

## Azad not out of danger

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students, teachers, writers, Azad's relatives, well-wishers and fans thronged there to see him.

When Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina went there to visit Azad, army men at the main entrance sent her back in an action that applied to all other visitors.

Unknown assailants savagely stabbed the outspoken author who has penned over 50 books of poems, novels and essays with butcher's knives while he was returning to his Fuller Road house at 9:35pm and his family blamed Professor for the attack.

With one stab at the back of his head, two in the left side of his face and one in the shoulder and some of his teeth lost, a profusely bleeding Azad was first rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital from where he was shifted to the CMH.

### DEATH THREAT

Prof Azad's brother Monjur Kabir, who filed a case with Ramma police accusing unknown 'miscreants' for the attack, said the perpetrators were threatening the victim's family with death if they did not cease to demand justice.

Smita confirmed the death threats, but said: "We don't want to give details of the threats by telephone at this moment."

Monjur in the case said the goons employed by a vested quarter swooped on him with butcher's knives and axes to kill him and melted in the dark of Suhrawardy Udayan after the attack.

DU students who were placing wreaths at the painting of the attack scene propped up on the spot yesterday noon, found a 14-inch knife and a tooth there.

They linked the tooth to Azad.

### PRE-PLANNED ATTACK

Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Ashraf Ali Huda last night said police might find out the attackers and uncover their motives once Prof Azad came round.

"Since we have information that he talked to them for several min-

utes, I have reason to believe that he knows them," he said.

"The evidence gathered so far suggests the attackers were not merely snatchers, but executors of a well-orchestrated scheme to kill him."

Ehsan, an assistant commissioner of police (Patrol) went to the scene to take the knife, but incensed DU students assaulted him and handed over the sharp weapon to Vice-Chancellor SMA Faiz.

Faiz later gave the knife to Khan Sayeed Hasan, an assistant police commissioner of Dhaka's south zone. Police retrieved another butcher's knife from Friday night in front of Bangla Academy.

The atrocity, allegedly committed by religious bigots, outraged the entire nation, especially its civil society, progressive political quarters and intelligentsia.

A number of political parties, numerous organisations and eminent personalities yesterday tersely condemned the gory attack and blamed the government for failing to contain the ever-increasing violence.

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) in a protest rally in the city demanded stern punishment of the attackers. Speakers at the rally said the attack was not merely on Azad but also on the democratic and progressive forces of the country.

Blaming the BNP-led coalition government for harbouring communal forces, they demanded immediate resignation of the home minister.

Former president AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury in a statement said: "Repeated attacks on politicians, journalists and intellectuals have proved that the current coalition government have failed to fail to maintain the country's law and order." He also urged the government to abstain from indulging the terrorists in order to protect human rights of the people and save their life and property.

Gano Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain and General Secretary Saifuddin Ahmed Manik blamed communal forces for the attack and said the government could not avoid its responsibility for the terrorist act.

Left leaning 11-party alliance at a protest rally in the city demanded punishment of the culprits and alleged criminals were being encouraged due to the government's failure in taking punitive actions against the terrorists like the killers of journalist Manik.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JnU) said the terrorist act proved that the coalition government miserably failed in maintaining the country's law and order.

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad in statement said such dastardly attack on a writer of free-thinking stirred our conscience. Terming the attack pre-planned and designed to kill Azad, he remarked that there was no security for anyone in the country.

In separate statements, Supreme Court Bar Association President Rokanuddin Mahmud and General Secretary M. Mahbub Ali, State Minister for Cultural Affairs Selima Rahaman and DU Vice Chancellor (VC) SMA Faiz condemned the attack and demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment of the criminals. The DU VC also sought financial assistance from the government for better treatment of the victim.

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed said such heinous attack on one of the country's noted linguist and researcher was unfortunate. "We will have to vigilant so that such incidents

do not occur again," he added.

Our Rajshahi University (RU) correspondent adds: The RU Teachers Association (RUTA) in a statement protested and condemned the 'cowardly' attack and demanded immediate arrest and stern action against persons involved in the incident.

Speakers at the rally viewed the attack on Azad as an onslaught on free-thinking and called for united resistance against such an unhealthy trend.

