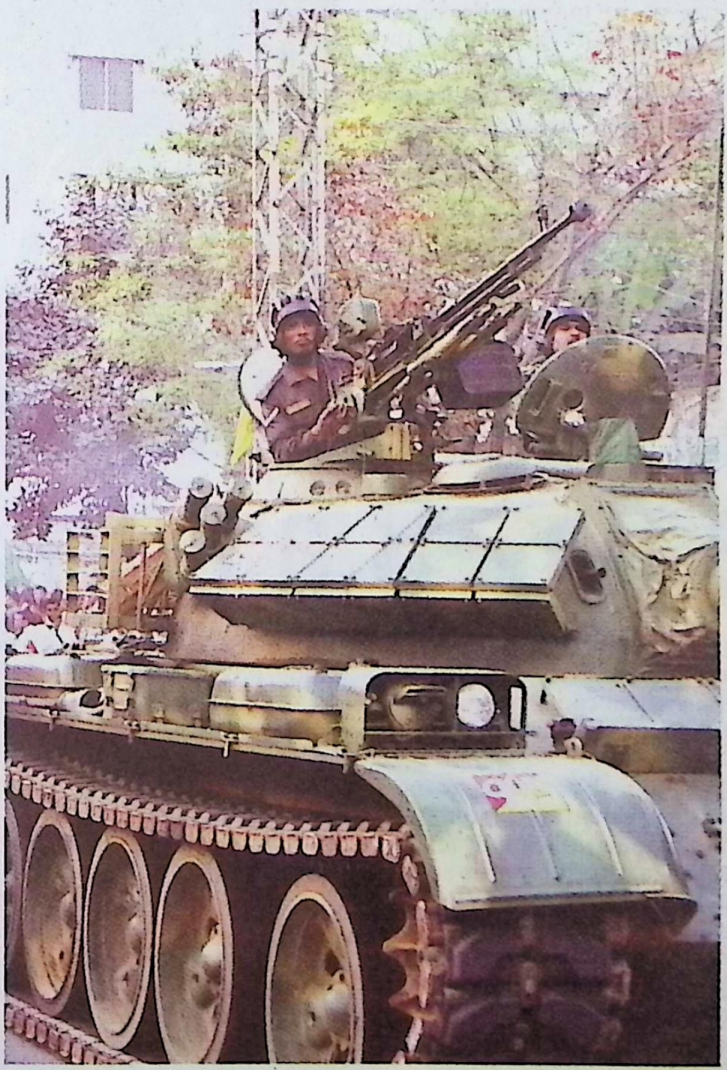
Department, the CID is well into trying to draw its own conclusions about the tragedy. Add to all that the arrival of teams from Britain's Scotland Yard and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) from the United States. And what you have is a picture, rather composite, of the determination of the government about delving into the roots of the mutiny that quickly turned into a serialized murder scheme whose goal was simply to do away with the lives of the army officers assigned to the BDR. The sheer magnitude of the cruelty resorted to by the killers is all. Besides murdering the director general of the BDR, Major General Shakil Ahmed, they quickly put an end to the lives of all the twelve sector commanders of the force along with those of other officers. In addition, the wife of the director general lost her life at the hands of these murderers when they went on the rampage after they had disposed of the officers. A woman army doctor assigned to the BDR was also done to death. The rest of the story hardly calls for a retelling.



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. The BDR is under a cloud, for all the patent reasons, and nothing can therefore be said about its immediate future as long as the inquiries are not fully and definitively gone through. Hundreds of BDR personnel, most of whom had earlier fled once the mutiny died down, have reported back to headquarters. They have since, for the most part, remained incommunicado and for obvious reasons. Altogether 248 of them have been taken into custody, some from different areas of the country. The country has been given to understand that among those nabbed is an alleged killer of Mrs. Naznin Shakil, wife of the murdered BDR DG. One can be fairly certain that there are others as well, men who together went into the business of murdering her in cold blood. One BDR member who reported for duty at Peelkhana has been placed under arrest following the recovery of a large amount of cash and ornaments at his parental home in his native village. And yet, despite all such news of arrests of BDR men allegedly involved in the horrors of February 25-26, there have been disquieting reports of some of the killers making their way out of the country. The daily Manabzamin reported quite sometime ago that four such individuals quickly left Bangladesh through Zia International Airport. If they did, it now becomes necessary to ascertain their identity as well as that of those who facilitated their flight out of the country.

A quick unraveling of the sinister mystery is what the country needs now. The arrest and remand of deputy assistant director Towhid and his colleagues should provide more clues into the tragic incidents. Towhid and the thirteen others who joined him for talks with the prime minister on 25 February have never been above suspicion. To what extent they were involved in the planning and execution of the carnage remains a fundamental question. They were, inexplicably for the nation, able to extract from the prime minister a public announcement of an amnesty even before the full extent of the horrors already perpetrated at the BDR headquarters became known. The very legitimate query arises, therefore, of what they told the prime minister, of whether they concealed the truth of the tragedy that had already taken place.

There is little question that a vast conspiracy was at work. The failure of the intelligence agencies to smell anything foul in progress, the role of the Rifles Security Unit on the two days in question, the reported mobile messages ('Be cautious' and 'Be alert') transmitted by two BDR sector commanders to their subordinates, who then passed the messages on to the RSU --- all of these only dig deeper holes in the ground. ■