

Tongi erupts

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were rushed to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital while others were taken to local hospitals and clinics.

The home ministry will hold an emergency meeting with officials of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association at 11:00am at the ministry to find out the causes behind yesterday's clash.

Witnesses said the clash erupted at about 8:00am when several hundred workers of Nippon garment factory tried to enter the factory, defying police barricade at the entrance.

The factory authority had hung on the main gate a notice of closure of the factory from October 31 to November 29 because of "global recession and some unwanted incidents".

The notice also asked workers to collect their dues from the factory office on November 10.

When the agitating workers, mostly females, tussled with police personnel to enter the factory yesterday, the law enforcers resisted them and at one stage charged truncheons to disperse the protesters.

The angry workers along with locals of Ershadnagar area blocked the highway and torched the bus and vandalised several vehicles.

Ali Asgar, driver of the torched bus, told The Daily Star that the agitating workers intercepted the bus in front of the factory and set it on fire.

The police charged truncheons on them again, which prompted the protesters to retaliate with bricks.

A team of police then fired rubber bullets and teargas canisters. At one stage, they entered the Ershadnagar area and clashes ensued.

Locals alleged that the police ransacked their houses and shops and tortured many innocent people who had no involvement in the incident.

A worker told The Daily Star that they wanted to enter the factory without paying their arrears. "But the police barred us and charged truncheons on us which caused the clashes," he said.

Mohammad Akter, a class III student, sustained bullet in the abdomen and arms during the clash when he went out of his house to look for his mother who is a worker of the factory.

"Hearing gunshots, I came out of the house to find my mother but all of a sudden I received the bullets," he told The Daily Star at DMCH.

A few family members of the workers tried to enter the factory in the afternoon in search of their missing relatives who, they said, had not returned home or made any contact since going to the factory.

Police kept around 15 locals and male workers tied to pillars of a nearby foot-bridge.

Many people claimed that the police killed several workers and locals. The law enforcers either took the dead bodies to another place secretly or hid those inside the factory, they said.

Rajab, a resident of Ershadnagar slum, said, "The law enforcers killed those who got trapped inside the factory compound."

However, none could specify identities of the alleged dead ones.

Lawmaker of the area Awami League leader Zahid Hasan Russell visited the three-storey factory building along with 10 workers to look for dead bodies but found none.

Home Minister Sahara Khatun visited DMCH around 6:00pm and expressed grief over the incident.

2 pirates killed

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Rahman Mizan, 40, son of Abdul Khalek of Chandrakhal village under Rampal upazila. Both were the members of 'Raju Bahini'.

During the gunfight, two police constables -- Nurul Islam and Zakir Hossain -- were also injured.

Police Super M Mizanur Rahman said 6-7 armed pirates started firing on police around 5:30am while they were conducting a special drive in the Sundarbans following the Raash Mela at Dublar Char.

Retaliatory firing by police left two pirates dead on the spot. Their accomplices, however, managed to flee.

Police sent the bodies to Sadar hospital morgue for autopsy and recovered two rifles, 14 bullets, 8 cartridges and a mobile phone set from there.

BNP blasts Star report on Aug 21

FROM PAGE 1
has astounded us.

4. This report by Daily Star is nothing but a far-fetched and fanciful story. Its style is objectionable, information unbelievable, and source unknown. The words chosen have expressed... against BNP and contempt against its leaders. We have noticed that this report's chosen words and languages are similar to those used by our political rivals.

5. We are rejecting this malicious propaganda and heinous fiction. We are condemning this practice of yellow journalism.

6. In this connection we would like to mention that, a certain section of the media including Daily Star, had been campaigning against BNP and its leaders for a prolonged period. This hate campaign was based on false stories and unreliable evidence. This careful but ill conceived propaganda led a state of emergency rule in Bangladesh which took away people's basic democratic and fundamental human rights. This road to conspiracy and its stopping point, an emergency rule by an unelected government, did irreparable damage to politics and economy of our country.

7. We watched then, Daily Star welcoming the emergency rule and taking credit for it.

8. We are now watching that, after the lifting of the emergency rule and the installation of a political government, Daily Star is trying to create misunderstanding and mistrust between the two major political parties. It is publishing baseless and fictional reports. We have valid reasons to doubt its patriotism.

9. The events of 21 August 2004, when some unknown assailants attacked a public rally by Awami League by throwing grenades, are tragic and condemnable. But, unfortunately, to this date, the plotters of this barbarous attack have not been identified beyond reasonable doubt.

