August 15, thereafter

FROM PAGE 1 taken over power and curfew has been imposed -- was a lie.

The army as an institution was not involved in the bloody changeover. And Mushtaque did not officially assume the office of the president until the afternoon.

The next day, state-run newspapers also published news that martial law was in place. But there was no official gazette notification in this regard until August 20 when president Mushtaque issued a martial law proclamation, giving retrospective effect from August 15.

These show how the killers and conspirators established their control over everything and their words had gained the potency of law.

The violent overthrow of Bangabandhu's government, just three and a half years after the country's independence, was the beginning of a dark episode.

Mushtaque Ahmed, who was mired in controversy for his dubious role during the Liberation War, was made president. He termed the changeover "historic" and "for the sake of the nation"

and portrayed the killers of Bangabandhu as the brightest sons of the armed forces and indemnified them by promulgating an ordinance. The constitution lost its supremacy as the country was under martial law pro-

claimed by the Mushtaque-led regime. Later, the regime made the constitution subject to its whims and brought many changes issuing proclamations. There was more anarchy as a battle for

power began within the then army leadership resulting in more killings and two more coups on November 3 and 7. There was no bloodshed in the

November 3 coup. But later that night, four national leaders -- Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, M Mansur Ali and Qamaruzzaman, who had led the Mujibnagar government to liberate Bangladesh -- were brutally murdered in prison. The November-7 counter coup, led

by the followers of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal and Gen Ziaur Rahman, succeeded in their mission. But again, war heroes -- Gen Khaled Mosharraf, Col Najmul Huda and Lt Col ATM Haider -- were brutally murdered.

What Maj Faruk, one of the masterminds of the August 15 massacre, said in his briefing before the attack on Bangabandhu's residence about the objective of the operation -- to form an Islamic government -- came true as their appointed president Mushtaque started working according to the plan.

Pakistan was the first country that recognised the government led by Mushtaque, who dreamt of turning Bangladesh into an Islamic republic, like Pakistan. When Mushtaque was president, he wanted to improve relations with Pakistan.

Mushtaque's successors, Justice Sayem and Gen Zia did not foil the dream of Maj Faruk. During their regimes, the constitution was amended through proclamations to remove secularism from it and insert "absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah".

The constitutional restrictions on

the use of religion in politics was withdrawn allowing some anti-liberation Islamist political parties and organisations, including Jamaat-e-Islami, to resume their activities. The Gen Zia regime executed a

policy of rehabilitation of war criminals. He made Shah Aziz, who opposed Bangladesh's birth, prime minister of his government. The BNP, the party Gen Zia founded,

has been following this policy. Abdur Rahman Biswas, who was against Bangladesh's independence, was made president in 1991. Two more war criminals, Matiur Rahman Nizami and Ali Awami League leader Khandaker Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, chief and secretary general of the Jamaat-e-Islami, were made ministers by Gen Zia's widow Khaleda Zia in 2001.

Assassination of Zia, while in office in 1981, brought in another spell of martial law. Gen Ershad, the then army chief, grabbed state power overthrowing the then president Justice Abdus Sattar in March 1982.

Gen Ershad too continued using religion to consolidate his position. He took it a step further and gave Islam the status of state religion in 1990.

Islamist political parties and organisations mushroomed since the constitutional ban was withdrawn in 1976, allowing their formation and operations.

Between 1964 and 1970, intelligence records claimed existence of 11 Islamist parties involved in various activities. But since 1976, floating of such parties and organisations increased manyfolds.

The use of Islam as a political mobilisation tool did not yield positive results. Take the example of one militant

outfit. Thousands of Bangladeshi youths went off to fight in Palestine, Kashmir, and Afghanistan in the 80's and 90's.

A group of Bangladeshi Mujahideen returnees from Afghanistan in a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka on April 30, 1992, declared the establishment of Harkat-ul Jihad, Bangladesh or Huji-B.

It emerged as a militant outfit and has been accused of being directly involved in the assassination attempt on Sheikh Hasina and carrying out attacks on the country's cultural symbols and sites, including Pahela Baishakh celebrations, monuments and cinema halls.

The escalation of militancy has a root in the use of religion to form political parties and organisations that began after the assassination of Bangabandhu, according to security experts.

Over the years, the situation has become so complicated that the previous Awami League-led government, which brought about major changes in the constitution in 2011, could not bring back the original spirit of secularism despite a Supreme Court verdict in its favour.

