

Operation Dal-Bhat in spotlight

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the soldierly attitude and behaviour of the BGB members.

Earlier, a lower court in its judgment had observed that the glorious history of the 218-year-old Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) was damaged by its involvement in a programme like "Operation Dal-Bhat" that left a serious impact on the goodwill, professionalism and honesty of the force.

The lower court had also observed that involving the BDR in controlling price hike of essentials was not fruitful due to the absence of a specific mechanism to that end and it had destroyed the moral fabric of the disciplined force and led to the 2009 mutiny.

The Dal-Bhat operation was introduced in 2007 when food prices were soaring. Under the programme, the force sold essentials to people at a

reasonable price and kept the profit.

"By late 2008, most border guards started to believe that their bosses had deprived them of their right share of the profit. This resentment blended with their age-old discontent about being led by army officers on deputation."

A handful of hardcore mutineers cashed in on this pent-up resentment of the members of BDR, now renamed BGB, to stage the mutiny, said the court.

While delivering the verdict yesterday, the three-member special HC bench also called for investigating the failure of intelligence in the light of the Pilkhana carnage.

"This court strongly feels that the BGB authorities should make an inquiry into the matter by forming a probe committee as to why the Rifle Security Unit of BDR failed to provide necessary information of the BDR massacre in Pilkhana before commission of

the same," said the HC bench, asking to make the report public as early as possible.

"It is also the view of this court that the Ministry of Home Affairs and the BGB authorities should provide fast decision/reply to all problems of BGB members," said Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder.

"This is also the view of this court that the BGB should mitigate all the grievances of BGB members, if any."

"The court is also of the view that the BDR authorities should make quick payment of TA and DA [Traveling Allowance and Dearness Allowance], if any, to the BGB members which are still pending."

"The court further expects that the BGB authorities would consider the leave of the BGB members which are due to them and solve all problems relating to leave and other matters," it added.

Diaz's mother

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nurses and doctors called in from the university medical centre forcefully picked her up and took her to the centre.

Acting Registrar Kamrul Huda told reporters that the woman was not well and needed medical attention.

"We are sending her home in an ambulance," he added.

But the attempt failed as the woman forced her way out of the vehicle and walked to the Central Shaheed Minar on the campus to resume the demonstration.

Between sobs, she kept telling students and bystanders how her son was killed and there was no justice to till 3:00pm.

She then went back to Bangabandhu Chittagong where Diaz's family members, friends and university officials again tried to send her home.

They picked her up and took her home. But the desperate mother came back and stood at the campus gate.

Her daughter and other family mem-

bers finally took her home at 4:20pm, Diaz's sister Jobaida Sarwar said.

The body of Diaz, who was the assistant secretary of the central committee of Bangladesh Chhatra League, was found hanging at his home near Gate No-2 of CU on November 20 last year. His family members were not at home at the time.

A second autopsy on the body concluded that he was strangled to death.

The case is being investigated by the Criminal Investigation Department.

His family members said they were frustrated at lengthy investigation and alleged that police deliberately did not arrest the accused who roamed free on campus and sometimes threatened them.

"Diaz was murdered. But police are not arresting any of the accused," his sister Jubaida, a lawyer, said.

Diaz was also known to be loyal to Chittagong City Corporation Mayor AJM Nasir Uddin. Most of the BCL men

accused in the case are also loyal to the mayor.

After his death, the first autopsy at Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) concluded that he died by suicide.

But family members and fellow leaders said he was murdered by rival BCL group over tender manipulation.

Rejecting the post mortem report, his mother lodged a complaint with a Chittagong court accusing 10 people, including nine BCL men and a sociology teacher at CU on November 24, 2016, of murder.

The court ordered Chittagong CID to investigate the case.

A second autopsy report published by Dhaka Medical College Hospital on July 30, this year, concluded that Diaz was strangled to death.

A court on August 7 asked the CID to prevent the accused from leaving the country.

Asif Nazrul sued

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Chittagong Port, mocking the minister.

"We recorded the complaint as a case under section 57 of the ICT Act on Sunday night after getting approval from the Police Headquarters in Dhaka," Quamrul Hasan, officer-in-charge of Madaripur Sadar Police Station, told The Daily Star last night.

