

## BDR MUTINY

## Exemplary punishment is required

ZAHID HOSSAIN

**M**ANY a tragic stories of brutal and senseless killings of army officers have come to be known only after the BDR mutiny was quelled and the situation came under control. The entire process of negotiation with the rebels and surrendering of arms took little over 30 hours without causing any consequential loss of life and property there and government's efforts have been widely appreciated both at home and abroad.

This gruesome incident at the BDR headquarters at Pilkhana involved crimes against humanity, service rule and, above all, against social values. Naturally, exemplary punishment through the legal processes must be meted out to the culprits. And possibly that is why the demand for awarding punishment to the culprits has been gaining momentum every day.

As soon as the mutiny was brought under control, many opinions and views - sometimes conflicting and confusing - had been expressed from different quarters through the media as well as in other platforms. Military personnel have different views. Political parties and their supporters have come out with their own interpretations. Even the Parliament members had their say on this mutiny in the parliament. In fact, in the midst of widely expressed emotional discussions and country-wide condemnation, the demand for punishment to the culprits is increasing day by day.

Now the question arises as to why this demand for awarding punishment is being uttered everywhere and by every quarters? The answer is very simple. Our past experiences in similar or near similar situations, or in case of an army revolt, speak of a completely different story.

As Director of ISPR, Ministry of Defense from 1972 to 1980, I have had the sad experiences to see some of the army revolts in Bangladesh from close quarters and in most such cases no punishment, not to speak of exemplary ones, was meted out to the culprits. And possibly that is why people in general - civilians, military personnel, politicians, intellectuals, professionals, media men, all have come out with the demand for punishment. This has become all the more stronger and pervasive because of

the fact that the military personnel and others involved in such previous mutinies or the act of brutal and inhuman killings have in most cases never been punished. As a result, the recurrence of rebellious activities is still on no matter what the reason is.

What happened on August 15, 1975? The Father of the Nation and President of the country Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family members were brutally killed by a section of army personnel, both retired and in active service. Were any action taken against the killers? In fact no punitive action was taken against anybody involved in the brutal and heinous crime.

On the contrary, the then military government awarded immunity to the killers. Not only that, the killers were even rewarded by giving them diplomatic assignments abroad and possibly that is why we are still suffering from the after effects and consequential impacts of such brutal, inhuman, immoral and unethical acts in the name of mutiny by a section of army personnel.

What happened to the perpetrators of the jail killings? The inmates of a jail or a prison house are normally like guests of the government. Eminent political personalities like Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, Capt Mansur Ali and Quamruzzaman who led our Liberation War as members of the exiled Mujibnagar government in the absence of Bangabandhu Sk Mujibur Rahman were brutally killed inside Dhaka central jail on Nov 3, 1975 by the same group of army personnel who killed Bangabandhu and his family members. What punishment was given to the killers of the national heroes and that too inside a jail? Even a normal investigation and trial process did not take place for a long time and the sad story is known to all.

The events and the circumstances which led to the killing of a very bright army officer and a valiant freedom fighter who was founder commander of S Force during the war of Independence, Brig Khaled Mosharraf, (who later became Major General) along with very courageous freedom fighters like Col Huda and Col Hyder are still officially unknown to the people. What actually happened on that day and why such brilliant officers had to die in such an unceremonious way is still unknown.



Can't such brutal killing of the valiant freedom fighters be made public and the culprits given exemplary punishment?

What happened to General M.A. Manzur, another bright army officer and a sector commander of our Liberation War who was brutally killed along with other freedom fighter officers in mysterious circumstances in Chittagong in 1981? The real story is still unknown to the people and the culprits are still unknown, and the trial processes are still on after twenty-eight years of the occurrence.

According to available information, as many as twenty-one army coup took place from 1975 to 1981 and in many cases no effective or strong punitive actions were taken. And possibly because of absence of normal legal processes and transparent and acceptable trial methods, the culprits in those cases got immunity and faced no punishment for their grave offences, violating service rule and discipline. Had there been examples set through trial pro-

cesses in all those cases in the past, possibilities of recurrence of such activities would have, by this time, diminished.

