

Only a handful

All the progressive and liberal forces must unite together to destroy the dark forces. Side by side, create a new set of laws that could try them for mass murder and treason. Go to the International Court of Justice, get international lawyers, motivate our own lawyers to do their homework well ahead to be able to make the case. It is now or never.

SHAHNOOR WAHID

THE wanton massacre and the brutality at Pilkhana must not be dignified by calling it a mutiny. It was more like an armed robbery by a large number of dacoits who went into a frenzy of killing, burning, and looting. Rape has not been ruled out by some analysts. Definitely the perpetrators were not "soldiers" who take the oath of allegiance to serve the country, accepting the terms and conditions of the service.

A soldier serves without asking questions. A soldier goes forward before a hail of bullets at the command of the commanding officer and gives his life for the country. Read the history of 1971 and

learn about the sacrifices of the soldiers of this same paramilitary force (the then EPR) and you will feel respect welling up within your bosom. The killers at Pilkhana were no soldiers. They were not worthy of the uniform they wore. They were dacoits just like any other dacoit who enters the house of an unarmed citizen and chops him down to loot his possessions.

Such murderers are to be tracked down and brought before a tribunal. There can be no second opinion about this, because once they have looted, raped, and killed, they will do it again and again. The last thread of morality has snapped inside their black souls and now they have no respect for human life. They have tasted blood and they will

want more. So, if the killers remain untraced there is every chance that they will join some smugglers or child traffickers or killer gangs, unleash a reign of terror in the countryside, and create a serious law and order situation. Therefore, one has to be quick in dispensing justice in such cases, and exemplary punishment is the expected justice.

While we shall hunt the killers down in the valleys and jungles, we at the same time must launch a vigorous investigation to unearth the truthfulness of strong allegations that those robbers and killers did not act in isolation. It is being widely and openly discussed that the killers were frontline implementers of a blueprint that was masterminded by a sinister force.

Now, the question is how big is this dark force we are talking about? Are there many people manning the force? It is a pity that the overwhelming majority of the people of Bangladesh could not round these few rogues up and throw them into the dungeon for good. On the contrary, we have let them live in this country, we have let them grow in strength, we have watched them do all sorts of anti-people activities, and yet we

cannot do anything to stop them.

From the way unarmed army officers were killed at Pilkhana last week, it has become glaringly evident that it was done to unnerve and discredit the government, the armed forces, and the BDR, and that it was done to destabilise the state.

Some sources are talking about secret meetings the previous night. Some are talking about vehicles that moved suspiciously in the BDR compound. Some believe armed elements from outside joined the killers in uniform. Therefore, it is easy to conjecture that there are many loose ends flying around. Our sincere suggestion is: pick up the threads and weave the painful story back.

Going back again to the theory of only a handful of the masterminds that are out to destroy Bangladesh and all its achievements, we would like to send the warning note, beware of them however small in number they may be at the moment. Do what you must do before it really gets too nasty.

All the progressive and liberal forces must unite together to destroy the dark



What dark force impelled them?

forces. Side by side, create a new set of laws that could try them for mass murder and treason. Go to the International Court of Justice, get international lawyers, motivate our own lawyers to do

their homework well ahead to be able to make the case. Do whatever is needed. It is now or never.

Shahnoor Wahid is a Senior Assistant Editor of The Daily Star.

The legacy of blood

No word is enough to condemn this outrageous act of medieval-age barbarity committed by the lunatics. They have not only killed their own officers and badly damaged the image of a two centuries old tradition-rich institution like BDR, but have also struck at the very root of our existence as a sovereign, independent, democratic and peaceful nation.

HUSAIN IMAM

THE number of deaths, reported so far, in the BDR mutiny of February 25 is 73. According to latest statistics released from army headquarters, 53 of them were army officers from the rank of captain to major general and 3 of them were their family members. Seven army officers are still missing.

