

Bangladeshi cops

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including Bangladesh have an opportunity to contribute more by sending a large number of police personnel.

Bangladesh has sent its first police contingent in Ivory Coast in 2005 to work under the UN mission. Now two contingents each having 125 personnel are working there. The contingents include 10 officers and two doctors.

Two more police contingents are also working in Congo and one in East Timor, while preparations to dispatch another to Sudan are underway, said a police official.

Working with the forces from different countries is expanding experiences of Bangladesh Police in many ways, a police official told The Daily Star correspondent during the visit to Ivory Coast in mid-July.

Inspector General of Police Nur Mohamad, who visited Bangladeshi peacekeepers in Ivory Coast and Liberia last month, told The Daily Star yesterday that the exposure to UN missions has been benefiting the policemen beyond expectation.

"It's a wonderful opportunity to work with foreign police personnel, which is enriching our force to the great extent," said the IGP, adding that the policemen will get a good opportunity to apply their knowledge in mission once they return.

Though 125 police personnel have been working in each Bangladesh FPU in Ivory Coast, the work force is not strong enough to perform assigned duties properly.

This reality prompted them to place a proposal to the authorities concerned to increase the number to 140 in each BANFPU to perform their duties properly, said a police official.

Of the two contingents, BANFPU-1 has been deployed in Bouake city under Commander Md Akram Hossain and BANFPU-2 in Yamoussoukro, administrative capital of Ivory Coast, where Ruhul is its commander.

A civil war in Ivory Coast broke out on September 19, 2002. Although most of the fighting ended by late 2004, the country remains split in two, the North under rebel control and the South under the government.

French troops had been brought into the country to resolve the crisis. The UN operation in Ivory Coast began after the civil war calmed down. A peace agreement to end the conflict was signed in March this year that is known as "Ouagadougou Peace Agreement", which could lead to the holding of elections and reunification of the country.

Both units of Bangladesh Police have already been acquainted with the people of Yamoussoukro and

Bouake.

The police peacekeepers are also performing significant duties including patrolling, riot controlling, escorting of the VVIPs, VIPs and refugees, guarding key point installations and important UN establishment, setting up check points, check posts and out posts, forming convoy with armed personnel carriers, arresting hard-nut criminals, detaining wrongdoers, and evacuating and searching houses and buildings.

Few months back, a massive fire broke out at the market place of Yamoussoukro. On information, two platoons of BANFPU-2 rushed there with water canons and firefighting equipment. With the help of the locals and the authorities they controlled the situation. This proactive enterprise is one of the remarkable jobs done by Bangladeshi police peacekeepers.

Up to now Bangladesh has completed 24 out of total 61 peacekeeping missions, where 62 thousand 131 peacekeepers have taken part.

Currently, over 83 thousand troops are working in peacekeeping operations in 15 countries, with about ten thousand peacekeepers from Bangladesh in 11 different UNPKOs. Bangladesh is one of the top listed troops contributing countries in the UNPKO.

Bangladeshi peacekeepers had been operating in many of the beleaguered areas of the world under difficult circumstances, even in serious life risks.

To restore peace and earn name and fame for the country, 76 Bangladeshi peacekeepers have so far laid down their lives for the cause of world peace. Among them, four police officers embraced death in foreign lands.

He said establishment of a national human rights commission, as promised by the government, is a priority.

Ashraf Uddin, acting high commissioner of Bangladesh, gave a comprehensive presentation on the caretaker government's commitment to minority and human rights in its reform plans.

He said a draft of the law on the Human Rights Commission is about to be circulated to stakeholders for consultation.

Baroness Uddin, chair of All Party Group on Bangladesh, Amnesty International's South Asia Researcher Abbas Faiz, Conservative Friends of Bangladesh Chair Ms Ann Main MP, Labour MP David Drew, Human Rights Watch Asia Director Brad Adams, and European Friends of Bangladesh Chair Dr Charles Tannock MEP also took part in the discussion.

Other contributors included Harry Cohen MP, Tower Hamlets Mayor Councillor (Cllr) Ann Jackson, Awami League Representative MA Rahim, BNP Representative Barrister Jushna Miah, Gano Forum's representative Cllr Ayub Korom Ali, Respect Cllr Lutfi Begum, Bangla TV's MS Alam Liton, ex-Cllr Talal Karim and Alik Rahman Chowdhury.

The AL representative said Sheikh Hasina was arrested and imprisoned under the emergency powers that appear to deny her basic legal rights, including legal representation.

Lord Avebury in his concluding remarks said, "We as fellow members of the Commonwealth, and with the ties of family and history that bind us together, want to see Bangladesh go through a new liberation, emerging with strong political, legal and human rights institutions."

