BDR Tragedy Update

Digging Deeper into the Mystery

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Commerce Minister Faruk Khan left little room for ambiguity last week when he noted that the bloodbath at the headquarters of the Bangladesh Rifles on February 25 and 26 was aimed at destabilising the country. A retired lieutenant colonel, the minister has been coordinating the three inquiries now in motion regarding the tragedy that claimed the lives of as many as fifty-two officers of the Bangladesh army in addition to those of three civilians. A few days earlier, Faruk Khan had raised quite a few eyebrows with his assertion that elements of the Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh may have been involved in the carnage. The government (and Khan is an important cog in that wheel) quickly sought to inform the country that the on-going inquiries would reveal the identity of those behind the incident. That, however, did not stop the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party from charging the government with trying to influence the course of the investigations into the Peelkhana disaster.

The bottom line ought to be obvious. The national focus is, very appropriately, on the three inquiries that are now going on into the February massacre. On the one hand, the government committee headed by former secretary Anisuzzaman Khan has asked for more time to finish its investigations. At another end, the Bangladesh army remains busy with its own investigations. Again, judging by the frequent media appearances of Abdul Kahhar Akand, Senior Assistant Superintendent of Police at the Criminal Investigation



The entire structure of the Bangladesh Rifles has fallen apart or is creaking badly. Government functionaries at various levels have, rather naturally, been mulling over a restructuring of the outfit through such measures as a renaming of the organisation.