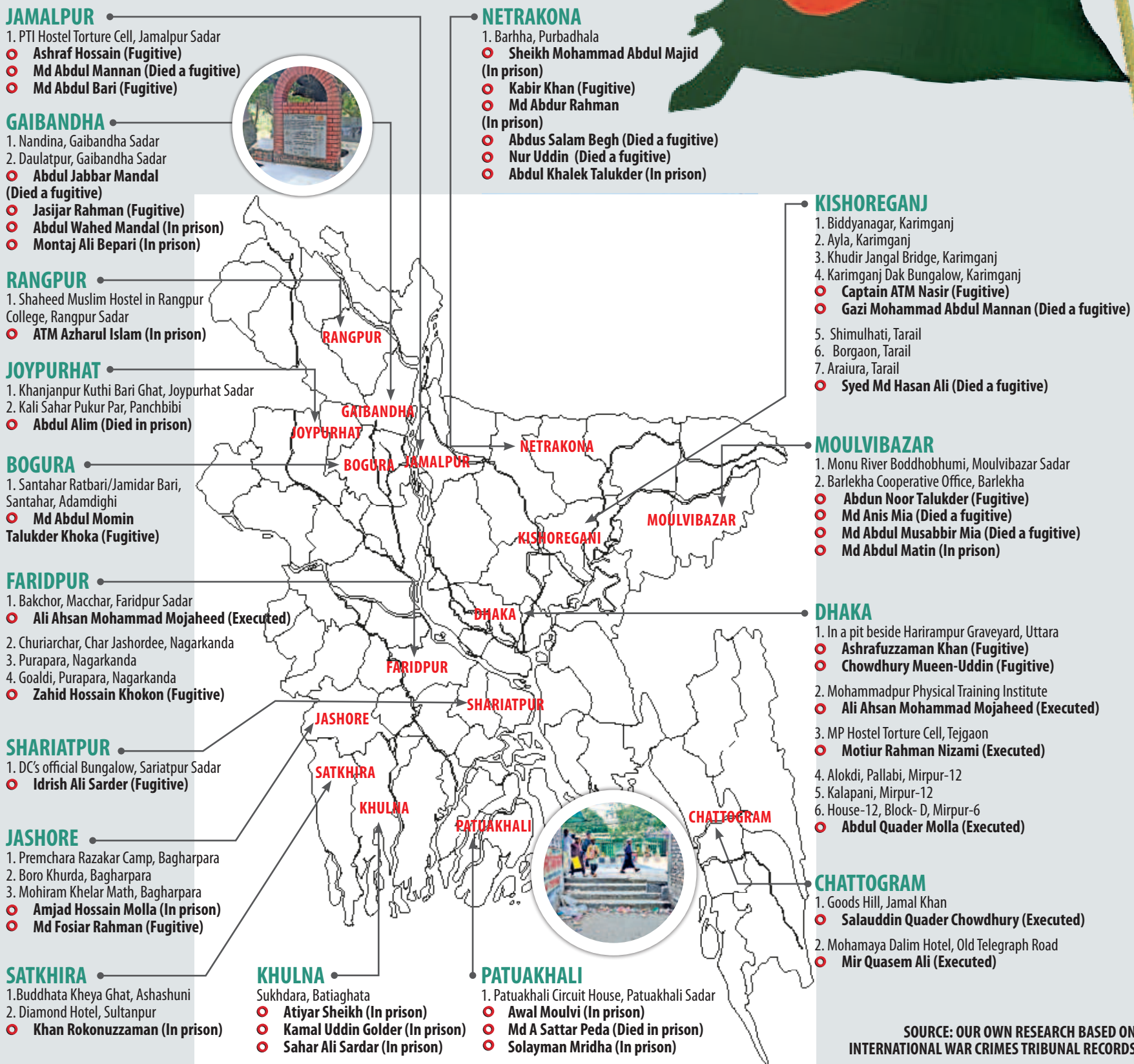


## THE 37 KILLING FIELDS/TORTURE CENTRES

WHERE 41 CONVICTED WAR CRIMINALS COMMITTED ACTS OF GENOCIDE AND CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY, BUT ARE YET TO BE RECOGNISED BY THE GOVERNMENT.



## LAST DAY OF BLOCKADE Seven cops hurt in clash, crude bomb attack Four vehicles torched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A clash between police and BNP in Chattogram and a crude bomb attack on the police from a BNP procession in Bogura left at least seven policemen injured yesterday – the last day of the 36-hour nationwide blockade enforced by BNP and its allies.

Besides, three buses and a lorry were set on fire in Dhaka and Sylhet, while a police van was vandalised in Chattogram.

In Chattogram, four policemen, including the officer-in-charge of Anwara Police Station, were injured after police obstructed a BNP procession on PAB road in Anwara upazila around 12:45pm, triggering the clash, said witnesses and police.

Sohanur Rahman Sohag, assistant superintendent of police (ASP) of Anwara Circle, claimed a group of BNP men tried to halt traffic by bringing out a procession. "When police chased them, they started pelting bricks."