Speakers also discussed the 'failure' to bring justice to criminals who committed outrages during the last government's regime, and the need to curb the activities of fanatics who stir up religious hatred.

Two female students of Haider Ali High School at Mugda of Sabujbagh in the capital were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with the symptoms of mass hysteria.

He is accused of abusing his position as a lawmaker to grab 25 bighas of land and shrimp farms, and of amassing massive wealth.

Nazrul is also reportedly guilty of embezzling Tk 1.68 crore by creating a 'ghost' relief programme. Three other extortion cases against Nazrul are currently underway.

Mowlana Abdus Sobhan, former lawmaker of Jamaat from Pabna, is accused in a case of misappropriating relief goods, after 160 sheets of corrugated iron sheets were recovered from his clinic in Pabna on June 27.

Former Jamaat lawmaker from Nilphamari, Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, surrendered himself on February 19 and was later sent to jail for embezzling 239 corrugated iron sheets which had been marked as relief material.

Former Jamaat lawmaker, Shajahan Chowdhury, has been accused in 24 cases since 2001, including murder, and was named by the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) on the February 18 list of corruption suspects. The joint forces raided his house on February 3 on suspicion of corruption.

But he walked out in front of law enforcement officials after submitting his wealth statement on February 20. Three extortion cases were filed against Shajahan in the last two months. He is currently in hiding.

He was acquitted in three murder cases while Jamaat was part of the four-party alliance government.

Former Jamaat lawmaker from Khulna-5, Golam Parwar, is accused of driving a jute mill to bankruptcy between 2002 and 2004. A case was filed on June 27 with Khanjahan Ali police station by the mill manager accusing Parwar of bankrupting the mill by looting Tk 35 lakh worth of goods and leaving the mill with a Tk 2 crore electricity bill.

He further alleged that he watched the incidents of murder, torture and ransacking of rooms at DU dormitories and houses at different parts of the country by the activists of four-party alliance in the video.

The CDs contained torture of Purnima in Sirajganj, attacks on minority Hindu community after the general election on October 1, last year and ransacking of puja mandaps. "Such activities might destroy the communal harmony and worsen the country's law and order," he observed.

After hearing, the court had directed the officer in-charge (OC) of Airport Police Station to accept the complaint as a regular case and to go for legal action against the accused.

Following the court order, police registered the case.

On February 20, five bundles of corrugated iron sheets were recovered from a madrasa patronized by former Gaibandha-1 Jamaat lawmaker, Mowlana Abdul Aziz. No case has been filed against Aziz as yet.

London seminar

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Secretariat, Liberation, Saferworld, Ahmadiyya Muslim Association, International Crisis Group, Jago Bangladesh, London School of Economics, and University of London addressed the seminar.

Addressing the seminar British MPs expressed concern at the 'undignified arrest' of former Bangladeshi prime minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, and the rejection of her application for bail. It was also suggested that a delegation of parliamentarians should visit Bangladesh to observe the situation.

Speakers were also critical about the restrictions on the freedom of political parties to decide freely on how to democratise themselves. They suggested lifting the ban on political activities before the next general elections.

The seminar criticised the detention of a large number of people and lack of prosecutorial and judicial capacity to hold the trials promptly.

In his inaugural speech, Lord Avebury said while attention has rightly been focused on the caretaker government's strategy for genuinely free and fair elections, reformation of the political system, and eradication of corruption, there is concern also about problems of human rights.

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Mass hysteria

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Immediately after she fell unconscious, seven more girls followed, said Headmistress Mohsena Khatun.

The children went back home with their parents after a medical team led by Dr Parikshit Par and Civil Surgeon Dr Narayan Prasad Chowdhury had treated them.

Meanwhile, 10 class nine students of Pabna's Girls' High School went unconscious at about 11:00am yesterday, reports our Pabna correspondent.

A student became senseless and while trying to help her, the others also fainted.

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Matin plays down

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case, and in the case of Paltan shooting on 28 October, 2006.

Bangladesh Worker's Party filed a case against ten senior Jamaat leaders in connection with the murder of one of its activists, Russel, during a clash between 14-party coalition and Jamaat on October 28, 2006. The accused ten include Nazrul, Jamaat's secretary general and former social welfare minister Ali Ahsan Mujahid, its Senior Secretary General Mohammad Quamaruzzaman, Nayeb-e-Ameer Maqbul Ahmed, and Assistant Secretary General ATM Azharul Islam.

A supplementary charge sheet of the case will be submitted on August 2 following several hearings.