Asif, a law teacher, said he was shocked to learn that the PHQ gave approval to record the case.

He said he clarified the matter with evidence before some newspapers that the post was uploaded from a fake Facebook account. He on several occasions also warned people through his Facebook account about the fake one.

"I will definitely be able to prove my innocence at the court, but even before doing that I could be arrested anytime and get locked up for an indefinite period."

"This law is now being used against me by the shipping minister's relatives only to cause harassment and suffering

to me and my family," the teacher told this correspondent.

Asif said the people behind the fake pages and those who filed the "false case" should instead be punished.

He called upon the law minister to repeal section 57 of the ICT Act immediately to save the innocents from the "wrath of influential people".

Saheli Ferdous, assistant inspector general (media) at the PHQ, said she was unaware of the approval and filing of the case.

If the case was filed upon approval, it must have some merit, she said.

A police investigation into the case would prove if the Facebook post was uploaded from a fake account, the AIG added.

The Daily Star contacted two more top police officials concerned at the PHQ, but they refused to comment on the matter.

The case was filed amid growing demands from different quarters for repeal of section 57 of the ICT Act for

its alleged misuse.

Some 300 cases were lodged under the section in the first seven months of this year. Over two dozen journalists were sued and several were arrested, according to statistics of the Cyber Tribunal.

Inspector General of Police AKM Shahidul Hoque on August 2 instructed all police stations to consult the legal wing at the PHQ before registering any case under section 57.

According to sources at the Cyber Tribunal, among the cases filed under the ICT Act, about 90 percent were recorded under section 57 and a large number of the plaintiffs were from the ruling Awami League.

A defamation case was also filed against Asif on Thursday over the same Facebook post.

Faruk Khan, cousin of the shipping minister, filed the case stating that the DU teacher "willingly tarnished the image of the minister socially and politically by uploading the post".

Rohingyas, he added.

Pope Francis is likely to meet a small group of Rohingyas in Dhaka during his three-day visit, he said.

"We are trying, with the approval of the government, to invite a small group of Rohingyas to Dhaka. We hope we can do it," the cardinal said.

Vatican-Bangladesh Relations

Fantastic

Asked about the significance of the Pope's visit to Bangladesh during November 30-Dec 2, Cardinal Patrick said it is a recognition of Bangladesh's tradition of harmonious living and the development made over the years.

Vatican does not have economic or trade relations with Bangladesh, but there is an exceptional relationship based on humanity, morality and spirituality, he said.

Bishop Gervas Rozario of Rajshahi said the Catholic Church in Bangladesh has been making significant contributions to education, health and socio-economic development and to promoting the rights of the marginalised people.

"This relationship will continue," he said.

Bishops from around the country said approximately 80,000 Catholics will attend a prayer service at Suhrawardy Udyana and pray for peace and harmony with Pope Francis on December 1.

Chittagong Archbishop Moses M Costa, Bishop Sebastian Tudu of Dinajpur, Bishop Sharot Francis Gomes of Dhaka, Bishop Subrata Hawlader of Barisal, Bishop Romen Bairagi of Khulna and Father Kamal Corraya, convener of the media committee for the papal visit, also spoke during the briefing.

Govt college

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not take part in any academic and administrative activities.

Many students went to colleges found that there were hardly any academic activities there.

Officials of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board, Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, different education boards and Government Alia Madrasas also observed the work abstention.

2 alleged robbers beaten to death in B'baria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

An angry mob beat two suspected robbers to death in Brahmanbaria's Kasba last night.

Moniruzzaman, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Kasba Police Station, said they were yet to identify the two men.

Quoting locals, he said a night guard in Hariabaha village saw a group of men preparing for a robbery around 10:30pm and alerted the villagers.

Within moments, the villagers came out of their houses, caught the two men and beaten them to death. The others managed to flee.

Pak govt

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he told a crowd of around 2,500 demonstrators, adding that his group was abandoning plans to issue a fatwa against Hamid and was calling for roads and schools to be reopened.

