The Battle Within

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Jamaat-Shibir men have been unleashing mayhem in different districts across the country to protest the verdict of the international crimes tribunals, which were formed to try Jamaat leaders for heinous crimes they are accused of committing during the country's liberation war in 1971. They are also demanding that the government immediately release all Jamaat leaders detained on charges of war crimes. To meet their demands, they are out to destabilise the situation; they wage a war against the government. They are attacking police-posts, members of law enforcement agencies and even brutally killed some policemen.

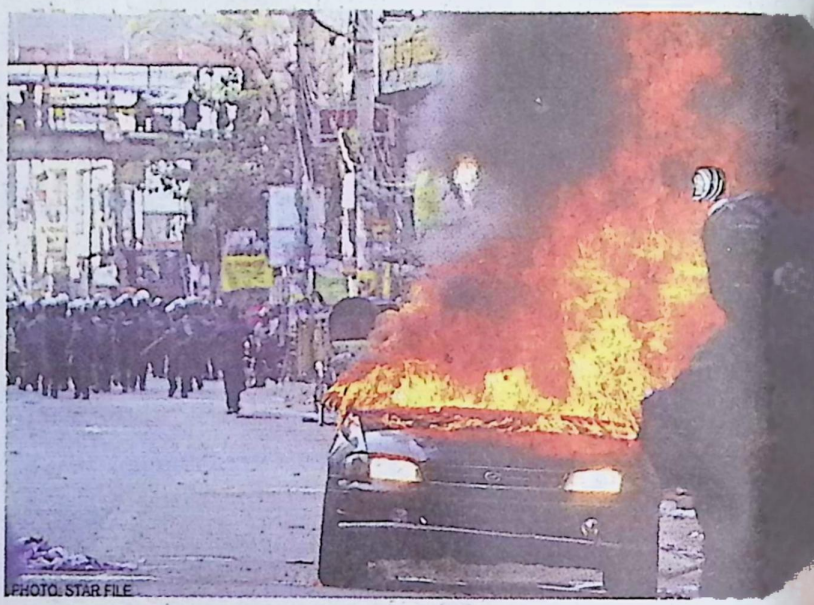


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The way they are gearing up their battle also proves that they are do not think of ethics, principles and common sense. They are in their own war. And it seems they believe nothing is wrong with their actions. In Bogra, they abused people's religious sentiments on March 3 to unleash the mayhem. Jamaat-Shibir men also used women and children as human shields to fight members of law enforcement agencies in a planned way. The law enforcers, whose job is to make people obey the law, are falling prey to their cruel attack. In many cases, policemen were seen helpless in the face of Jamaat-Shibir's fierce attack. From February 28 to March 3, the death toll rose to more than 60 including six policemen. All prevailing signs suggest the situation will deteriorate further as Jamaat-Shibir men will not stop fighting; rather they will apply new strategies to worsen the situation as a peaceful situation will not yield them any result. Jamaat men will be more desperate in the coming days to further worsen the situation.

The political situation may become even more volatile as the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party has taken to the streets since March 2 protesting what it called "genocide". The BNP brought out processions across the country protesting the violence on March 2 and enforced a dawn to dusk hartal on March 5 to protest the violence.

The BNP also plans to wage a movement to force the government to install an election time non-partisan government. The BNP policymakers believe that their core issue of non-partisan election time government will get buried if the government is succeeded in containing the violence and controlling Jamaat, a key ally of the BNP. The ruling Awami League will not quit power ahead of the next parliamentary elections. Rather they prefer the next parliamentary polls will be held under an AL-led government. The BNP high command therefore adopted the strategy not to allow the government to win the ongoing battle. Talking to a number of BNP's policymakers it has been learnt that the main opposition party will continue enforcing various programmes like hartals and road marches to mount pressure on the government and to ensure its defeat. BNP has already taken a stance against youths who took to the streets demanding the trial of war criminals. The momentum of these youths might have been fizzled out amidst this political controversy.

And when the BNP intensifies its agitation, it will help Jamaat-e-Islami to do better in its own fight as the government will have to tackle BNP's agitation too. Jamaat-Shibir men will also use the BNP as a shield to carry out attack on law enforc-