Unidentified assailants stabbed and critically injured Humayun Azad, also professor Bangla at the DU, with butcher's knives in front of Bangla Academy on Wednesday night.

The rally held at the foot of Aparajeya Bangla was addressed by a number of teachers and students.

Eminent jurist and Gano Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain also addressed the rally.

Addressing the rally, AAMS Arefin Siddique, president of Dhaka University Teacher's Association, said, the attack on Azad is an attack on free-thinking and secularism. He demanded quick action against the elements involved.

Former DU vice chancellor AK Azad Chowdhury said a lawmaker's speech provocative speech in parliament on the free thoughts of Azad encouraged the attackers.

Prof Sirajul Islam Chowdhury said writers, journalists, teachers and others are being oppressed but no one is being brought to justice for this. Rather, the persons responsible are getting shelter from powerful quarters and they are moving freely, he regretted.

The others who addressed the rally included Prof Ahmed Kamal, Prof Harun-ur-Rashid, Dr Qudrat-e-Khuda and SMLutfur Rahman.

Kamal Hossain said unbelievable incidents are taking place one after another. What happened to Azad was an onslaught on constitutional rights of people.

He regretted that certain quarters are resorting to criminal activities and corruption in the name religion.

In Chittagong, some 10 people were injured and 20 picked up amid pitched battles between police and protesters.

The law-enforcers drove away pro-hartal pickets, planning to take out processions at different parts of the city including AL's central office at Bangabandhu Avenue, Dhaka University campus, Motijheel, Dhanmondi and Nazira Bazar of old town. No major violent incident in the city during the hartal hours was reported.

The general strike brought normal life and business to a grinding halt and shops, schools, business centres and private offices were closed while most of the automobiles stayed off the streets.

At about 7:20am, a large contingent of police, both male and female, clubbed the pickets in front of the AL central office and asked others to disperse. As they refused, police manhandled and dragged 31 women pickets to nearby police vans leaving some of them partially stripped.

Former women lawmakers Zinatunnesa Talukdar, Tahira Ali, Bharati Nandi Sarkar and Jahana Khanam were among them. However, police released the former lawmakers in the evening but they went to court on their own to protest the arrest of their fellow demonstrators.

Police produced 27 women AL leaders and activists before the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrates on charges of blocking the streets and interfering in police activities. The court granted bail to nine of them but put 16 under trial.

Police threw up barbed-wire fences to seal off all entrances to Bangabandhu Avenue (road in front of the AL headquarters) from the early hours. They did not allow anyone inside the cordoned area.

The law-enforcers also chased demonstrators in a procession led by former home minister Mohammad Nasim and Abdur Razzak MP near Russell Square in Dhanmondi and arrested 12 at about 11:30am.

Police also asked the university authority to bear medical expenses for the renowned linguist and send him abroad for the best possible treatment.

The government agreed to hand over three institutions of the CHT region -- the vocational training institute, cotton development board and primary education training institute -- to the district council in line with the peace agreement in a decision which is yet to be implemented.

Hills people allege that local BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami have put up Samo Adhikar Andolan at the instigation of Wadud to counter the demands of pro-peace deal ethnic group. But the four-party alliance and the government keep mum about the platform or their activities.

The only tangible result of the pact is the setting up of some offices including the regional council, Chittagong Hill Tracts Refugee Rehabilitation Affairs and land commission.

It urged the government to take necessary steps to send Azad abroad for treatment.

Syndicate members also urged all to cooperate for maintaining congenial atmosphere on the campus.

## Nation in fury

FROM PAGE 1

parliament alleged Azad came under attack as he used his mighty pen against those who wanted to make the country dependent once again and were resorting to rape, harassment, torture and killing.

Azad was brutally chopped with butcher's knives Friday night in front of Bangla Academy.

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A number of political parties, numerous organisations and eminent personalities yesterday tersely condemned the gory attack and blamed the government for failing to contain the ever-increasing violence.

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## DU swells with protest

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At a largely attended rally on the campus yesterday condemned the attack on writer and linguist Humayun Azad and demanded immediate arrest and stern action against persons involved in the incident.

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