



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia with the recipients of Ekushey Padak at Osmany Memorial Auditorium in the city yesterday.

BDR raids annoy some BNP leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A section of BNP leaders are unhappy over Thursday night's raids by Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) in some areas of the city.

"The raids only resulted in harassment of our party men and innocent people," said a BNP leader.

Talking to The Daily Star, some other BNP leaders also expressed similar views. They however did not want to be identified.

The massive raids by BDR personnel for arresting listed criminals in the city failed to achieve their goals, the leaders felt.

In the raids, BDR arrested 291 people. Most of them were innocent while a good number were activists of BNP and its front organisations Juba Dal and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD). JCD activists were arrested from Dhaka University halls while those of BNP and Juba Dal from Arambagh and Eskaton areas.

After verification, police released the innocent ones but detained a number of them in jail for their alleged involvement in criminal activities.

Some annoyed BNP leaders claimed that the detained are either activists of their party or its students.

The said that such massive raids were launched when 'most the listed and identified criminals' went into hiding out of the city.

According to some sources, the home ministry had given BDR a list of criminals with their whereabouts. Only a few top ruling party leaders were informed about the raids. The State Minister of Home Affairs supervised the operation for arrest of notorious criminals, extortions and muggers.

Many police personnel were also allegedly harassed by the BDR men.

To make the drive effective, mobile network was also snapped for hours. But the notorious criminals are yet to be nabbed.

In many cases, BDR men broke open the gates, dragged residents out of their houses and misbehaved with them, it was alleged.

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innocent students including two campus reporters were picked up. The arrested also included some criminals.

Instead of sending the arrested to the Police Control Room, BDR detained them at their Peekhana Headquarters. They allegedly tied their hands and legs, blindfolded them and tortured them for more than 18 hours, which caused resentment among various sections.

"A democratic government should never go for such a brutal raid. Only a military government can do so to harass innocent citizens," said Tuhin, one of the victims. He was arrested from Mohsin Hall and tortured.

According to him, the worst part of BDR's atrocity was keeping their whereabouts secret. "None could trace us for more than 12 hours as BDR authorities kept our whereabouts secret," he said.

Aziz, another victim, said a BDR personnel hit him on the nose when he requested him to allow him to see. "They treated us as animals."

"During the 18 hours' confinement at BDR headquarters, they behaved with us as if we were the wanted notorious criminals. They did not even allow us to see while having food or going to toilet," regretted another victim, Abu Jafar of Zahurul Haq Hall.

A resident of Bangabandhu Hall said, "Drive to arrest criminals is nothing new, but the atrocity by BDR can never be acceptable to any one. 'Are we not living in a democratic society'?"

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PTI, New Delhi

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NICD sources told PTI that all three tests recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO) that were carried out on the organism isolated from patients' samples were positive for 'Yersinia Pestis', the bacteria that causes plague.

They said the results have been communicated to the health authorities.

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