

Angry Afghan Hajj pilgrims beat minister to death



Abdul Rahman

AP, Kabul

A mob of Hajj pilgrims enraged over flight delays to the holy city of Makkah stormed a plane at Kabul airport and beat Afghanistan's aviation minister to death, tossing his body to the tarmac, officials and eyewitnesses said.

The violent outbreak underscored fears about the interim government's ability to establish security in chaotic post-Taliban Afghanistan -- and raised

Interim leader Hamid Karzai said last night that the killing of the country's aviation and tourism minister had been a conspiracy and that several high government officials now in Saudi Arabia would be arrested. "He was killed by people who planned it," Karzai told reporters at a hastily called news conference. "We are asking the Saudis to arrest them and bring them back... We will try them. We will put them behind bars." AFP says three people have been arrested, among them

questions about the role of international peacekeepers, who were present on the airport grounds at the time of the mob attack.

Afghanistan's Cabinet met in emergency session for several hours late Thursday following the killing of the aviation and tourism minister, Abdul Rahman. The Kabul airport was sealed off yesterday morning and white-helmeted Interior Ministry police were stationed every few meters (yards) on

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PHOTO: STAR

Human sea... people queue up for advance tickets at the Kamapur Railway Station at 8am yesterday, more than a week ahead of Eid-ul-Azha. Many of them alleged that tickets were being sold in the black market.

CU under 'siege' but nobody seems to care

CU CORRESPONDENT

Having spent seven months without classes and examinations, students of Chittagong University will have to wait for at least two weeks more for normal academic activities to begin.

The stalemate for the last seven months is due to strikes and siege programmes enforced by student bodies affiliated to political parties. But neither the government nor the university authorities have any headache to resolve the deadlock, sources on the campus said.

Officially, classes and examinations are scheduled to resume on March 2 but leaders of Awami League-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) unit at the university have threatened to continue their 'siege programme' on the campus till their eight-point demand is met.

They said they will not sit with the varsity authorities if their demands are not accepted. These include arrest of the killers of Mortuza and 'rehabilitation' of BCL activists in dormitories.

On the other hand, many of the teachers belonging to the ruling party-backed 'white panel' also threatened of non-cooperation with the new VC in resolving the stalemate, alleging that he is sympathetic to Islami Chhatra Shibir, student front of Jamaat-e-Islami. They earlier expressed their resentment over his appointment.

The university lost 288 academic days last year, including 240 days since June 28.

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9 cell phones to strengthen President's security

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangabhaban has purchased nine cellular phones for further strengthening security arrangements for the President.

The phones have already been allocated to the President, his family members and personal staff.

The Bangabhaban purchased the mobile phones last month without prior approval of the Ministry of Finance and other authorities concerned.

The nine phones are now being used one each by the President, Military Secretary to the President, ADC (on duty) to the President, President's Personal Physician, Assistant Military Secretary to the President, ADC (standby) to the President and ADC (spare) to the President and two by the family members of the President.

Official sources said the Personal Division of the President's

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Crime against humanity

Try offenders in special tribunal

Convention adopts 6-pt declaration

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two-day National Convention on Crime Against Humanity ended in the city yesterday adopting a declaration demanding trial of the perpetrators of such crimes in special tribunals, both under national and international laws.

Thousands raised their hands in support of the six-point Dhaka Declaration when it was read out at the concluding session of the convention held at the Engineers' Institution.

The declaration said 'crimes were orchestrated all over the country at the behest of the ruling BNP-led four-party alliance' and demanded immediate steps to stop the 'ongoing violence, repression and political and religious persecution.'

"The convention strongly feels that the government has failed to ensure security of life and property and dignity of the religious minorities in spite of repeated

appeals and hence the government must be held responsible," it went on.

"In the interest of justice, sovereignty of the people and confidence and trust in the minds of citizens, the perpetrators of the crimes and those giving them shelter and protection, be tried in special tribunals, both under national and international laws," said the declaration, read out by Barrister Amir-ul-Islam, co-convenor of the Awami League-backed national committee which organised the convention.

In order to protect the life, liberty, property and dignity of every citizen of the country, it called upon various social forces including political parties and the civil society to help protect the victims. It urged them to mount pressure on the government to bring an end to the 'atrocities so that the confidence, trust and sense of security among those who have been violated, molested and made homeless are restored.'

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Massive BDR-Police raid fails to net top terrorists

85 arrested from DU area

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Rifles along with Dhaka Metropolitan Police conducted a 'block raid' in the capital in the early hours of yesterday and arrested 291 people from different areas of the city.

According to police, a total of 2600 law-enforcers including 1500 BDR personnel divided into 215 groups raided different parts of the city at about 3am yesterday and arrested 291 persons including 48 identified terrorists. The arrested mostly include members of the ruling party, sources said.

Neither any of the 23 top terrorists listed by the Home Ministry nor the nine notorious crime godfathers were among the arrested. The teams also failed to recover any drugs from anywhere during the raid.

BDR arrested 85 people identified as miscreants from the Arambagh club area, an AL stronghold during the previous government now controlled by the ruling party.

BDR also arrested 85 people from the Dhaka University area including eight suspects and the others are mostly general students. Only seven firearms including three from the university area were recovered during the raid.

Another source said BDR arrested two DU Correspondents Farid Ahmed Saju of UNB and Kabir of Aiker Kagoj during the raid.

Residents of Dhaka University's Surya Sen Hall said BDR personnel climbed over the boundary wall of the dormitory in the early hours of yesterday.

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'Stop patronising terrorism, political persecutions'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government must stop patronising terrorism of all kinds to free the country's politics from arms and goons and ensure human rights, the National Convention on Crime Against Humanity that ended in the city yesterday was told.

Noted human rights activists, academics, intellectuals and professionals discussing various aspects of political and religious persecutions at the two-day convention suggested that all social forces should be united against such heinous acts under political influence.

They also underlined the government's role in protecting people's fundamental rights and ensuring security to life and property.

The convention concluded at the Institution of Engineers adopting a six-point Declaration seeking trial of those responsible for crimes against humanity in a special tribunal.

As many as 14 papers were presented in five working sessions on the concluding day. Two papers were presented on the opening day.

The papers analysed crimes against humanity from political, social, cultural, legal and historical points of view while focusing on post-election violence that took its toll on minority Hindus and activists of Awami League.

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No decision yet on last 3 BCS exams

Fate of over 25000 youths hangs in the balance

ABUL KALAM AZAD

Thousands of unemployed yet qualified students are increasingly getting frustrated at the government's suspension order on three consecutive BCS examinations.

More than 25,000 students sat for the last three BCS examinations (21, 22 and 23), but the process of recruitment was halted by the suspension order, sources in the Public Service Commission (PSC) said.

Worse still, the government did not take any decision on the issue even more than three months after the suspension order.

Thousands others are also waiting for fresh announcement of the 24th BCS examinations. The PSC sources said the announcement was scheduled for January.

Many job-hopefuls have already lost their eligibility for BCS examinations due to 30-year age limit. Many more will lose eligibility, if the suspension order remains in force for several months more, students apprehend.

On October 30 last year, the BNP-led coalition government issued an order suspending direct recruitment to vacant posts and recruitment through the PSC.

Following the order, the PSC suspended the process of the three BCS examinations and announcement of the fresh one, which led to a backlog in BCS examinations.

The final results of the 21st BCS examinations prepared by October were

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