There was no immediate confirmation from the government of the resignation and no comment from the military.

The decision to capitulate to the protesters' demands is a major embarrassment for the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) as it eyes elections in 2018, analysts said, and underscores the influence of religious groups in the nuclear-armed country of 207 million.

Rizvi's previously obscure group has been calling for weeks for Hamid's ousting over a hastily-abandoned amendment to the oath which election candidates must swear. It has occupied a main highway into Islamabad since November 6 and virtually paralysed the capital.

The protesters have linked the amended wording to blasphemy -- a highly contentious charge in Muslim Pakistan which carries the death penalty. Even unproven allegations have spurred mob lynchings and murders.

Time Inc

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Meredith had expressed interest in buying Time earlier this year then walked away because it could not secure the necessary financing.

Time revealed in October an aggressive plan to boost revenue that included focusing less on magazine journalism and more on digital activities.

Time Inc was spun off from media and entertainment giant Time Warner, which was seeking to shed its journalism assets.

Meredith's offer is for \$18.50 per Time share, up about 10 percent from the shares' closing price of \$16.90 on Friday. Share prices rose over the past week on speculation over the purchase.

The boards of both companies have approved the transaction, which is due to be finalized in the first semester of 2018, Meredith said in a statement.

The all-cash transaction includes about \$1.7 billion for the company assets plus more than \$1 billion in debt.

Among the funds financing the purchase are \$650 million from Koch Equity Development, a fund belonging to Charles and David Koch.

"We are creating a premier media company serving nearly 200 million American consumers across industry-leading digital, television, print, video, mobile and social platforms positioned for growth," said Meredith Corporation chairman and CEO Stephen Lacy.

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For Zinnatul Ferdous, the situation was totally opposite to Rehana's as her father's death sentence was upheld by the HC. Besides, the court also upheld life imprisonment of her two brothers and two uncles in the BDR carnage case.

She claimed that her father Subedar Maj Jakir Jamal had been in the BDR headquarters for several days before the BDR mutiny to have his pension-related documents completed and was not involved in the BDR carnage.

Many students went to colleges found that there were hardly any academic activities there.

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MK Alamgir made to quit

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of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Farmers Bank Director Mohammad Masud has replaced Alamgir as the new chairman. Another director, Maruf Alam, has been made its vice chairman and also chairman of the Audit Committee.

Earlier on Sunday, the BB issued a notice to Farmers Bank Managing Director AKM Shameem, asking him to explain within a week why he would not be removed from his post for failing to manage the bank efficiently and address its liquidity crunch.

It also asked him to explain why the bank disbursed fresh loans despite having restrictions on lending, according to the BB notice.

Talking to this correspondent, Md Anwarul Islam, assistant spokesperson of the central bank, confirmed the issuance of the BB notice.

Shameem could not be reached over his mobile phone yesterday.

Earlier in January, the BB slapped some restrictions on the bank in disbursing loans and opening new branches, given its precarious financial health.

Non-performing loans at the bank increased significantly in recent months as the board continued to sanction and disburse loans in breach of the rules.

Between September and November in 2015, the BB conducted special inspections at three branches of the Farmers Bank in the city's Gulshan, Motijheel and Shyampur, and found gross violation of the banking rules in disbursing loans of around Tk 400 crore.

Some directors of the bank were allegedly involved in sanctioning loans, violating the credit rules.

Last year, the central bank

appointed an observer to the bank to help it restore corporate governance, but the initiative went in vain.

As of September this year, Farmers Bank's non-performing loans (NPLs) amounted to Tk 377.68 crore, up by Tk 100 crore from the previous year's. The NPLs now account for 7.45 percent of the bank's total outstanding loans.

According to a BB report, 13 counts of irregularities were found in the bank, including disbursement of loans to nonexistent companies. The bank also gave loans to its own directors as well as those of other banks, violating the credit discipline.

Besides, the bank disbursed loans to defaulter clients against forged Credit Information Bureau reports, and took the burden of a number of bad loans from other banks, flouting the banking rules.

The Farmers Bank doesn't have the capacity to pay back the depositors' money and refund the credit taken from other banks, the BB report mentioned.