Police had to fire blank rounds to bring the situation under control, he said, adding that a police van was also vandalised in the incident.

In a separate incident in Bogura, three policemen suffered injuries when a crude bomb exploded when a BNP procession was marching past the police personnel standing there at the Timmatha intersection around 1:30pm.

Abul Kalam Azad, officer-in-charge of Gabtoli Police Station, said, "A police team was on duty at Timmatha intersection. A BNP procession heading towards the party office hurled a crude explosive at police."

However, Enamul Haque, general secretary of Gabtoli unit of BNP, refuted the allegation, saying the crude bomb was blasted to frame BNP men.

In Sylhet, criminals set fire to a lorry in the Fulbari area of Golapganj upazila in the early hours. No casualties were reported as the driver and his assistant were allowed to leave the lorry before the arson attack, said police.

In Dhaka, three buses were set on fire in Dhanmondi, Shahbagh, and in front of the Bahadur Shah Park area.

In Khulna, a fire broke out in the courtroom of Paikgacha Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court. The police claimed it was an act of sabotage, saying criminals set the fire that burned the dock and some chairs.

In the 24 hours till yesterday evening, 340 BNP leaders and activists were detained, and nine cases were filed against 928 named and many unnamed supporters of the party, said BNP Senior Joint Secretary Ruhul Kabir Rizvi at a virtual press briefing.

So far, 21,490 BNP leaders and activists have been arrested in 608 cases filed across the country since October 28, he added.

## In search of the forgotten killing fields

FROM PAGE 1  
Of these 27 killing fields, 17 are in no way recognisable. Of the rest 10, only the Jalladkhana killing field has been fully preserved by the Liberation War Museum. The one inside the Government Bangla College in Mirpur has been partially preserved by the college authorities.

The Daily Star visited eight killing fields in Mirpur recently, and found them occupied by multi-storied buildings, business establishments and garage. Two are used as landfills, while one has been devoured by the Turag.

**NO ONE KNOWS**  
No one is really sure about the exact number of the killing fields in the country.

A study conducted in 40 districts so far by 1971 Genocide-Torture Archive and Museum Trust found 855 killing fields, 1,264 mass graves and 1,118 torture centres in those districts. The Trust is making GPS (Global Positioning System) maps of those sites.

In its own research, the War Crimes Facts Finding Committee has identified 5,000 killing fields. The committee has produced GPS maps of 1,040 of those.

Genocide researchers say successive governments had taken some initiatives to prepare a list of killing fields, but they came to nothing.

"The government could not prepare a list of the killing fields even 52 years after our liberation. It is a complete failure. The bureaucratic tangle is a major barrier. Bureaucrats do not want to involve researchers in such projects," said eminent historian Prof Muntassir Mamoon, also chairperson of 1971: Genocide-Torture Archive and Museum Trust.

Bangladesh's Liberation War is one of the bloodiest. In just nine months, an estimated 30 lakh people were killed, some researchers say. They add that this figure does not include the estimated

3-5 lakh Bangladeshis who died of cholera, malnutrition and other diseases in Indian refugee camps where they took shelter to save their lives.

The plan for this large-scale massacre was set even before the war began.

"Kill three million of them, and the rest will eat out of our hands," Pakistan president Yahya Khan told his generals in a military conference in February 1971, according to Massacre: The Tragedy at Bangla Desh and the Phenomenon of Mass Slaughter Throughout History by eminent writer Robert Payne.

**WAR CRIMES TRIAL AND KILLING FIELDS**  
Although the genocide took place all over Bangladesh, certain killing fields were notorious for committing systematic mass murders.

Incidents of genocide and torture in many such killing fields and torture centres came up very prominently during

the war crimes trial. The International Crimes Tribunal convicted many infamous war criminals for acts of genocide and crimes against humanity in those killing fields and torture centres.

So far, the tribunal sentenced 143 war criminals to death, lifetime imprisonment and other punishments for committing genocide and other war crimes. Of them, 102 were given death penalty.

On a random basis, The Daily Star has analysed the verdicts relating to 63 such convicted war criminals. Two criteria were considered for the selection – those who were given death sentences for any war crimes anywhere in the country and those who were given death or jail sentences for committing genocide and other war crimes in specific killing fields or torture centres.

The analysis shows 41 of them committed acts of genocide in at least 37

killing fields and torture centres in 16 districts, as presented in the map.

None of those sites are officially recognised as killing fields or torture centres.

"If the government really wants to prepare the list of killing fields and torture centres, it should not take more than two months. It is shameful that the Liberation War Affairs ministry made no effort to list the killing fields that were recognised by the International Crimes Tribunal," said Dr Mahfuzur Rahman, chairman of Bangladesh Mukti Shongram Gobeshona Kendra Trust.

Talking to The Daily Star, Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque said, "It would have been better if we had a complete list. However, we will take steps about the killing fields that were proven as such at the International Crimes Tribunal after you publish reports on them."

