



Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student wing of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), stages a demonstration on the Dhaka University campus yesterday protesting Wednesday's countrywide serial bomb blasts.

Two college students die in road mishaps

UNB, Moulvibazar

Three people, two of them college students, were killed in separate road accidents here Friday-Saturday.

Sources said motorcyclist Syedul Haq, 26, died on the spot when his motorbike turned turtle after hitting a tree on Bhanugach road in Sreemongol town yesterday.

In another accident, two students of Moulvibazar Government College were killed and another was injured as the motorbike they were riding crashed into a ditch down a bridge at Jagathpur village in sadar upazila on

Body recovered

BSS, Narayanganj

Narayanganj river police recovered the decomposed body of a man from the Shitalakhya river near BIWTA launch terminal yesterday.

The identity of the victim, aged about 30, could not be known immediately, police said.

The body, which bore marks of injury, was sent to the General Hospital for autopsies.

Friday night.

Police and witnesses said the accident occurred when the three students were returning home from Sompashi village.

Sibbir Ahmed Torofdar, 20, died instantly while Alamgir, 21, succumbed to his injuries on way to Osmani Medical College Hospital.

Badrul was admitted to the hospital in a critical condition.

Trawler capsizes at Kuakata

BDNEWS, Barisal

A fishing trawler MB Nazma capsized with 10 fishermen in the sea five kilometers off the Kuakata Sea Beach of Kalapara upazila under Patuakhali district.

After about an hour another trawler rescued those ten fishermen.

The trawler driver Gaffar said the trawler capsized at 10:00am as it was caught in the strong tide on way to Alipur after loading fish.

Fish and fishing net worth about Tk 5 lakh was damaged.

UP encephalitis toll rises to 110

REUTERS, Lucknow

The death toll in an encephalitis outbreak in Uttar Pradesh rose to 110 yesterday with 20 more deaths reported in the past 36 hours, a health official said.

Most of the dead were children and more than 170 people were in hospital, many of them in critical condition.

"Encephalitis is a perennial problem during the rainy season, but the situation appears to be quite alarming this time," said K.P. Kushwaha, a health official in Gorakhpur town, worst hit by the outbreak.

Encephalitis, an acute form of brain fever, is caused by a virus spread by mosquitoes and proliferates in water-logged parts of India during the monsoon season.

Last year, about 50 people died of the disease in Uttar Pradesh.

India has suffered serious flooding during this year's monsoon season, which runs from June to September.

In Mumbai and adjacent areas, 210 people have died of diseases such as leptospirosis, gastroenteritis and malaria after the worst floods in history hit the region three weeks ago.

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One year into the bloody incident, however, the intelligence officials of the country is yet to make any headway towards identifying the attackers and bringing them under trial.

The government announcement of a Tk 1 crore reward for information about the perpetrators, repeated visits by the Interpol and FBI experts and formation of a high-powered judicial probe commission have yielded no result. Worse still, the investigators are yet to get a clue about the grisly attack except the confessional statement of George Mia among the 15 arrested in connection with the attack.

After failing to earn people's trust by inviting in the FBI (US Federal Bureau of Investigation) and Interpol at different times during 10 months since the incident, the government produced one George Mia, claiming he confessed to his involvement in the grenade attack and disclosed many details.

Quoting George Mia's statement, the investigators tried to earn acclamation by naming top terrors Subrata Bain Shuvro, Molla Masud and Mukul, an alleged criminal from Badda, as the main criminals to carry out the attack. Senior intelligence officials, however, termed this a childish attempt to earn credit by naming these high-profile criminals.

According to the investigators, Mukul slipped into India through the Satkhira border and the person who helped him disclosed it to police. But different sources said the law enforcers do not even know what Mukul looks like as they do not have any photograph of him.

Terming George's story a very weakly-woven one, experts pointed out several loopholes in it.

Fired by the media, the government later ordered the investigators to stop building on George Mia's story and "wait for a bigger achievement", said a leading investigator of the August 21 attack.

Although the investigators earlier said they were scrutinising the video footages with the help of foreign investigators, sources said they failed to identify anyone from them.

The whole investigation is revolving around the statement of George Mia, a criminal facing five cases and arrested from his village home in Birkot of Senbag, Noakhali on June 10. But, those he has named to be involved in the incident were learnt to have already left the country.

Ruhul Amin, special superintendent of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police, who is supervising the investigation, said George mentioned 20-21 people were involved in carrying out the attack but named 11 of them. None of them, however, are now in the country.