10. After the promulgation of the emergency rule an ongoing investigation was diverted. After the formation of Awami League government, in the guise of a new investigation, actions are being taken to harass the political opponents. To fulfil that aim, controversial and politically loyal civil servants are being posted.

11. Under this circumstance, a fictional report by Daily Star, where without disclosing names and addresses of sources, citing some so-called investigators, to involve BNP and its leaders, is nothing but an attempt to divert the real investigation and to disillusion the public.

12. The chairperson of BNP had a political office in a rented house called Hawa Bhaban in Banani, Dhaka. By trying to portray that office as "an alternative power house of the 4-party alliance government," Daily Star has published hateful and untrue information. In fact, political and party meetings and discussions, research and analytical works were conducted in that office.

13. BNP's political opponents and a section of media loyal to them, propagated many untrue stories about this office. During the emergency rule, capitalising on this propaganda, so many investigations were launched. So many people were detained, jailed and tortured to extract false evidence and confessions. But, not a single allegation could be proven.

14. Now Daily Star has taken a new road to propagate the old conspiracy. This report is actually an old and poisonous wine in a new but fragile bottle.

15. At one time, a section of Indian press, by quoting an Indian intelligence agency, spread a story of imaginary connection between an Indian fugitive criminal and BNP's promising young leader Tarek Rahman. During the emergency rule, a section of Bangladesh retold the same false story. Vehement protests were made repeatedly against this malicious propaganda. Even after that, Daily Star has thrown up the same old story it was forced to swallow by the Indian intelligence agency.

16. Daily Star has also involved Tarek Rahman's name with some other criminal investigations and with person alleged to be militants.

17. We want to state unequivocally that these motivated propaganda are totally baseless and absolutely fictional. The chairperson's office in Banani was never used for any conspiratorial meeting, nor any meeting was ever attended by anyone connected with militants.

18. We would also like to

state that, in this so-called investigative report, an attempt has been made to implicate Madam Khaleda Zia, Chairperson of BNP, by dragging her name. This is highly audacious, grossly objectionable and shamelessly obscene. Daily Star has fallen into a black hole.

19. BNP does not believe in conspiratorial and subversive politics. By pointing fingers towards BNP leaders and by making serious allegations against them without any shred of evidence, Daily Star has ignored journalistic ethics and by doing so has committed an unpardonable libellous act.

20. We hope that, Daily Star will publish our statement in full and giving it the same space and importance as their story and express its unreserved apology. Otherwise, we shall be forced to take appropriate legal action.

Thank you

Yours Faithfully

Advocate Khandaker Delwar Hossain
Secretary General
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)

(The paragraphs were numbered consecutively by The Daily Star)

Below is a paragraph-by-paragraph response to the BNP rejoinder.

1. We thank BNP for its rejoinder.

2. The purpose of our report is not what has been suggested here. On the contrary, by pointing out some disturbing facts and presence of criminal elements within its ranks, we think we are providing BNP an opportunity to purge the organisation of conspiratorial elements and thereby restore the prestige and credibility it once enjoyed as a party elected to office twice (thrice if we take the controversial February 15 election in 1996) since restoration of democracy in 1991.

3. As to sourcing, our story is based on those whose authenticity we have verified independently. It is the product of a long investigation starting from the bloodbath itself. As we watched with horror the repeated attempts made to divert the investigation, especially by the then state minister for home and some key investigating agencies, we decided to follow the story on our own. Our report is the fruit of years of hard investigation.

4. As for the words and expressions used, they were chosen to depict the tragedy the story deals with -- an attempt to assassinate a political leader, a former prime minister and the then leader of the opposition.

5. We respect BNP's right to reject our story. At the same time, we think the readers have a right to know where our story is untrue, weak or distorted. We have mentioned by name Lutfozzaman Babar, Harris Chowdhury and Abdus Salam Pintu of being involved in the plot to assassinate Sheikh Hasina. The rejoinder does not refute any of these. It is rather silent on the three, two of who held important ministerial positions and the other was the political secretary to the then prime minister. It only protests the mention of two names -- Khaleda Zia and Tarique Rahman. The former appears more to prove her innocence rather than guilt. As for the latter, the facts speak for themselves.

6. The rejoinder accuses us of carrying out prolonged anti-BNP propaganda and a "hate campaign based on false stories and unreliable evidence". It is nothing more than a sweeping claim, the bankruptcy of which is revealed by the fact that not a single story is cited nor any specific instance mentioned where our report was found to be false, misleading or wanting of evidence. Suffice it to say that ours is an independent voice fully committed to the highest ethical and professional standards of journalism. It is for this trust and confidence that the public has made us by far the highest circulation English daily in the country. We have never indulged in propaganda against or for anybody and will never do so in the future.