What happened at the BDR headquarters at Pilkhana on Feb 25-26 was not at all a small occurrence. It has cast a heavy blow to the nation and has shaken up the army set-up as well as the BDR out-fit. It will take a long time to compensate the loss. So we must now stand united and continue with firm resolve and determination

to ensure a really exemplary punishment to the guilty for their brutal act so that peaceful and immediate restoration of normalcy in every areas, sections and branches of BDR and its chain of command is possible within the shortest possible time. Hopefully once the culprits are punished through a transparent trial, the nation will not have to face similar crisis any more in future.

The author is former Director, ISPR, Ministry of Defense.

## Salute to the brave foreign freedom fighters

MOHAMMAD ANWARUL QUADIR, LLB

**T**HE country has celebrated the historic 38th Independence Day on 26th March in a befitting manner. March is a red-letter month in our Liberation War.

The nation remembers the brave foreign freedom fighters, who struggled heart and soul, supporting our liberation war and against genocides, in their respective homelands.

Late Indian Prime Minister Sirimati Indira Gandhi supported and showed generous hospitalities, taking into shelter our countrymen in India during the Liberation War.

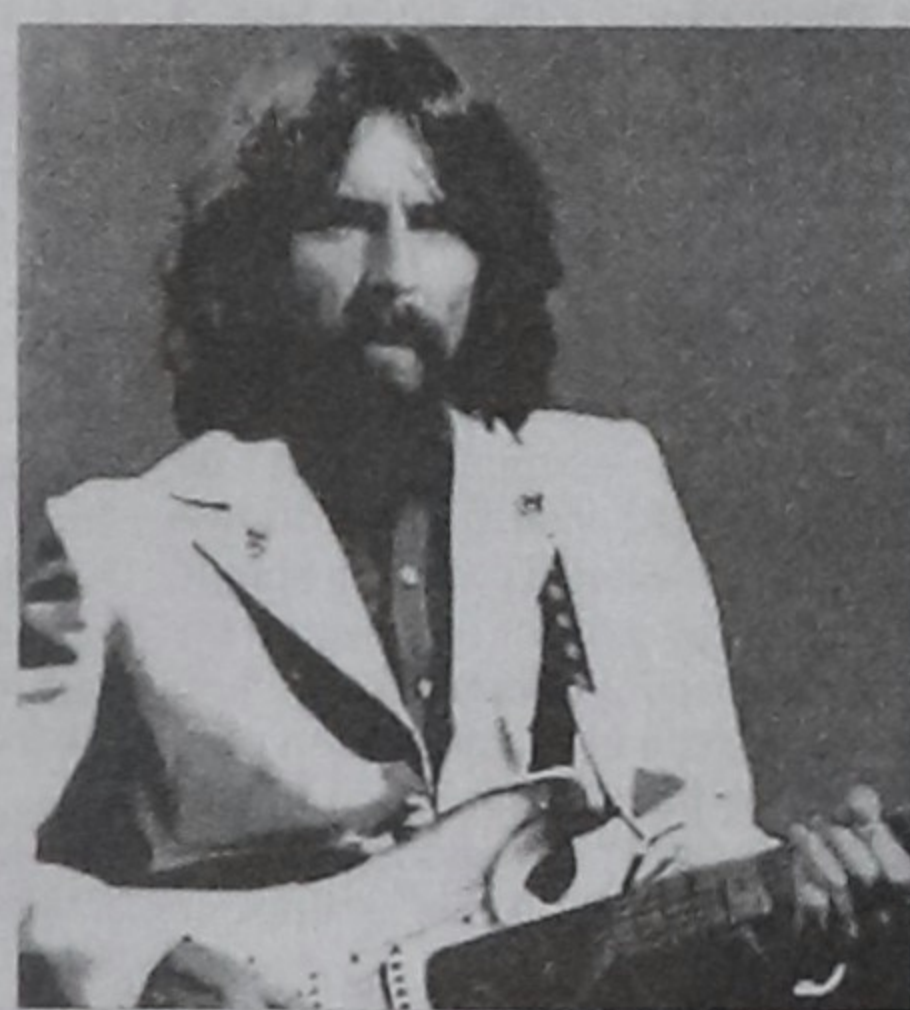
Famous French soldier-writer-politician and 1960 Nobel Prize Literature winner Late Andre Malraux was the first person, being then French Culture Minister, to become a household name in Bangladesh following his unequivocal support and most historic declaration. In a press conference at his chamber in Paris, during President General de Gaulle's regime, he declared to join the Liberation War of 1971, as a freedom fighter, to fight side by side with the Bangladeshi freedom fighters in the battlefield.