"It seems the investigators sit idle, waiting for them [named by George] to return to the country. And this has led to the prevailing stalemate in the probe," said a senior intelligence officer.

Meanwhile, Ruhul Amin claimed that they are about to complete the investigation and will submit the charge sheet soon. "We're waiting

for a little more information before submitting the charge sheet," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

The CID officer said George disclosed details about how they gathered to plan the attack, training on grenade handling, meeting before the attack, receiving grenades and payment, how they carried out the attack and fled after it.

He, however, could not say anything about the motive of the heinous attack except that George did not disclose the motive. "How will he [George] say this? He was appointed merely to throw the grenades. He is not supposed to know this," Ruhul said.

Before George was "discovered", sources of the investigators brought a few others who were prepared to make confessional statements, giving details about the August 21 attack. "Two of them told stories almost similar to that of George Mia. But the investigators rejected those as some links were missing in them," said a well-placed source.

The investigators and the government earlier linked top terror Arman and former AL ward commissioner Mokhesur Rahman and arrested Shaibal Saha Partha and 13 others, but the so-called "significant disclosure" of George did not link anyone of them.

The investigators are also saying now that they had not found any evidence of Arman's involvement.

The blast site was kept unprotected for the time needed to gather evidence and the truck on which the AL leaders were sitting was taken away before proper examination.

The investigators are also alleged to have not collected evidence, even the unexploded grenades, which were vital for the investigation. The army explosive experts detonated two unexploded grenades—one found near the spot and the other at the adjacent Gulistan Hawkers' Market—at the dead of night without taking fingerprints from them.

The army experts detonated another grenade recovered from the Dhaka Central Jail on August 22 the same way. Asked about the grenade, the investigators said it was similar to those that blasted at the Bangabandhu Avenue and the people who attacked the AL meeting might have abandoned it on their escape route.

The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA), which also conducted an inquiry into the attack, also blamed the government for destroying the evidences.

Also mysterious is the quick burial of two unidentified victims on August 22 night although unclaimed bodies are supposed to be kept at the mortuary at least for 72 hours for identification. The police took the two bodies away in an ambulance of Anjuman-e-Mofidul Islam and buried those after an autopsy done hurriedly at night.

Although sources said at least one of the two was a primary suspect, the investigators failed to justify the quick burial without identification.

Some of the investigators, while

talking to The Daily Star, alleged that the AL itself did not co-operate properly when they went to Sudha Sadan, to examine Sheikh Hasina's jeep and record the statement of Hasina's driver and some injured AL leaders.

Till now the investigators believe no bullet hit Hasina's jeep during the attack although there were bullet-marks on it. "I think [grenade] splinters hit the jeep, creating a hole that looks like one made by bullet," said an intelligence officer involved in the investigation.

Meanwhile, a government-formed one-man judicial inquiry commission linked a foreign enemy with the attack but the report was not made public. The government is yet to make any statement whether there were any recommendations in the report and, if any, whether they were implemented.

"The government has a constitutional responsibility to publish all investigation reports about all bomb and grenade attacks and illegal arms seizures, but it failed to do so," said

eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain, who headed the SCBA inquiry.

The SCBA leaders alleged that the government's indifference to the SCBA report led to subsequent bomb and grenade attacks in the country.

"The August 21 attack should not be investigated as a detached one as it has links with the other grenade attacks," quipped a senior intelligence officer, who has 30 years of experience in criminal investigation.

George Mia's story does not provide any coherent links to the incident and, above all, the motive, he said.

"The investigators did not show any sign to dig the motive and find out the identity of the mastermind of such a grisly attack that shook the whole nation," he noted.

AL, allies observe anniversary
The AL and its allies will observe the day as "Anti-political Violence Day".

Sheikh Hasina will unveil a memorial plaque in front of the central party office at 11:00am today.

The AL will bring out an anti-

terrorism rally from the Central Shaheed Minar at 5:22pm, the time of the attack, which will end in front of the central party office with the oath to resist all types of violence in the country and oust the present government for its failure to protect public life.

Similar programmes will also be observed across the country at all Shaheed Minars.

On the eve of the first anniversary of the August 21 attack, opposition leader Sheikh Hasina in a statement yesterday said the attack was pre-planned by the powerful cliques of the government.

"The government has made the whole investigation a farce," she said, adding that she wants a proper investigation into the incident and trial of the perpetrators.

In a separate statement, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil said, "One year has passed since the attack, but the government is yet to identify the culprits. It has been rather protecting them."