7. It is said that this paper took credit for bringing about the state of emergency. We invite BNP to cite any editorial, report or statement by this newspaper or its editor where we made such a claim. This statement is false.

On the contrary, it is a whole range of activities by BNP and the four-party alliance government that led to a groundswell of suspicion over fairness of the January 2007 elections (later cancelled),

which led to public unrest and subsequent political violence. These actions include the extension by two years of retirement age of the Supreme Court judges, the unconstitutional appointment of a sitting judge (without relinquishing his judgeship) as CEC, the fiasco over voter list, the overturning by the Appellate Division of CEC's decision regarding voter list, expansion of the EC by two partisan persons, especially the appointment of the sitting secretary, and later addition of another two.

What proved to be the final straw breaking the proverbial camel's back was the assumption of the post of the chief adviser by the president himself, widely believed to be at the behest of the BNP leadership, especially the then prime minister Khaleda Zia. This was followed by President Iajuddin Ahmed's refusal to allow the then council of advisers to function properly, leading to the resignation of its four important members. These and other events led to a dangerous division within the electorate, one side wanting the election to be held and the other vowing to resist it at any cost. It was in these circumstances that Iajuddin stepped down as the chief adviser and declared the state of emergency.

8. The rejoinder says, "The Daily Star is trying to create misunderstanding and mistrust between the two major political parties" by such reporting. What can be more laughable than this? This paper along with others has made relentless efforts to bring about some semblance of understanding between the two parties ever since restoration of democracy. Record will show how often The Daily Star has written against politics of confrontation and in favour of some sort of understanding between BNP and AL.

9, 10 and 11. Here the rejoinder claims that the investigation was diverted during the state of emergency. The fact is while Khaleda Zia as prime minister promised proper investigation, her party started holding AL responsible for the grenade attack within days into the blasts. On September 2, 2004, the then prime minister said the attack on AL rally was a "conspiracy to mar her government's image". Anybody familiar with our political parlance can understand who she was holding responsible for the so-called conspiracy. On September 13, 2004, BNP lawmakers directly blamed AL for the August 21 carnage, terming it a "pre-planned game". On September 15, 2004, BNP MP Shamsuzzoha Khan said in parliament that AL itself exploded bombs at its rally as part of a conspiracy against the government. On the same day Foreign Minister Morshed Khan in parliament said, "We know who sheds crocodile tears meeting foreign envoys and who takes money for treatment from where." The same day BNP MPs asked the government to take action against AL. September 2 that year Law Minister Moudud Ahmed said certain quarters had initiated a massive anti-Bangladesh campaign immediately after 2001 election trying to portray Bangladesh as a terrorist country. "I think the August 21 incident is part of that campaign," he added. On June 13, 2005, BNP lawmakers alleged in parliament that "extremist elements in AL" were involved in the August 21 grenade attack, and that Sheikh Hasina was giving false statements to divert public attention. Fazlur Rahman Patal, the then state minister for youth and sports, said, "The cat has come out of the bag during interrogation, and facts reveal their [AL men] involvement in the grenade attack." Kalimuddin Ahmed, another BNP MP, made similar statement amid loud desk-thumping by his party colleagues including the then Leader of the House Khaleda Zia. Perhaps the most glaring example of attempts to divert the investigation was the Joy Miah chapter. A hapless person, Joy was forced into admitting involvement in the blasts and was later found to have been paid by an investigation agency. So much for the caretaker administration diverting the BNP government's "proper" investigation into the August 21 attack.

12 and 13. As to whether Hawa Bhaban was or was not "an alternative powerhouse of the four-party alliance government" and what went on there we leave it to our readers to judge. Suffice it to point out that the above description of Hawa Bhaban was used most commonly during the tenure of the alliance government and was never objected to

then.

14. It can be "old wine" to BNP, since it had access (naturally, as it was the government of the day) to privileged information. But to The Daily Star and its readers, it was new information. We never published any story (since we did not have facts in hand at any previous stage) stating that Hawa Bhaban was directly involved in the August 21 plot.

15. The Daily Star's reference to Tarique Rahman and an "Indian fugitive criminal" is taken from local media and not from any foreign news source.

16. Tarique Rahman's links with Bangla Bhai, the notorious killer who was hanged during the caretaker rule, was stated by IG Police Nur Mohammed in an interview with this paper in June 2007. Nur Mohammed said Tarique had been supporting Bangla Bhai's militant activities. It may be mentioned here that at the initial stage the BNP government had denied the existence of Bangla Bhai and termed him a creation of the media.

