

Staff Reporter

Bangladesh wants to go beyond government machineries, if necessary, to mobilize international support for bringing back the convicted killers of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman hiding in foreign countries to execute at any cost their capital punishment.

Bangladesh also wants foreign countries to treat the issue of repatriating the convicted killers as an 'exceptional case' and repatriate them by amending their respective laws, if necessary.

"We respect their laws but they must respect our laws as well. It's an exceptional issue and there're exceptions," State Minister for Foreign Affairs M Shahriar Alam told reporters on Tuesday.

He said there would be no legal barrier if the countries where the killers have taken shelters agree on the matter. "Principle agreement is urgent."

The State Minister came up with the remark when the government's diplomatic efforts for the last few years over the repatriation of convicted killers apparently have gone in vain.

On January 27, 2010, five condemned killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman were hanged at Dhaka Central Jail.

In 2009, the Supreme Court upheld the death penalty of 12 killers, including the six fugitives.

Of the 12, Syed Farooq Rahman, Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, Bazlul Huda, AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed and Mohiuddin Ahmed were executed on January 27, 2010. Another convict, Aziz Pasha, died in Zimbabwe in 2001. The trial began in a Dhaka court in 1997.

Among the six convicted fugitive killers, Maj (ret'd) Nur Chowdhury and Maj (ret'd) Rashed Chowdhury residing in Toronto, Canada and in Los Angeles of the United States respectively, according to government sources.

Khandaker Abdur Rashid, Shariful Haque Dalim, Abdul Mazed and Moslehuddin Khan are also on the run.

Shahriar Alam said it is a challenge for the government to bring back the rest of the killers and execute them at any cost. "We've started working with a new vigor and in a more methodical way in coordination with related ministries," he said, adding that diplomatic efforts are on to bring back the killers.

The State Minister said it was unfortunate for the nation that the trial of the killers had been delayed and the trial process stalled for five years in the past.

On Monday, Canadian High Commissioner in Dhaka Heather Cruden said the assassination of Sheikh Mujib and his family was a terrible crime but did not want to make comment on the repatriation of Nur Chowdhury.

She said Canada understands Bangladesh's interest in repatriating Nur Chowdhury but privacy laws restrict her commenting on any specific case.