

POLITICAL POLARISATION AFTER GRENADE ATTACKS

Discord, indecision hobble anti-govt agitation

SHAKHAWAT LITON and SHAMEEM MAHMUD

A discord in the left alliance and indecision of the main opposition Awami League (AL) on agitation strategy are hobbling the efforts of the mainstream opposition parties to launch a broad-based anti-government movement.

The AL, 11-party left alliance, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) and the National Awami Party (NAP) have agreed to join forces to topple the Khaleda Zia government, but are divided over the objectives, next course of action and the modes of movement, leaders of the parties said.

They said some left parties were in favour of adding more agendas to the movement including fight against fundamentalists, some were against frequent use of hartal as a tool of movement and many demanded a blueprint detailing joint steps in the wake of the government's fall.

The AL, JSD and the Workers Party (WP), a constituent of the left alliance, are staging nine days of simultaneous programmes, but 10 other parties of the left coalition maintained a distance with them.

The AL, WP and JSD are determined to gear up the movement and bring other opposition parties to the anti-government movement, while the left alliance and the Jatiya Oikya Mancha led by Dr Kamal Hossain are also trying to gear up a movement with the same objective on their own.

"We will keep up the movement from our position," AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil said. "The opposition parties might have difference of opinions, but our goal is the same: ouster of the fundamentalists-allied government through a mass movement."

The AL is trying to bring the second largest opposition in parliament, the Jatiya Party led by former president HM Ershad, to the AL-planned alliance.

"We have set some leaders within the left political arena, who brief the BNP high command on

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BNP desperate to keep AL isolated from minor parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP policymakers are as busy as a bee to keep the minor political parties, specially the left-leaning ones, away from forging alliance with the main opposition Awami League, which has launched a movement to unseat the coalition regime.

Highly placed sources said the BNP high command is desperate to keep its arch-rival isolated and has assigned several top-ranking BNP leaders who have leftist political background to talk with the leaders of left-leaning parties and persuade them to keep a neutral stance.

Instructed by the prime minister, they said, since the August 21 grenade attack on an AL rally, around half a dozen BNP top brass have sat down with some important left political leaders and succeeded to keep their parties from joining the AL-planned alliance.

Sources said the BNP policymakers assigned to keep the AL isolated are in constant contact

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every meeting they hold with the Awami League leadership. We are closely monitoring the main opposition's moves and trying our best to keep the leftist parties away from it," said an important leader of BNP.

Besides, all intelligence agencies have been directed to take measures that would hinder the AL from forming an effective alliance or launching a vigorous movement against the government.

BNP insiders said the ruling party leaders do not consider an alliance between the AL and the lesser political parties, who do not have any vote bank as such, ahead of a general election would cause any significant harm to the 4-party coalition. But, they said, the BNP does not want the lesser parties join forces with the AL in its anti-government movement, which it believes might damage the government's image.

The water bottles were a stark symbol of how the children were left without water or food by captors who were demanding independence for separatist Chechnya.

"Why? What for? What for?" wept one woman over one of two coffins set under a blue tarp in a courtyard in this town of 40,000, where seemingly everyone knew someone who was affected by the attacks.

Under overcast skies, the men

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Police check Awami League adherents before they join a rally in Muktangon yesterday, as law-enforcers have been mounting a wary watch on political meetings since the August 21 grenade attack.

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Probe body biased towards BNP Accuses AL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jalil yesterday accused the one-member judicial investigation commission formed by the government to probe the August 21 deadly grenade attack on an AL rally of bias towards the key ruling party.

"Investigation under him (probe chief Justice Joynul Abedin) cannot be neutral as he was actively involved in the BNP politics in the past," Jalil said in a speech to a huge

rally organised by Dhaka City AL at Muktangon.

Thousands of AL supporters joined the rally staged as part of the party's nine-day programme to protest the grenade attack in front of its headquarters that killed 19 people, including the party's Women's Affairs Secretary Ivy Rahman and injured over 200.

No investigation committee is acceptable to people except for one under the Commonwealth or the United Nations, Jalil said.

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Police pick up another son of Maya

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detective Branch (DB) of police yesterday arrested Rashedul Hossain Chowdhury Rony, the youngest son of former state minister and City Awami League General Secretary Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya, at his billiard club on Baily road in Dhaka.

Family sources said a DB team went to Rony's billiard club at about 4:30pm and took him to its office.

Police sources said Rony, 24, was kept at the DB office on Mintu road till 9:00pm. He has no criminal history, but police may show him

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Hundreds of Awami League leaders and activists join a rally, organised in Muktangon yesterday to protest the August 21 grenade attack that killed 19 people.

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SC stays bail to a lifer

UNB, Dhaka

The vacation bench of the Supreme Court yesterday stayed for five days the bail granted by the High Court to a person sentenced to life imprisonment for murdering a businessman in Dhaka.

Chamber judge also asked the Aga Khan Medical University to set up a 4-member medical board for a medical check-up on Abdur Razzak (Thandu) who was granted bail on health ground. The medical report should be placed before the court by September 10.

The order came upon a petition filed by Acting Attorney General Abdur Razzak Khan.