17. We respect BNP's right to deny.

18. Any serious reader of our report will see that there was no attempt on our part to implicate the BNP chairperson. We only said that investigators have not found any evidence if Khaleda Zia knew about the August 21 plot.

19. We believe that BNP as a party "does not believe in conspiratorial and subversive politics." It is for that belief we try through our report to bring out the activities of some leaders who have through their activities brought this mighty party into disrepute. BNP should use the facts in our report to cleanse its ranks of these criminal elements. BNP will have to accept responsibility for the activities of many of its leaders including that of the former state minister for home, especially when he was neither removed nor ever reprimanded for mishandling the August 21 investigation. Blaming the media will not help it to extricate itself from the depths of a self-inflicted malaise.

20. We are publishing the rejoinder in full and with due importance because it is our policy to do so. As for legal action, we welcome any attempt to uphold the law. In fact, it is the law and the respect for it that has been most grossly and deliberately violated in the attempted murder and its subsequent investigation.

9 British MPs

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programme, with a particular focus on social services, work with local communities, climate change, governance, private sector and aid effectiveness.

The British MPs will call on the prime minister and other ministers, visit UK funded projects and meet a wide range of development partners, civil society and private sector representatives, according to a press release of British High Commission.

The International Development Committee is appointed by the UK Parliament to examine the DFID's expenditure, administration and policy. The committee also takes an interest in the policies and procedures of the multilateral agencies and non-government organisations to which the DFID contributes.

The UK plans to provide £126 million in bilateral assistance to Bangladesh in 2009-10. Over the next five years, UK aid aims to help Bangladesh reduce poverty and adapt to the climate change impacts.

Kidnapped boy

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The kidnappers demanded Tk 20 lakh from victim's mother for his release. The victim's father even agreed to pay Tk 4 lakh ransom to free his son.

However, a police team led by Assistant Police Super Babul Akter rescued the victim.

Babul told the Star correspondent that Hasan and Khokon masterminded the abduction. There were another five to six accomplices including Ria, Roni, Alamgir and Babu. Hasan, a member of "Didar Bahini", tried to kidnap Javed once before with the help of his younger brother Suman, he said.

Suman was a friend of Javed. After the abduction, Hasan went into hiding.

Police, in search of the kidnappers, arrested Babu on Friday. During interrogation, he confessed to his involvement and took police to the house where Javed was confined in, said ASP Babul.

Iranian MPs reject

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Russia in one batch by the end of the year. Iran has indicated that it may agree to send only "part" of its stockpile.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said yesterday it is still difficult for Iran to trust Western powers when it comes to negotiations, but he hopes the nuclear dialogue between the two will continue.

His comments came as the White House warned that US President Barack Obama will not wait for ever for Tehran's response to a UN-drafted deal to supply Iran with nuclear fuel in exchange for its low-enriched uranium (LEU).

Western powers are awaiting a clear response from Tehran over the nuclear fuel deal brokered by UN atomic watchdog the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

France has said the deal aims to ship out 1,200 kilos of Iran's LEU -- enriched at a facility in Natanz in defiance of three sets of UN sanctions -- for further higher processing abroad and converting into fuel for a Tehran research reactor.

Western powers are backing the deal as the Tehran reactor is an internationally supervised facility.

The deal is aimed at removing from the country Tehran's stock of LEU, a major concern in the West which suspects the enriched material could be further enriched for use in nuclear weapons.

Israel, which maintains that world powers must keep all options on table to halt Tehran's nuclear drive, including a military strike, has also backed the UN-drafted deal.

The Jewish state is the Middle East's sole -- if undeclared -- nuclear-armed power. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Friday called the deal "a positive first step," as it supports efforts "to unite the international community to address the challenge of Iran's attempts to become a nuclear military power."

The IAEA has confirmed that Tehran has given an "initial" response to the deal, but late on Friday IRNA reported saying Iran's response was "not an answer" to the deal and that it wanted more talks.

On Friday, White House spokesman Robert Gibbs warned that Obama will not wait for ever for a formal reply

Tigers go 2-1 up

FROM PAGE 1
including the important scalp of Masakadza, to take his tally to ten wickets in the series so far.

Bangladesh batters, albeit a small hiccup towards the end, comfortably chased down this modest target with Tamim responding to his captain's call for a more responsible approach from the openers after the second game where Shahab had struck a sublime unbeaten 105 in a seven-wicket victory.

