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force was a tactical mistake. She has also said that she has sought the help of the US and UN to probe into the killing. The PM, who has to handle such a big crisis on the 50th day of her tenure, has taken some widespread measures. Her government has formed a probe committee ensuring representation of the army, air force, navy, police and Rab. In an oblique reference to the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, she has told the parliament that they (the BNP-men) brought out processions in Hajaribagh and other areas surrounding Pilkhana to encourage the killers.

There is no doubt that the crisis has been one of the toughest challenges that any new elected would want to see itself embroiled into. Sadly, there is no instance in our history that the probes into such carnages have been done in a transparent manner. We hope the BDR massacre will be an exception. Along with the entire nation we demand a neutral probe into the massacre, we also hope that the nation will be informed about the possible conspirators and their motives.

Given the nature of loss and the scale of brutality, our army, which was on duty during the crisis, has shown maximum restraint. No bullets were fired from their side, putting first priority on the safety of the women and children who were kept hostage inside. It only goes to the credit of the army that they have given peaceful resolution of the grave problem a chance. The government has started to probe into the carnage and we hope that the conspirators, along with the murderers, will be brought before justice. The brutality with which some of the brilliant officers of our armed forces and their family members have been treated cannot go unpunished. We do not have enough words to translate our anger and hatred to those who have committed one of the ghastliest crimes in the nation's recent history. The blood of the martyrs of the Pilkhana massacre shall not go in vain.

It is time to remain united as a nation. "We love ourselves, we love our friends and family members. But more than them," says Lt Gen (Retired) Harun, "We love our nation. At a time of such grave crisis we should be united to safeguard our nation and its sovereignty." He adds: "The pain that we are suffering should not deter us from safeguarding our country and putting the interest of it before everything. More then anyone else we love the country."

On simply military terms, the loss for the army and the country is staggering. "The number of officers we have lost would be enough to man 8 to 10 regiments of the army," he says. Even though any army in the world would find it difficult to stand such a massacre, Anam thinks, traumatised though its members are, "it is a disciplined force and is continuing to act in the highest traditions of professionalism."

Besides the irreparable loss of life, which has given a big blow to our army and the country, the BDR, as a force, needs to be reconstructed. The mutiny has left our porous border unguarded and our nation's security has remained vulnerable. This is the time to rise above the occasion and get united as a nation. It is only the united effort of everyone that can save our nation from this catastrophe.

Meanwhile, Nadeet Haque stares vacantly at the sky and remembers his father, who was the main brain behind the caretaker government's Operation Dal-Bhat, which was the lifeline for the country's poor. He says, "My father was a brave man, he worked really hard for the country. I do not know what has happened, I do not know how such an incident can happen." Like the slain Colonel's son, the entire nation anxiously waits to see the culprits of the BDR massacre to be brought before justice. ■