

DU violence

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events had spread, triggering thousand more students to pour onto the streets in protest

Acting Vice-Chancellor Prof AFM Yusuf Haider, Proctor Prof AKA Firoz Ahmed, assistant proctors and some other teachers rushed to the spot and sat with army and students to reach a solution.

After the meeting Prof Haider said, "The in-charge of the unit Colonel Huda unconditionally expressed sorrow for the incident on behalf of his force and said they will take action against the responsible army personnel." However, angry students demanded that the responsible apologize publicly and that the army camp be shifted.

Students were frightened when army took video shots of the demonstrators and they chanted slogans against the army.

The proctor said, "I saw someone was taking video shots from the rooftop, but when I talked to the army, they denied it was them."

After sometime students went to the campus and took part in a protest procession from the Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) to press home their demand. As they approached to the resident of the VC, police charged baton from behind the students, injuring five demonstrators, including one female student.

Students were disbursed, but

soon they were reinforced, as hundreds of students came out of different residential dormitories including Bangabandhu Hall, Zia Hall, Surya Sen Hall and Jashimuddin Hall and gathered at Mall Chattar on the campus, adjacent to VC's residence.

At this place, furious students vandalised a police car with some police inside.

Then they marched towards the army camp at the gymnasium and locked in a fierce battle with police. Police charged baton on the students, hurled tear shells and chased them, leaving several demonstrators injured.

In retaliation, students pelted police with brickbats, stones and other such things turning the area into a virtual battleground.

The battle spread from the gym to the TSC, Rokeya Hall, central library, VC's residence, Mall Chattar, Bangabandhu Hall, Zia Hall, Surya Sen Hall and Jashimuddin Hall. Several hundred police took position on the streets, while the demonstrators continued to pelt police with brickbats and stones hiding behind buildings and from rooftop.

Until filing this story, scattered battles between the police and students continued.

More floods

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Erosion at Taraf Manu and Khalshi on Gobindaganj-Dinajpur highway is threatening to snap road communication. The WDB, however, is trying to stop the erosion by dumping rubble and sandbags.

"After the floodwater receded, we sowed Amon seeds on chars for seedlings, but all went under water, said Hafizur Rahman, a farmer of Char Pupulia of Fulchari upazila.

With the addition of 161 new patients, a total of 4,542 people have been infected with diarrhoea in the district so far.

Our correspondent in Sathkhira reports: Over 2 lakh people have been marooned by the floods caused by the distension of the Kabodak at Tala and Kalaroa upazilas of Sathkhira and Jhikargacha, Manirampur and Keshabpur upazilas of Jessor.

Over 657 families, now homeless, have taken refuge in at least 11 makeshift flood shelters and on the Patkelpahata bridge. There is a severe crisis of food and drinking water there as most tube wells went under water.

Floodwater submerged standing crops on about 30,000 acres of land. At least 20 shrimp enclosures were inundated and shrimps worth Tk 40 lakh were washed away.

Our correspondent in Sirajganj reports: The WDB officials said flood situation in five upazilas-Belkuchi, Chowhali, Kazipur, Sirajganj Sadar and Shahjapur deteriorated further with the swelling of the Jamuna.

People who vacated their homes two to three weeks ago are not returning, as they fear further flooding. Riverbank erosion took a serious turn for worse devouring many farmlands, houses and other establishments, sources said.

Around 500 diarrhoea patients were admitted to different hospitals yesterday and there is a scarcity of saline and medicines, officials at the District Civil Surgeon's Office said.

Meanwhile, the local administration took a number of people who took shelter in a high school in Sirajganj town to leave immediately, as the school would start operating soon. They, however, claimed their houses are still under knee to waist deep floodwater.

About 80,000 looms are still under floodwater in Belkuchi, Shahjapur, Sirajganj Sadar, Kazipur and Chowhali upazilas forcing around four lakh loom employees out of work, said District Relief Officer Abul Khayer.

Pabna farmers

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occurred as a large number of farmers gathered there at the same time demanding fertiliser.

But the aggrieved farmers said they were not getting adequate supply of fertiliser.

"I have cultivated nine bigha of land this year. At least 10 kg of fertiliser is required for each bigha. But I could not get sufficient quantity of fertiliser," said Abdus Sattar, a farmer of Ramchandrapur village.

Other aggrieved farmers also expressed their resentment over inadequate supply of fertiliser.

However, Pabna Sadar Upazila agriculture officer Md Mokbul Hossain said 200 farmers were included in the list for distribution of 7.5 metric tonnes of fertiliser yesterday. The incident occurred as over a thousand farmers gathered there for fertiliser.

He said 800 metric tonnes of fertiliser are required in August while they have 437 metric tonnes of fertiliser.

A probe committee led by assistant commissioner (Land) has been formed to investigate the matter," said Pabna Sadar UNO Md Abdul Hakim.

Pabna District Agriculture Office sources said the supply of fertiliser in May and June was not sufficient.

EC to ask again

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imposed on March 7, following the declaration of the state of emergency on January 11.

