communication Technology Division has finalised the draft of the Personal Data Protection Bill and is preparing to place it before the cabinet for approval.

Although the draft formally recognises the average citizen's right to know what personal information is being collected about them and how the data will be used and stored, it exempts government agencies, including those enforcing laws, from having to comply.

"The ministry is gathering public opinion on the bill, following which there will be an inter-ministerial meeting, and then the bill will be placed before a cabinet meeting. We hope the bill will be placed in parliament for passage during the next session," Senior Secretary N M Zeaul Alam of the division told The Daily Star yesterday.

Illegal sale or transfer of personal data to third parties carries fine up to Tk 5 lakh

Draft not applicable to detecting, preventing any offence

Data protection chief cannot be prosecuted for misuse

The ICT Division will be gathering public opinion on the draft until the end of next month, he said.

The draft carries fines of up to Tk 5 lakh for the illegal sale or transfer of personal data to third parties, as well as unauthorised collection or processing of the information.

It also states that if the personal data in question is "sensitive", like passwords, genetic information,

biometric information, and information about sexual orientation, religious and political ideals, the fines can go up to Tk 10 lakh.

The director general of the Digital Security Agency is empowered by the draft to investigate violations, levy fines and ensure overall compliance with the proposed law. A Data Protection Office will also be set up to ensure the same.

The draft bill absolves certain agencies, including the law-enforcing ones, from compliance, ignoring critics who had been voicing concern over the matter ever since the draft was initiated.

The bill gives all citizens the right to know when their data is being collected, how and for what purpose – but it will not be applicable when agencies collect personal data for the prevention and detection of any offence, any investigation, or for "national security".

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COMMENTARY

Arrogance and a disaster

MAHFUZ ANAM

Russia felt insecure, or should we say President Putin, and so Ukraine had to be invaded, population from major parts of the country had to leave their homes, millions had to become refugees, thousands had to die – including Russian soldiers, many foreigners and a Bangladeshi sailor – a nation needed to be terrorised and the world thrown into turmoil.

With literally the whole international community condemning the invasion, Europe solidly united behind Ukraine and with the US suddenly finding a moral mooring to its usual aggressive posturing against Putin, how is Russia better secured now than before boggles the mind of any neutral observer of the situation anywhere in the world?

Whatever be the underlying and long-term factors behind Russia's concerns, the rest of the world cannot accept the Russian invasion for the simple reason that no nation can invade another under any circumstances, except perhaps in very rare and clearly proven circumstances of imminent existential danger. Russia's invasion of a small, disproportionately endowed – in every measurable way – neighbour constitutes nothing but big power thuggery and use of brutal force as the ultimate arbiter in resolving matters between neighbours. This undermines every international law, norm, practice and behaviour. No country will feel safe and nothing will remain

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