Thandu and three others were handed life term while seven others sentenced to death by a speedy trial tribunal court in January this year

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Russians weep, bury siege victims

Toll nears 400

AFP, Beslan



PHOTO: AFP

Relatives of a victim of the terrorist attack cry near a coffin during his funeral in Beslan, North Ossetia in Russia yesterday. The first funerals for the hundreds killed in the Russian hostage siege took place in Beslan.

GRENADE ATTACK PROBE

Uttara arrestee remanded for 10 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed Abdur Rahman, who was caught with arms and ammunition by a Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) team in Uttara early Friday, on a 10-day remand.

Rab officials yesterday again denied the claim that Rahman was held in connection with the August 21 blasts. Different sources, however, kept claiming that Rahman closely resembles one of the two persons seen roaming on the Bangabandhu Avenue on August 21 in the video footage.

Interpol personnel probing the August 21 blasts, after examining video footages found movements of two men at the AL public meeting

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Cops clueless to 16 Sylhet blasts

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

Sixteen bomb blasts have ripped through Sylhet region since 1997 killing 26 people, but most investigations found no leads.

Cases were filed after each incident and the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) or the Detective Branch of Police carried out investigations, but no mastermind was arrested.

Only one officer, Assistant Superintendent of Police Munshi Atiqur Rahman of CID, carried out investigations into five bomb explosions in the northeastern district since January.

A morning bomb blast in a suburban house in Pirerbazar killed 35-year-old Anwar Hossain, a day worker, and his 11-year-old nephew and

wounded seven others yesterday.

Sylhet City AL Publicity Secretary Mohammad Ibrahim was killed and 40 others injured in a grenade blast close to Gulshan Centre on the night of August 7.

A minor boy was killed and at least seven others were injured in the blasts in two cinema halls on August 5.

A grenade attack killed three people and injured 70 others, including British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Anwar Choudhury, at Hazrat Shahjalal Shrine after Friday prayers on May 21.

On the night of January 12 were killed five people and injured 50 others at the same shrine. The police

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Two homemade bombs found at Airport school

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered two homemade bombs from Civil Aviation High School at Kawla near Zia International Airport yesterday.

Receiving an anonymous call that bombs have been planted in the school, the school authority informed the airport police who at around 12:30pm recovered two bombs wrapped in red scotch tape from the school laboratory and the coriander.

Police could not arrest anybody.

Verdict on jail killing tomorrow

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Judgement in the sensational Jail Killing Case will be pronounced tomorrow.

Judge Mohammad Motiur Rahman of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka, will deliver the judgement at 10:30am, court sources said. The court has been set up adjacent to the Dhaka Central Jail.

Earlier on August 21, the prosecution and the defence wrapped up the arguments and the court recorded statements of 64 out of 75

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Robber killed in shootout

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

One robber was killed and at least six including five cops were injured in an hour-long police-robbers shootout in Nishan Khal in Dakop upazila Saturday midnight.

Robbers Jahangir Alam Gazi, 42, was killed and Abdul Kader, 40, hurt. He is receiving treatment at Khulna Medical College Hospital under custody. Police arrested three robbers – Kader, Rafiqul Islam and Humayun Kabir – and recovered six foreign-made guns and 80 live bullets.

Acting on a tip off, a platoon of police led by Officer-in-Charge Nasiruddin of Dakop Police Station raided a hideout of Akkas Bahini,

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70 killed capturing Saddam aide

REUTERS, Baghdad

Iraqi and US forces have arrested a man believed to be the most-wanted Saddam Hussein aide still on the run in a bloody raid in which 70 of his supporters have been killed and 80 captured, the government says.

The defence ministry said yesterday that Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri – who was sixth on the US list of the 50 most-wanted members of Saddam's regime and had a \$10 million price on his head – was captured in Tikrit, Saddam's hometown and powerbase north of Baghdad.

Latif said the captured man was suffering from leukemia and was in

very poor health. The U.S. military has said Ibrahim was directly involved in organising and funding attacks on U.S. forces since the downfall of Saddam. In a deck of cards issued to US troops to help them identify fugitives, Ibrahim was the King of Clubs.

The news spread fast in Baghdad, and in some Shia districts residents fired AK-47s in the air in celebration.

Ibrahim was Saddam's number two in the Revolutionary Command

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Signs of discord at Kashmir talks

REUTERS, New Delhi

Signs of discord have emerged between India and Pakistan as foreign ministers from the nuclear armed rivals meet to review and advance a peace process that has faltered recently over Kashmir.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Khurshed Mehmood Kasuri and his Indian counterpart Natwar Singh shook hands and said they were committed to friendly relations before entering two days of talks. But tensions are already emerging.

India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh complained on Saturday that Pakistan had failed to keep a promise to prevent Islamic militants sneaking into Indian Kashmir to join a revolt there, and to

scrap guerrilla training camps on its soil. Pakistan fears that India, which controls the heart of Kashmir, is dragging its feet and is unwilling to engage in a serious dialogue over the region.

But Islamabad's attempt to force the pace and focus attention on Kashmir drew an angry response from India.

"A resolution of the Kashmir dispute alone will guarantee peace and security in South Asia," Kasuri said shortly before leaving Islamabad, adding that Kashmiris also had to be involved.

"We have the genius to resolve this issue," he said. "Most important

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Prayer Timing

September 6		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-35	5-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-20	6-25
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation

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