There were however a couple of needless dismissals as Bangladesh coasted towards the target, but that was too late to have any significant impact on the outcome.

The two teams travel to the port city of Chittagong today to play the last two ODIs.

that the government insiders might be helping the extremists.

"No, no, what I was responding to is what I have been really doing on this trip, which is there exists a trust deficit, certainly on the part of Pakistanis towards the United States, towards our intentions and our actions. And yet we have so much in common, we face a common threat," Hillary said.

When asked that whether she had underestimated the level of anti-American sentiment in Pakistan, Hillary said she was aware of the adverse situation.

"No, because I've been following the research and the polling that's gone on for a couple of years. I knew that we were inheriting a pretty negative situation that we were going to have to address," she said.

Hillary said her three-day visit to Pakistan was not aimed at proving the point that Washington's every action concerning that country was perfect.

"I wanted to demonstrate that, look, we are not coming here claiming that everything we've done is perfect. I've admitted to mistakes by our country going back in time, but I've also reminded people that we've been partners and allies from the beginning of Pakistan's inception as a country," she said.

When asked that what she actually meant by pointing out that Pakistan government was in fact aware of the presence of al-Qaeda leadership inside the country's boundary, but didn't want to act, Hillary said she was not suggesting

from Iran to the deal.

"The president's time is not unlimited, this was not about talking for the sake of talking, this was about reaching an agreement that just a few weeks ago seemed to be something that the Iranians wanted," he said.

But Ahmadinejad said Iran still distrusts Western powers.

"The government, like all Iranian people, looks at the negotiations with no trust, given the negative record of Western powers, but realities make them interact with Iranian people," he said.

His views were echoed by influential lawmaker Alaeddin Borujerdi who also opposes sending LEU abroad.

"We are completely against the offer... I think the best option is to buy the necessary fuel for the Tehran reactor as before," Borujerdi, who heads parliament's committee on national security and foreign policy told ISNA.

Citing the example of Iran's Bushehr nuclear plant, Borujerdi said Iran "widely distrusts Westerners" who "did not fulfil their contracts with Iran."

The Bushehr facility, being built by Moscow, was begun in 1970s, but has still not gone on stream.

6 BCL men

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of the university around 4:30am.

A case under the Speedy Trial Tribunal Act had been filed against the arrestees and they were sent before a Dhaka court in the afternoon, OC Rezaul said.

The arrestees were identified as Mehrab Hossain, a second year student of DU Bangla department and a resident of Zahurul Haq Hall, Kudrat-e-Khuda Mithu of Islamic history, Zahid of statistics, Rumman Hossain Sani of philosophy and Jaman Mian of history, and Anirban, a Dhaka College student.

Mithu, Zahid, Rumman and Jaman are the resident students of Salimullah Muslim Hall.

Shahbagh Police said the arrestees claimed themselves as BCL activists to policemen when they got caught.

DU Proctor Dr KM Saiful Islam Khan admitting the incident said the owners of floating shops at Suhrawardi Udyan were the victims of mugging. Academic action would be taken against the arrestees if allegations were proved, he said.

DU unit president of BCL Shohel Rana Tipu, however, denied arrestees' involvement with the organisation.

A number of mugging incidents occurred on DU campus involving BCL men since Awami League-led grand alliance formed the government early this year, campus sources said.

Bangabandhu

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sentences by the High Court.

The Supreme Court started the hearing on October 5.

The lawyers concerned have already placed arguments on behalf of Feroq Rahman, Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, Muhiuddin Ahmed, and Bazlul Huda.

Supporting dictators

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US for safe guarding its installations would certainly abide by the law of the land.

Dr Mirza said Hillary also pointed out that the Obama administration, after evaluating past policies, has now decided to interact with the people of Pakistan and parliamentarians for which a mechanism was being devised.

Hillary's tough talks during her three-day Pakistan visit may have upset the hosts, but the top US Diplomat herself clarified that such an approach was necessary to 'clear the air' with one of the major US allies in the 'war on terror'.

In an interview with CNN, Clinton said it was important for the Pakistani leadership to realise the impending threat.

"I don't think the way you deal with negative feelings is to pretend they're not there," Hillary said.

"I think it's important, if we are going to have the kind of cooperative partnership, that I think is in the best interest of both of our countries, for me to express some of the questions that are on the minds of the American people," she added.

When asked that what she actually meant by pointing out that Pakistan government was in fact aware of the presence of al-Qaeda leadership inside the country's boundary, but didn't want to act, Hillary said she was not suggesting