## 127 more BNP, Jamaat activists sentenced to jail

FROM PAGE 1  
Magistrate Mehedi also sentenced 15 BNP men to six months' imprisonment in another case filed over political violence in Gulshan in April 2013.

He acquitted two other accused as the charges against them were not proved. Five prosecution witnesses testified during the trial.

The case statement said a group of BNP-Jamaat activists gathered on Gulshan Avenue on April 8, 2013, ahead of a hartal called by the BNP-led 18-party alliance. They also torched a car in the area.

Police then filed a case with Gulshan Police Station in this regard.

Another Dhaka court yesterday sentenced five BNP members to 18 months' imprisonment over political violence in Kamrangirchar area in September 2018.

Dhaka Metropolitan

Magistrate Rajesh Chowdhury also acquitted 19 other accused. During the trial, five prosecution witnesses gave their depositions.

According to the President of Dhanmondi BNP Sheikh Rabiul Alam Rabi and president of the party's Hazaribagh unit Majibur Rahman Mazu and its General Secretary Abdul Aziz are among the convicts.

Magistrate Farjana Shakila Sumu Chowdhury yesterday sentenced, in absentia, 10 BNP activists to two and a half years' imprisonment over political violence in Banani in September 2018.

Also yesterday, Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Mosharraf Hossain sentenced 12 BNP members to 24 months' imprisonment for obstructing police from discharging duties in Kafrul in December 2017.

The magistrate also sentenced 67 BNP leaders and activists to 25 months' imprisonment in two cases filed with Uttarkhan Police Station in September 2018 for illegal gathering on the streets and obstructing police from discharging duties.

## Yet to be nationally recognised

FROM PAGE 1  
by since the country won independence, the government is yet to nationally recognise the Martyred Intellectuals Day.

Currently, 91 days are nationally recognised and mentioned in the list, last updated in September, prepared by the Cabinet Division. The days are split into three categories – A, B and C – based on their status and significance.

Of those days, 11 are in the month of December, with the exception of the Martyred Intellectuals Day.

On this day in 1971, the Pakistani army, faced with impending defeat, and aided by the Bangladeshi collaborators, executed its blueprint for the

elimination of teachers, writers, doctors, lawyers, journalists and other professionals.

This final act of atrocity was carried out to destroy the future of the newly independent country and maim the nation permanently by annihilating its brightest minds.

War crimes campaigners and experts expressed dismay at the day not being nationally recognised yet.

Shahriar Kabir, chairman of Ghatok Dalal Nirml Committee, said, "Is it believable that Martyred Intellectuals Day hasn't been mentioned in the list of national days? ... What role does the ministry of Liberation War

affairs play? Everybody must be held accountable for this.

"There still must be many pro-Pakistani officials in the administration. Otherwise, how is it possible? Do they expect that somebody will remind them of this day and then it will be included in the list of national days? Then, what is the role of the administration?"

Meanwhile, the Cabinet Division declined to make any official comment on the matter, though several officials concerned have themselves raised questions about the non-inclusion of the day in the list.

Contacted, AKM Mozammel Haque, minister

for the Liberation War affairs, initially expressed disbelief about this day not being recognised as a national day.

"The president and the prime minister issue statements on this day, they also attend many programmes. How do you say it is not included in the list of national days?"

When this correspondent confirmed to him that it indeed is not in the list, the minister refused to make any further comment.

Ishrat Chowdhury, secretary of the ministry, was also unaware of the issue. "I will look into it," she told The Daily Star.

Speaking to this correspondent, a

commander of the Liberation War, preferring anonymity, said, "We [freedom fighters] also can't avoid responsibility when the question of the day's non-inclusion is raised. But what are all the high officials of the state doing?"

Ahad Chowdhury, former chairman of the Freedom Fighters' Command Council, said, "We didn't notice that it wasn't included in the list of national days.

"The government must take note of it and take initiative to include it in the list. I will also talk to the relevant individuals about it. Martyred Intellectuals Day must be recognised as a national day."

## No bar on peaceful olitical events

FROM PAGE 1  
and gatherings unless they are part of an election campaign.

Political parties should be stopped from holding political programmes like rallies and other events that may obstruct the election process and discourage people from casting their vote, said the letter sent to the Public Security Division of the home ministry.

When reporters asked him for comments, Alamgir said, "Our point is that if a rally or programme is an obstruction to the election, it should not be allowed."

If a party says it will not

participate in the election and urges voters not to cast their votes, the Election Commission has nothing to say.

The letter was given to prevent arson, damage to rail lines, and obstruction to voting, he said.

Meanwhile, the Public Security Division yesterday directed the inspector general of police (IGP) not to allow political parties to organise rallies and gatherings unless the event is part of an election campaign.

The restriction will be in place from December 18 to the election on January 7.

Deputy Inspector General Anowar Hossain said, "We have instructed all the units to follow the directives given in the [EC] letter."

The development takes place as BNP, its allies, and several left-leaning political parties demand that the national election be held under a non-partisan government.

The BNP and several other opposition parties have been enforcing blockades and strikes in protest.

Several EC sources said the commission did not send such letters ahead of the three previous elections.