This revolutionary move by Andre Malraux created huge sensation all over the world and played a significant role in drawing attention of the world leaders and mobilising support of the world community, in favour of the people of besieged Bangladesh.

Upon the invitation of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Malraux paid a memorable visit to war-ravaged Bangladesh in April, 1973. He was given a hero's welcome as a first state guest with deep affection and warmth.

Dhaka University in a special ceremony, conferred upon him Doctor of Law, in recognition of his heroic performances for Bangladesh. He was the first person who was awarded the title since Bangladesh came into being.

Late John Stonehouse, labour MP in an opposition party, supported and campaigned as a freedom fighter, addressing in several street-corner meetings in some commonwealth countries including his homeland Britain, to pave the way for world support



George Harrison



Simon Dring



Andre Malraux



Archer Kent Blood

in favour of Bangladesh liberation war.

The proposed first Bangladesh Stamps, was presented to him for his heroic performance by Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury, the then Special Representative of the Mujibnagar Government, in a simple ceremony at a preview held in the British House of Commons, on 26 July, 1971.

Another British MP Late Peter Shore, the then deputy leader of the opposition labour party in the parliament moved and criticised strongly then Prime Minister Edward Heath's Conservative Party government, seeking support of the British government in favour of Bangladesh liberation war, as a freedom fighter.

Young British Journalist Simon Dring, who worked for the London based world famous newspaper The Independent, came to Dhaka in 1971. He covered the historic round-table meeting between

the Pakistani President General Yaya Khan and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on 26 March.

He stayed for several days in Dhaka at Hotel Intercontinental in disguise and gathered news and photos of the horrible massacres and guerrilla fights, risking his life. He left Dhaka secretly and published the feature entitled Bangladesh Genocide with photos in The Independent; this gained rapid support of the world for liberation of Bangladesh.

Late WAM Woodeland, an Australian citizen and former army officer, then serving as executive director of the famous Bata Shoe Company in Dhaka, was the first to join as a foreign freedom fighter and fight and direct operations in several battlefields. Later, he was awarded Bir Protik for his heroism in the liberation war.

Archer Kent Blood, the then

American Consul-General in Dhaka, resigned from his post in protest against the American government, for failure to support the liberation war; he strongly opposed the brutal military crackdown on the Bengalees. His famous "Blood Telegram" alerted the then US President Richard Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to the "selective genocide" and urged them to pressure Pakistan to stop the killing, even though he knew that he was risking his diplomatic career. He then left for home with his family. Later his scholar wife, Margaret Blood, inaugurated the Archer K. Blood Library Hall of the American Centre in Dhaka in 2005 in honour of her husband. It was acknowledgement by the American government of his brave support of the Bangladesh Liberation War.

Internationally acclaimed American singer Late George Harrison composed and sang the song entitled 'Bangladesh' in the Concert for Bangladesh, which was staged at New York's Madison Square Garden in 1971, to help raise money for aid to the famine-ravaged Bangladesh. The second of the two all-stars show was released as a movie and a live triple album. Famous singers Eric Clapton, Ringo Star, Billy Preston, Leon Russell and Bob Dylan also performed in the said concert. Famous Indian sitar player Ravi Shanker joined the performance also.

Famous British poet Allen Ginsberg visited the refugee camp in India during the liberation war. He wrote several poems in a book entitled "September on Jessore Road," which supported and gained fame in favour of the liberation war.

Renowned American Bone Surgeon Dr. Ronald J. Garst, now ninety years old, rushed to Bangladesh in 1972, just after the independence following an appeal by Bangabandhu. He treated and operated upon hundreds of critically wounded freedom fighters with accompanying doctors and nurses of his international hospital, at no cost, for several years. He returned the wounded freedom fighters home after helping them recover fully. Later, he was Project Director and Founder of Pangu Hospital in Dhaka.

Famous BBC journalist Mark Talley, based in New Delhi in India, covered and focused the news of the battles and genocides to the media, during liberation war.

Late Senator Robert F. Kennedy and Senator Edwar P. Kennedy, brothers of the President John F. Kennedy, moved and struggled in favour of the liberation among the Americans, criticising against President Richard M. Nixon's Government.