But the government has not yet responded to the EC's request, making the EC to wait for about five months to begin the talks with the parties.

Finally, the EC on July 15 announced a detailed polls plan including holding talks with the political parties from September to complete the electoral reforms.

"We have discussed with the government before disclosing the roadmap. The ban on indoor politics must be lifted. We will keep asking the government to lift it," Huda said.

Two major political parties Awami League and BNP have already declared that they would not sit with the EC unless the ban on indoor politics is lifted, allowing them to hold meetings at their party forum to discuss the EC's proposals.

As per its official plans, the EC will send letters to the political parties next week inviting them to sit in dialogue with the EC on electoral reforms.

"The political parties will be given two weeks to examine the draft proposals for electoral reforms," he added.

Asked what if the major political parties like Awami League and BNP seek more time for their preparation to join the dialogue, the CEC said the EC would give a tentative timetable for the parties to sit in dialogue.

According to the EC's draft proposals, a political party that had won at least one parliamentary seat in elections since 1973 will be considered fit for registration. To qualify for registration, the organisations not meeting the above condition will have to have offices and committees in at least 32 districts and the upazilas under those.

Besides, they must have at least one thousand members at a district unit and 200 members at an upazila.

No headway in probe

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presence of the erstwhile prime minister Khaleda Zia blamed AL for perpetrating the grisly attack on its own rally endangering the life of its own chief while leaving 24 killed and over 300 others maimed.

The government's stance subsequently influenced the then investigators of the case enough to weave a story, involving a ward level AL leader and former ward commissioner of Maghbazar area in the capital, Mokhlesur Rahman. They attempted to feed the public the woven story through an ostensible confessional statement made by a petty criminal Joj Miah, in which he had named Mokhlesur as one of the planners of the attack.

Police officials, who had been tight-lipped about the case until the recent regime change bringing in the seat of power the current military backed caretaker government, are now saying that the erstwhile supervising officer of the case, criminal investigation department's (CID) Special Superintendent Ruhul Amin, invented Joj Miah out of the blue to keep the real criminals out of the reach of the probe.

Joj's very slightly woven statement drew media criticisms finally making it appear as blatantly meritless, and he himself turned out to be a creation of the police department's well practised imaginations, when his sister soon after his arrest divulged to the media that CID had been paying Joj Miah's family Tk 2,500 a month for upkeep since the arrest.

Based on Joj Miah's and two others' statements, all of whom had made almost identical confessions, CID investigators even attempted to submit a charge sheet in the case, but the government held back following a media flak that had termed Joj Miah's story very sketchy.

"Authenticity of the confessional statement made by Joj Miah is questionable as no other corroborative evidence was found supporting it," Kaosar Ahmed Haydor, special superintendent of CID who is now supervising the case, told The Daily Star.

Since the 'Joj Miah theory' flopped, the investigation has been stalled, and 17 of the 20 suspects arrested in connection with the case were freed on bail. Joj Miah, Abul Hasem alias Rana, and Shafiqul Islam, who made the confessional statements, are the only ones still remaining behind bars.

The investigators arrested the 20 suspects in their pursuit of establishing a story that the blasts had been carried out by a criminal gang, as 'confessed' by Joj Miah and the other two in line with directions from currently detained and charged with a slew of criminal offences, former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar, who had acted as a liaison between the 'criminal group' and the once feared power house of Hawa Bhaban, said the CID sleuths.

Besides, criminals usually leave marks of their attack patterns at a crime scene, said Haydor.

He however said they have yet to find any evidence connecting Mufti Hannan and other Afghan war veterans with the deadly August 21 attack.

QUESTIONS STILL UNANSWERED

Questions about who plotted the attack, what was the motive behind

Hossain alias Liton, Akhteruzzaman alias Ata, Abdur Rahim, Waliullah alias Ali, Mohammad Hossain, Monir Hossain alias Picchhi Monir, and Akash Sarkar alias Jiten.

The new investigators are now focusing on a group of Afghan war veterans led by Mufti Abdul Hannan, presuming that they might have carried out the attack as they had hands in many other grenade attacks in the country. The investigators are now saying that in the last three years they did not have enough corroboration for the confessional statements made by Joj Miah and the other two.

The investigators are now also saying that their task of finding out the attackers have become more complicated as many necessary evidence required for a fair investigation are now almost impossible to collect after three years into the incident due to the 'shady' start of the investigation.

An investigator seeking anonymity said three years after an incident it is extremely difficult to carry out an investigation starting anew. "As the previous investigation was not steered to a right direction, we have to investigate the case all over again from the very beginning," he said.

The investigators said they are having a hard time in finding a direction for the investigation as the case had been prejudiced from the get go due to the shady track of probe followed over the years. Now to start the investigation afresh again it will take time, as it is a tedious time consuming process to scrap confessional statements in the legal maze.

Despite the caretaker government's March 25 decision of marking the case as a sensitive one and of enlisting it with the home ministry's monitoring cell for proper investigation and quick adjudication, the new investigators have yet to make any headway due to the mess left by the previous investigation team.

