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WITH TODAY'S ISSUE



POLITICS IN THAILAND

Coup leader Chan-O-Cha is likely to be the next PM, but what's next?

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ANAMUL TON LEADS TIGERS

The right-handed opener scores 109 as Bangladesh post 217 for 9

PAGE 14

Justice so far away

98 of 491 witnesses testify till now

SHAKHAWAT LITON and
CHAITANYA CHANDRA
HALDER

Late president Zillur Rahman had sought justice, not mere sympathy, for the gruesome murder of his wife Ivy Rahman.

In an emotion-choked voice, he made this appeal at the qulkhani held three days after her death.

Ivy, a veteran politician and women affairs secretary of the Awami League, was critically injured in the August 21 grisly grenade attack on an AL rally in the capital. She succumbed to her injuries three days after the explosions.

Around four and a half years after Ivy's death, the AL rode to power in January 2009. The following month, the veteran AL leader, Zillur Rahman, was elected to the nation's presidency.

The changeover of power could not,



21
AUGUST
ATTACK

however, end his agonising wait for justice. President Zillur Rahman breathed his last in March last year, his appeal for justice yet to be fulfilled.

Thus it is that justice for the families of the victims of the grisly grenade attack remains a distant cry even a decade after the gruesome killings.

This is because of the dirty politics pursued by the then BNP-led government and, later, the snail's pace in the conduct of the trial of such a high profile case.

Since the beginning of the trial in 2008 and till yesterday, the court had recorded the statements of only 98 of 491 witnesses.

If statements of the remaining witnesses need to be recorded, one may easily foresee how much more time will be required for the job to be done.

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, then leader of the opposition, and late president Zillur Rahman in tears. Zillur lost his wife Awami League leader Ivy Rahman in the grenade attack of August 21, 2004, and Hasina narrowly escaped with injuries. The photo was taken at Paltan Maidan when the two were on stage in October 2004.

PHOTO: FILE

TIMELINE

2004 [BNP in Power]

Aug 21

● At 5:22pm, Islamic militant outfit Huji carries out the grenade attack on an Awami League rally in Dhaka, killing 24 people and injuring 300 more. Sheikh Hasina narrowly escapes assassination.

● Attackers leave the spot safely, reportedly with the help of the administration and the law enforcement agencies.

● Hasina blames the BNP-led government for the attack and asks it to quit.

● AL activists hold angry protests.

Aug 22

● Shock waves run through AL. Party activists stage protests and clash with police in the capital. Police file a case with Motijheel Police Station in connection with the grenade attack and investigate for a day only.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Minutes after massacre

Mind still numb, heart bleeds at the way state-sponsored terror struck

INAM AHMED

Walking through the busy, rain-soaked Bangabandhu Avenue yesterday, it was almost impossible to picture what had happened here 10 years ago.

Behind this scene of the hawkers selling sugarcane juice, the shuttered up shops and those ochre painted buildings lies a terrible moment of tragedy when scores of grenades were showered on Awami League President

Sheikh Hasina and the entire top leadership of her party.

As I reached the spot minutes after the grenade attack on August 21, 2004, this busy avenue had turned into a mangled disaster scene. The truck on which Hasina was standing when the grenades were thrown lay there, its wooden sides splintered away.

Personal possessions lay trampled on the road -- purses and vanity bags, umbrellas

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An unexploded grenade among shoes and a body on Bangabandhu Avenue right after the carnage on August 21, 2004.

PHOTO: FILE

All AL wanted was to rally against militants

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

They had gathered there to raise their voices against blasts only to fall victim to the most gruesome terrorist attack in the history of Bangladesh.

Around 25,000 leaders and activists of the then main opposition Awami League had turned up at the party central office on Bangabandhu Avenue on that black Saturday to protest against a series of blasts in Sylhet that had killed several people.

AL chief Sheikh Hasina joined the rally on August 21, 2004, injecting vigour among party activists aggrieved by the killing of their comrades across the country, including lawmaker Ahsanullah Master earlier in May.

But it was beyond their worst nightmare that they themselves would come under an appalling attack on a political programme, which was organised to protest such acts of violence, and lose two dozen colleagues.

It was 5:22pm, that fateful moment, when a wave of grenades were hurled at the rally of Hasina, then leader of

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Back from death, only to suffer

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Everyone thought they were dead as they lay like corpses on the spot of the August 21 grenade attack. They survived, however, proving doctors and rescuers wrong, but with a life they feel not worth living.

Even after 10 years, the miraculous return to life feels like a curse to Rashida Akhter Ruma and Mahbuba Parvin, two of the badly injured victims of the attack. Still today, they carry hundreds of splinters in their bodies.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



Parvin



Ruma

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CONTINUING TO LEAD

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We thank our board of directors, shareholders, valued customers and regulators for their trust and faith in us.

*The award is won in the local bank category.
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