We, the people of Bangladesh salute those foreign freedom fighters on this historic occasion.

It is high time that our government take some initiative to honour these foreign freedom fighters who bravely fought for our cause in their own ways.

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The conference began on 8th December with a presentation on what would happen to humanity in the event of a nuclear detonation before moving towards a discussion of what "Getting to Zero" would mean in practical steps, for instance the need for an intrusive system of inspection to ensure no country was evading its obligations.

In the US, the debate was kick-started by a joint call for "Getting to zero" from a group of veterans of the Cold War, including Henry Kissinger and George Schultz.

South Asia, the place where many experts fear a nuclear exchange is most likely, was well represented at the conference with retired Foreign Secretary Shaharyar Khan from Pakistan pointing to President Zardari's recent offer of a no-first strike agreement to prevent their spread.

Shankar Bajpai, former Indian Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs, remarked on India's statesmen arguing for nuclear abolition for many decades.

**Why elimination of nuclear weapons?**

Nuclear weapons pose an intolerable threat to all humanity and its habitat. The destructiveness of nuclear weapons is immense. Any use of such weapons would be catastrophic.

The only defence is the elimination of nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons are held by a handful of countries which insist that these weapons provide unique security benefits and yet reserve the right to own these weapons exclusively to themselves. This situation is highly discriminatory and thus unstable; It cannot be sustained. The possession of nuclear weapons by any state is a constant stimulus to other states to acquire them.

The world faces threats of nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism and these threats are growing.

The ground reality is that for these reasons nuclear weapons diminish the security of all states. Indeed, states which possess them become targets of nuclear weapons themselves.

In 2000, in his book "Engagement: The author is a n advocate and journalist.

## Elimination of nuclear weapons: Global Zero campaign by world leaders

BARRISTER HARUN UR RASHID

Last December, a group of international dignitaries have launched a new campaign in Paris to eliminate nuclear weapons. Global Zero aims to translate this stance to the international arena and into public debate.

Global Zero consists of 100 leading figures seeking practical steps towards abolition of nuclear weapons and to gain public support for that goal. Some of them are former US President Jimmy Carter, former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, former Brazilian President Fernando Cardoso, businessman Sir Richard Branson, Ehsan Ull-Haq, the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Pakistan, and Brajesh Mishra, former Indian National Security Advisor.

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Australia faces the Asia Pacific", Paul Keating, former Prime Minister of Australia argues for scrapping nuclear weapons on the following reasons:

"Three possibilities exist with regard to nuclear weapons and three only. First, they will be used, either deliberately or accidentally. Second, that they will not be used but will be managed forever by wise, prudent and well-meaning governments and military forces and will never fall into the hands of terrorists and third, that we agree to get rid of them. The first possibility offers catastrophe to the human race. The second requires us to make assumptions about the future that run completely counter to logic and experience. The third is the only possibility that can secure our safety."

The proposition that nuclear weapons can be retained in perpetuity and never used - accidentally or by decision - defies credibility. The only complete defence is the elimination of nuclear weapons and assurance that they will never be produced again.

Global Zero says the risk of nuclear weapons spreading to a number of countries or getting into the hands of extremist groups is too great.

## New opportunity

In the past, talk of nuclear disarmament was confined to the margins of political debate, but now a chorus of national security officials past and present have joined calls for multi-lateral disarmament.

US President Barack Obama, during his election campaign, expressed his support for the goal of disarmament. Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin expressed similar sentiments in a speech in September when he talked of how it would be better to "close this Pandora's box."

A key aim of the Global Zero is to build public support for the issue in the way that activists have helped put climate change on the agenda.

In a poll of twenty-one countries for Global Zero, it was found that an average of 76% of the population favoured eliminating nuclear weapons within a time-bound agreement.

But members of Global Zero emphasise the need for more public information, particularly to educate the post-Cold War generation for whom the dangers of nuclear weapons may be more remote.

The Global Zero group believes that reducing the large US and Russian stockpiles - which make up 96% of all the nuclear weapons in the world - should be amongst the first steps which in turn can then draw in third parties and other nuclear powers into a wider and deeper process.

The aim of Global Zero is to spend this year (2009) working on a plan that could lead to a phased nuclear weapons reduction which would eliminate all nuclear weapons in 20 to 25 years.

The author is former Bangladesh Ambassador to the UN, Geneva.