Mutiny is a misnomer so far as this tragic incident is concerned. It was a carnage perpetrated by a herd of wild beasts in the garb of humans on a scale far beyond anybody's imagination.

No word is enough to condemn this outrageous act of medieval-age barbarity committed by the lunatics. They have not only killed their own officers and badly damaged the enviable image

of a two centuries old tradition-rich institution like BDR, but have also struck at the very root of our existence as a sovereign, independent, democratic and peaceful nation. They must not go unpunished.

I, as an ordinary citizen of this country, express my profound sorrow at the sad demise of some of the brilliant sons of the soil and convey my deepest sympathy to the bereaved families. May Allah rest the departed souls in peace and help the bereaved families recover from the shock.

The government of Sheik Hasina has done more than its share. It quelled the rebellion and brought the situation under control in less than 36 hours, which saved the lives of 42 army officers and nearly hundred families who were held hostage by the rebels, and hun-

dreds of civilians living in the vicinity of the complex -- not to mention thwarting possible unrest among the 50,000 odd BDR jawans guarding the border.

All praise to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her government for putting down an armed rebellion, restoring order in the BDR headquarter and keeping the much aggrieved armed

forces in confidence. They have, however, a long way to go, a lot of things to do. Going by the events of February 25 and 26, apart from what the prime minister told the Parliament last Sunday, there can be little doubt that there has been a deep routed conspiracy to destabilise the democratic government and the country, and the con-

spiracy is still on.

That being the case, it is imperative on the part of the government to do everything possible to unearth the facts, expose those who are behind the scene and ensure exemplary punishment to the real culprits as early as possible, albeit through proper investigation and due process of law, so that nobody in future dares to indulge in such senseless misadventures. It is good to hear that the government has constituted a high-powered inquiry committee with representation from all the related agencies including the armed forces.

Equally important is to immediately restore the command structure of BDR, win the confidence of those jawans who were not involved in the incident, and make the organisation operational. We understand that the process is already underway. Another important task would be to restructure and reorganise the border force after careful analysis of the crisis.

Thanks to General Moeen, his colleagues and the troops under their command for the way they faced the situation under trying circumstances. They have shown extreme patience, kept cool and performed their duties in a most professional manner, and we

have reason to believe that they will continue to do so in future also.

Syed Badrul Ashan, editor, current affairs, The Daily Star writes: "Tragedy has been part of Bengali collective life for as long as we can remember. Death by violent means has been a pattern of life, of the end of life that we have known for ages."

Mr. Ahsan recalls the tragic events of death and violence from 1971 onward that led to the brutal killing of hundreds of men in uniform and civilians -- including the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, his family members, the four national leaders and a general turned president of the republic.

Mr. Ziauddin Choudhury, after having seen the tragic event of February 25 from abroad, asks in his article: "When will this murderous legacy end?" If I may answer his question, nobody knows for sure.

However, there could probably a beginning of the end by completing the Bangabandhu murder case, now pending in the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, without further delay, and by making sure that no murderer goes without trial, no murderer goes unpunished.

Capt. Husain Imam is a former senior officer of the merchant navy.



Punish those responsible.

How to get your bail-out



MEMO
TO: The global financial authorities, comprising:
The International Monetary Fund
The World Bank
The World Trade Organization
The central banks of all countries, and My wife.
FROM: The typical Asian consumer.
Dear Sirs and Madam,

I understand that you are in the middle of a series of bail-outs in which you give large amounts of public money to needy people all over the world.

You have generously given US\$150 billion to insurance salesmen at AIG. You have handed \$22 billion to

carmakers at Chrysler and General Motors. You have given more than \$350 billion to bankers around the planet.

Well, here's some good news. I am just about to put in MY requisition slip for bail-out funds, and it is very reasonable indeed. You're gonna love it!

I need only a fraction of the money you gave the folk above. I'm talking about a bail-out package of, wait for it, not \$20 billion, not \$10 billion, not even \$5 billion. All I'm asking for is a mere \$1 billion. Yep, that's all. Peanuts. Petty cash. Pocket change.