Mujahid and Abdul Kader Molla are also accused in the August 21, 2004 grenade attack case filed by Badar Aziz Uddin, who had been injured in the attack.

Mujahid is also accused in a case filed on May 3 by a Sylhet businessman in connection with an extortion of Tk 25 lakh by four local Jamaat leaders using Mujahid's and former Jamaat lawmaker Fariduddin Chowdhury's names.

Yet, Mujahid was allowed to travel on a five-day trip to Turkey on June 16, while Hasina was not allowed to travel to the United States last month for being charged in an extortion case.

Former Jamaat lawmaker from Comilla-12 constituency, Syed Abdullah Mohammad Taher, was arrested on March 7 by the joint forces for encroaching upon government land, ponds and sandanks.

Taher is also one of the 12 accused in an embezzlement case filed by two government officials on June 29, which accuses Taher and his brother along with 10 others, of siphoning money from government project funds.

Police sources said proof of the embezzlement was sent to the ACC.

Taher also have numerous other allegations against him including having links with several murders, and allocating Tk 14.65 lakh illegally for a college established in his mother's name.

Jamaat's former lawmaker from Satkhira-5 constituency, Gazi Nazrul Islam, had been named on a list of people who aided and abetted corruption, and he surrendered himself to the joint forces on March 9.

More areas inundated

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shelter at nearby highlands and embankments. The newly inundated upazilas are Chowhani, Shahjhpur and Beluchi.

Around 50 more educational institutions including primary schools were forced to close as after being deluged by flash flood.

Water Development Board (WDB) officials said the flood situation may take a serious turn within the next few hours and submerge all nine upazilas of the district, as torrents of water from upstream continues to gush into the low lying areas.

The Brahmaputra embankment near Raniganj point has turned vulnerable again due to the intense currents of the Jamuna. Kunkunia Bridge on the Sirajganj-Kazipur road is also at risk, said officials at Roads and Highways Department (RHD).

Meanwhile, various waterborne diseases including skin disease, diarrhoea and dysentery broke out in the area. Local hospitals have been having difficulties to treat the unexpectedly large number of patients as the hospitals lack adequate supply of saline and medicines, doctors working at the hospitals said.

Our Bogra staff correspondent reports, over 50,000 people have been marooned due to flash flood while more areas are likely to be flooded soon as water level of the rivers Sumeshwary, Mogra, Kangsha and Dhanu continue to rise.

The affected upazilas are Durgapur, Kalimakanda, Mohongonj, Khalajuri and Madan, WDB officials said. Vast areas of Netrakona sadar and Atpara upazilas are likely to go under water in the next 24 hours, they predicted.

Vast areas of Birishiri, Koyirgorda, Gaokandia and Bakoljura union in Durgapur upazila, Langura, Rangchati, Karnai, Pogla and Koiati union in Kalmakanda, Mohongonj, Madan and Khalajuri are now under floodwater. Sources said.

The floodwaters damaged 80 percent of Aman seedlings, Aman crops and vegetables fields, locals said.

The road communication between the district headquarters and Durgapur upazila sadar and Netrakona and Khalajuri upazila has been disrupted due to high waters. Our correspondent from

Khaleda

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ACC Secretary Mokhlesur Rahman yesterday informed reporters about the ACC decision.

Asked by newsmen, Khaleda's lawyer Ahmed Aazam Khan said that according to estimates till now, she has wealth worth less than Tk 3 crore.

He also said Khaleda's wealth comprises money received from renting a house, fixed deposits, life insurance and savings from salary and benefits she received during her two terms as prime minister. The wealth was accumulated over a period of 40 years. The estimates are yet to be completed, he added.

She has no wealth, movable or immovable, outside the country, he added.

Meanwhile, detained former premier Sheikh Hasina is supposed to submit her wealth statement by July 29—the deadline for this.

The ACC secretary said no petition seeking extension of time on behalf of Hasina was received till yesterday.

If case of any time extension petition by Hasina by July 29, the deadline would be shifted, he added.

On July 18, the ACC asked both the former premiers to submit their wealth statements in a week. According to ACC act, the commission can extend the time limit by seven days if someone applies for it.

The teachers believe that the image of the government was tarnished as it mistreated Sheikh Hasina during her arrest when it could have prosecuted her without sending her to jail.

A senior teacher said they felt moral obligations to protest and they came up with this unique technique to place their demands because strikes are not allowed under the emergency rules.

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He further alleged that he watched the incidents of murder, torture and ransacking of rooms at DU dormitories and houses at different parts of the country by the activists of four-party alliance in the video.

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