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Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Chhatra Shibir men attack policemen at several places in the country this month injuring at least 200 law enforcers. Even though police were the apparent target, 300 civilians were also injured. The attacks were carried out at a time when trials of a few Jamaat leaders accused of crimes against humanity were at the final stages.

Photo: Star/Focus Bangla

## Nothing can stop war crimes trial

Says PM at DU function

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday reaffirmed her government's firm resolve to hold the trial of war criminals.

Speaking at a function at Dhaka University, she said those who thought the government would stop the trial proceedings by getting nervous in the face of different movements were wrong.

"The trial of those who have killed our renowned teachers and intellectuals, raped our mothers and sisters, oppressed our people and carried out arson attacks during the Liberation War must be held on Bangladesh soil," she added.

Referring to the recent attacks on police by the activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir, Hasina said, "It is wrong to suppose that we will stop the trial [of war criminals] by getting nervous in the face of the movement."

The premier mentioned that there had been many ill attempts to foil the trial proceedings.

Hasina recalled that the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had initiated the trial of war criminals after the country's liberation.

But the process got stalled after the assassination of Bangabandhu and most of his family members in 1975, she told her audience at Nawab Nabab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban.

Hasina alleged that some 11,000 war criminals were freed after 1975 and some of them were politically rehabilitated.

Appreciating the role of teachers and students of



different universities in the struggle against the military-backed caretaker government in 2007, the premier conveyed her sincere felicitations to them.

"The teachers and students at that time had played a strong role against the military-backed caretaker government. If they had not, I doubt whether democracy could have been restored in Bangladesh," she said.

Hasina told the audience that the universities should not be operated in and around the capital Dhaka and with motives of profit.

Earlier, Hasina unveiled the plaques of newly built Poet Sufia Kamal Hall, Santosh Chandra Bhattacharya Bhaban of Jagannath Hall, Social Sciences Building, Higher Humanity and Social Science Research Centre at the university.

She also laid the foundation stone of Bangabandhu Tower, Seventh March Building at Begum Rokeya Hall and Pharmacy Building on the campus.

Chaired by Dhaka University Vice Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique, the function was addressed, among others, by Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid and University Grants Commission Chairman AK Azad Chowdhury as special guests.

## Jamaat mayhem again in Dec?

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their violent activities seen in the last couple of weeks and reengage more fiercely in December to hinder the war crimes trials.

Meanwhile, the authorities concerned have seized a huge amount of funds from different middle-eastern countries, which, the intelligence agencies believe was brought in to pay for the hindrance of the war crimes trials through destabilising law and order.

One source even claimed that the amount was around Tk 100 crore.

The intelligence agencies have been gathering information about Jamaat and pro-Jamaat student body Shibir's next course of action. They were interrogating the arrested Jamaat-Shibir leaders and workers, sources said.

Sources in the intelligence and other law enforcement agencies

said detained Jamaat-Shibir men told them that they had been attacking police and resorting to violence following instructions from their high-ups.

The intelligence agencies were trying to identify those "high-ups", added the sources.

However, the government thinks that opposition parties, including the main opposition BNP, have been backing the Jamaat-Shibir violence. Home Minister Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir yesterday claimed that they had proof in this regard.

Meanwhile, ruling Awami League and all of its associated bodies and like-minded organisations are planning countrywide elaborate programmes to counter the Jamaat-Shibir activities and press home their demand for quick trials of war-crime suspects.

Ruling party insiders said they would take to the

streets and stay there until the trials were over.

"We think that Jamaat-Shibir will try to put their last bite when the verdict of war crimes trial will be announced. So, we, along with all other pro-liberation organisations which are in favour of the war crimes trial will remain on the street to help the government and the administration under any circumstances," Jubo League Chairman Omar Faroque Chowdhury told The Daily Star.

A dawn-to-dusk hartal was called by Jamaat in Khulna yesterday. The day was marred with ransacking of vehicles and clash with police.

During the hartal in Khulna, Jamaat-Shibir activists vandalised two buses, a truck, two auto rickshaws and fought pitched battles with police, reports our Khulna correspondent.

Police rounded up 26

Jamaat-Shibir activists in the city's Goalkhali area in connection with attack on law enforcers.

The hartal was called to protest the arrests of party Assistant Secretary General Golam Parwar and Jamaat-Shibir activists in Khulna.

The home minister yesterday said 2,000 people have so far been arrested across the country in connection with the recent attack on police and violence.