Unlike bankers, I will not take this money from you with one hand while furtively handing out massive bonuses to my mates with the other. (Back off, guys.)

I will not make a mockery of my plea by flying to collect the money in a luxurious private jet, as people mentioned above have done. No, I shall fly economy to New York, take the downtown bus to your office, and carry the money

away in a biodegradable supermarket plastic bag.

I will not take your money and lock it away for my own use, as bank loan debts have done. On the contrary, I plan to have a shopping spree that Grace Mugabe would find excessive.

I will shop in a manner not seen on this planet since my wife went shopping with 13 of her counterparts and stripped an entire department store bare, leaving only the shell of the building.

Why should you bail me out? These are tough times, and I need money like everyone else.

Who is most deserving? The carmakers who made vehicles motorists don't want? The fund managers who put everyone's savings into bad investments? The bankers who pushed poor folk to buy homes they can't afford?

No, the money should go to people who have not misbehaved. We Asian consumers earned money by working for it. We did our share of saving and our share of consuming. We spent money we had, not cash from credit cards. We make up 60% of the world's population, but on a per capita basis, we make relatively little of the world's pollution and use few of the world's resources.

You know us. We are math geeks. We work in factories. We cook smelly food. We have low crime rates. We read comics. We miss-spell road signs and menu items. We have black hair, we wear glasses and we are generally harmless.

And besides, we think you should be nice to us. After all, it will soon be our turn to run the world.

Mwah-ha-ha-ha-ha.
Your sincerely,
The typical Asian consumer.

Visit our columnist at www.vittachi.com.

Nepalese migrants

The history of Nepalese migrants shows that they have been serving in Bangladesh since the Second World War, but have not received proper support from the government and the people of Bangladesh.

RAJEEV KUMAR JHA

ISSUES pertaining to migrants and minorities have been a critical concern in every part of the world, including the United States, United Kingdom and Australia. I believe that a solution is not possible without equal contribution from each country.

The new government of Bangladesh is facing the same problem. The history of Nepalese migrants shows that they have been serving in Bangladesh since the Second World War, but have not received proper support from the government and the people of Bangladesh. They are treated as people of another nationality, and are not given proper rights.

Almost one year after my previous visit to a Nepalese migrant's house, I did not see any changes in their life style, in addition I found that some of the young generation have become jobless. They have no permanent address. Most of them have no land in their names.

The world is talking about globalisation nowadays, and I am one of those who think that the notion of globalisation is adding to economic development. However, I also believe that globalisation should not be limited to business only, it should develop in terms of human life, security, and social responsibility. People migrate from one place to another for a better life, therefore, it is the local government's responsibility to assure the betterment of those people.

Minorities have always been one of

the major issues in Bangladesh. There are many groups of minorities in Bangladesh, like Nepalese, Biharis, and Pakistanis. Most NGO's and international organisations supports migrants and minorities to raise awareness, but the Nepalese are left behind since the Nepalese population is small. According to the Nepali migrants, no such organisations have assisted them in solving their problems or raising their issues.

All minorities and migrants should get equal attention from the government. Some minorities (like Biharis and Pakistanis) are relatively large or historically important, and the system is set up in a way to guarantee them compre-

hensive protection and political representation.

Different minority groups often are not given identical treatment. Some groups are so small or so indistinct (like Nepalese) compared to others that they are ignored by the majority and the government.

The United Nations has already contacted the government of Bangladesh regarding migrants, saying: "The government must live unto its responsibility to protect its citizens, and must do it now."

The Nepalese minorities in Bangladesh do not want to go back to Nepal; they only want an assurance of security from the Bangladesh government. If the new government of Bangladesh gives an assurance of security and betterment of life of those people it would be a great success politically, and in international affairs, for the new government of Bangladesh.

Rajeev Kumar Jha is a student of AIUB. E-mail: nepal.rajeev@gmail.com.



Ensure the rights of migrants.