MILITANT LINK

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The suspicion arose from Harkatul Jihad's arrested militants' confessions that the currently banned Islamist militant organisation had carried out grenade and bomb attacks on former finance minister and AL leader Shah AMS Kibria, British High Commissioner in Bangladesh Anwar Chowdhury, Sylhet City Corporation Mayor Badaruddin Ahmed Kamran, and an AL rally led by Suranjit Sengupta.

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QUESTIONS STILL UNANSWERED

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it, why were the evidence destroyed deliberately, and why two of the victims were buried hurriedly--remain still unresolved.

The immediate past elected government showed a brazen lack of interest in bringing to justice the perpetrators of the grisly attack, while the current caretaker government with its anti-crime posturing has yet to say why the law enforcers had totally failed to ensure security for the participants in the rally on that fateful evening and to arrest any of the perpetrators from the attack.

The Supreme Court Bar Association, which conducted its own inquiry into the attack, also blamed the immediate past elected government for destroying evidence.

CHARGES AGAINST ALLIANCE GOVT BIGWIGS MIGHT NOT STAND

The CID investigators said the complainant in the murder case filed against former premier Khaleda Zia, her son Tarique Rahman, Jamaat Chief Matiur Rahman Nizami, and 25 others in connection with the August 21 grenade attack seem to be lacking as the complainant could not provide any supporting evidence.

Haydor said it is mysterious why Badar Aziz filed the case. He said AL did not even support the charges Badar brought.

Badar's statement was recorded as an eye witness account soon after the incident, but he did not bring the charges at the time. "His statement is confusing," Haydor said.

Badar Aziz Uddin of Cox's Bazar, filed the case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka, on June 5, 2007, after being injured in the August 21, 2004 blasts on the capital's Bangabandhu Avenue.

Policy on cards

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campuses have the quality for getting approval but most others do not have the requirements for providing higher education. We will again publish the list of illegal foreign university campuses, if needed," he told newsmen after the meeting.

He however said the UGC has taken some initiative for removing confusion from the minds of students and guardians about the rule of law can follow its natural course.

"Those who tried to turn Bangladesh into a failed state through killing, repression, extortion, corruption and terrorism are now conspiring to mislead the nation about father of the nation Bangabandhu's place [in history]," he added.

Hinting at Jamaat-e-Islami, Zillur said, "Instead of arresting the ones with specific allegations for patronising militants, extortion and corruption, an adviser was speaking in their favour. This is saddening and unwarranted."

Meanwhile, AL president member Abdur Razzak told journalists at his Nakhalpara residence that

AL demands

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salvation of the departed souls.

Other political parties including Workers Party of Bangladesh and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal will observe the day separately.

On this day in 2004, a barrage of grenade blasts on an anti-terror rally of the AL killed twenty-four people including AL leader Ivy Rahman and wounded over 400 others. Almost the entire leadership of the party was present in the rally. Party chief Sheikh Hasina narrowly escaped the attack.

Briefing the journalists yesterday, Zillur accused the past BNJ coalition government of staging the dreadful attack on the AL rally. Primary objective of the attack was to kill Sheikh Hasina, he said.

He alleged that even though the grenade attack was launched in the presence of law enforcement agencies, they did not arrest the perpetrators. "They even helped the attackers flee the scene. To save the attackers, evidences of the attack were also destroyed," Zillur claimed.

He said the alliance government did not even accept AL's case against the attackers since they [BNP-Jamaat] were involved in the attack.

Zillur branded the cases filed against former prime minister and AL President Sheikh Hasina conspiratorial, false and fabricated. The AL leader demanded immediate withdrawal of the cases and unconditional release of Hasina so that the rule of law can follow its natural course.

"Those who tried to turn Bangladesh into a failed state through killing, repression, extortion, corruption and terrorism are now conspiring to mislead the nation about father of the nation Bangabandhu's place [in history]," he added.

Violence between rival Shia militias is now rife in Iraq's second city, Basra, where British troops deployed there since the invasion are preparing to withdraw from their last base in the city and re-deploy to a desert airbase.

The situation has been exacerbated, US commanders training and arming hardline Shia militia units known as "Special Groups" to carry out kidnaps and attacks on US-led forces.

Tehran has always vehemently denied trying to destabilise Iraq, and Maliki's government maintains close ties with its larger Shia neighbour.

The slain governors' party, formerly known as the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, was founded in Tehran under the auspices of the Iranian government as an Iraqi opposition force in exile.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is planning to make his first visit to Iraq, the

Iraqi governor killed

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ISNA news agency reported. Meanwhile, Maliki arrived Monday in Syria for a visit to another US foe and ally of Iran.

The latest political violence in southern Iraq coincided with meetings between French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner and the country's divided political leaders to learn about the crisis.

Kouchner's visit is the first by a senior French official since the US-led invasion and, while he brought no concrete offers of assistance, it has been welcomed by Iraqi leaders