Police arrested eight activists of Jamaat-Shibir at Abhoynagar upazila of Jessore and four in Sylhet.

Sylhet police also recovered five bullets, five knives, a laptop and a scanner, and some Islami books, said police officials.

In Bagerhat, at least 12 people including eight minor students were injured as allegedly local workers of Bangladesh Chhatra League attacked a

Photo: Star/Focus Bangla

## Jamaat out with one purpose

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"planned attacks" that also left at least 300 people injured.

A former police chief thinks the attacks on the law enforcers might have been carried out to demoralise them and disrupt law and order. Two eminent citizens, however, consider the attacks as a manifestation of fear in the Jamaat-e-Islami and its associated body Islami Chhatra Shibir, and their desperate bid to foil the ongoing war crimes trial.

"The reason behind targeting policemen [in the attacks] might have been to undermine their spirit," former inspector general of police ASM Shahjahan told The Daily Star.

He said the attacks were probably carried out to obstruct law and order and to push the war crimes trial off course.

"But whatever the reason might be, it is a must for the government to take necessary action against those who are involved," he added.

War crimes researcher Shahriar Kabir considers the attacks as Jamaat's desperation, saying that the party needs a few dead bodies so that it can claim "there is no democracy in the country".

"This is why they are attacking police to force them to retaliate [on Jamaat-Shibir] with fire and injure at least one," he

said, adding, "It's their old strategy."

He also labelled the attacks as "pre-planned" whereas the government considers them as stray incidents.

Shahriar, executive president of Ekatturer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee, said the countrywide brutal activities of the Jamaat "prove its efforts to push the country towards a civil war".

The more the war crimes trial is approaching its final stages, the more the Jamaat is becoming desperate to foil it, he observed, and added that once the trial was completed properly and the accused punished, it

would not be able to continue politics. "It is their life and death problem."

The government has no alternative but to ban the Jamaat as "it does not accept Bangladesh's constitution and its existence," he said.

Besides, Shahriar said, the politics of the Jamaat could also be banned by trying its leaders on charges of their involvement in genocide, murder, rape, and arson during the Liberation War of 1971.

Human rights activist Sultana Kamal thinks the Jamaat has gone violent as the trial is nearly at an end.

However, the attacks did not come to her as a surprise. A former advisor to a

madrasa and ransacked it at Morelganj upazila yesterday morning, reports a correspondent.

In Cox's Bazaar, police pressed charges against 145 Jamaat-Shibir men for attacking them.

In Bogra, police arrested seven Shibir activists from different parts of the district.

A Noakhali court yesterday granted a two-day remand for 20 Jamaat-Shibir leaders and activists accused of attacking police on November 26 at Maizdi.

In Dinajpur, 64 Jamaat-Shibir men have been accused in a charge sheet filed before the speedy tribunal in connection with their involvement in attacking the law enforcers on November 5. At least 32 of them are on the run.

**FAKHRUL REFUTES** BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday refuted government allegations

that it was instigating Jamaat-e-Islami to carry out attacks on police.

The BNP spokesperson in a briefing termed the home minister's claim of having proof in this regard a blatant lie.

"Jamaat is a registered political party and it can observe any programme on political grounds and Jamaat is responsible for what it is doing and they will be accountable," Fakhrul Islam said.

He was briefing newsmen after a meeting of BNP-led 18-party alliance late last night at alliance chief Khaleda Zia's Gulshan office.

Asked whether BNP supports Jamaat's violent activities, Fakhrul said BNP does not believe in any kind of violence and wants to avoid it.

He, however, said the government should allow Jamaat to carry out their democratic programmes to avoid further violence.

caretaker government, Sultana Kamal recalled the way the intellectuals of the country were killed at the

end of the Liberation War. These new attacks, though not done in that large scale, were carried out to cause frustration among people.

She said the attacks were made also to baffle the war crimes trial or change its present course.

"Their [Jamaat-Shibir men] activity is not merely an anti-government one, rather it should be considered as a serious affair," Sultana said.

"If they continue to carry on with such activities, they will take Bangladesh to a place where there will be no secularism, non-communalism, human rights and women's rights."

Sultana, who is executive director of the rights body Ain o Salish Kendra, asked secular and progressive people to raise their voices in a bid to show their resistance against such activities.

"It is not the time when the good people should keep silent."

She also suggested that the government take the people on its side. "There are many allies of the government in citizens' groups. And so the government should make its effort to resist the Jamaat-Shibir with the people's support."