The Supreme Court declared illegal and void the fifth amendment through which all activities of the first military regime had been legalised. The verdict paved the way for the restoration of secularism in full spirit. But in the prevailing political situation, the ALled regime had to compromise.

Now the constitution is in a peculiar state. Secularism has been restored in it but Islam has been made state religion and politics based on religion is allowed.

FROM PAGE 16

The teenager is taking advantage of a quirk in the constitution of the bucolic northeastern state that imposes no age limit on running for governor. Candidates only have to have lived in Vermont for at least four years.

Ethan, happily for his campaign, has lived in the state for 14. He faces a crowded field of adult rivals in Democratic gubernatorial primary.

His website proclaims him a champion for middle- and working-class families, with "the right ideas" on healthcare reform, economic development and education -- never mind that he's still years from graduating high He identifies with the progressive

has been increasingly in the ascendant in the United States since the ultimately thwarted run for president by Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders in 2016. "I think I'm the candidate who

wing of the Democratic Party, which

best represents the change we need,' he told a televised town hall event earlier this month. His rivals include Christine

Hallquist, running to become America's first transgender governor, James Ehlers, a Navy veteran and environmentalist, and Brenda Siegel, the executive director of a dance festival. But despite praise for Sonneborn's

"maturity" and political awareness, his

campaign has attracted calls for Vermont

lawmakers to close the loophole. "I think we should probably take a look at that to be perfectly honest," Republican Governor Phil Scott told reporters when asked if he thought 14-

year-olds should be eligible to run. "I think you should at least be able to get your driver's license at the time that you become governor."

Scott, 60, has been at the helm of Vermont since 2016 and was running for re-election, facing Keith Stern, who runs a fruits and vegetable business, in the state's gubernatorial Republican primary, also yesterday.

Haunted forever

After the dinner, Serniabat was talking to his son, daughter-in-law and nephew -- Abul Hasnat Abdullah, Shahan Ara Begum and Shaheed Serniabat -- in his room, discussing the country and its prospects.

"I still remember my father-in-law telling his sons about how the country could prosper. He was stressing the need for cooperatives for a poor country like us. But who knew it would be his last night with us?" Shahan Ara said, as she recounted the impending bloodbath that took place in that dark night to The Daily Star.

Shahan Ara hit the bed sometime after 12:30am. She and her two sons were in one room while her daughter in another. She, however, did not know exactly when the father and the sons had finished their conversation and

went to sleep. All of a sudden, she woke up to a hail of gunfire, baffled. A fierce sound of gunshots broke the silence of the night. A hail of bullets started coming from all directions.

She and her sons ran to her fatherin-law's room where all other members of the family had already been gathered; all bewildered by the turn of

events. Her mother-in-law asked her husband to call up her brother, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and tell him that robbers attacked their house. But what came from the other side of the telephone

was not clear. Shahan Ara then took another telephone and dialled the number of Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni,

Bangabandhu's nephew. Moni picked up the phone.

"'Some people have attacked our house, please do something', I told Moni bhai. He asked me whether they were in uniform. I told his there was no way to see that as bullets were raining down," said Shahan Ara.

Impatient, her mother-in-law once again insisted her husband to call Bangabandhu.

"It seems your brother has not been spared either," Serniabat told his wife.

Moments later, they heard sounds of stomping of people climbing up the wooden staircase. Their house help locked up the room.

inside the room.

"I heard his [Hasnat's] voice several times, warning those people not to come any further. I don't know where

knew the house well.

he went then," said Shahan Ara. But it seemed that the attackers

Breaking the glass door, they barged

into the room and shouted: "Hands ground," she said.

They took no time to destroy the telephone set. Then they made all of them come down to the ground floor, with everyone's hands up.

They took them to the drawing

"Who are still upstairs?" asked one the police. of the army men.

"I don't know who they are," replied father-in-law's pulse and dropped his Shahan Ara in presence of Abdur Rab Serniabat.

At the moment, she could read the expression on her father-in-law's face: "don't tell who are inside the house."

The thought of Bangabandhu came on her mind, giving her courage.

"I knew that Bangabandhu is there the pulse, but dropped the hand soon. to try these people. He's the president. Till then I had no idea that Bangabandhu was no more," she said.

That very dark night, the biggest bloodbath took place at Bangabandhu's house in Dhanmondi 32. Some disgruntled army officers assassinated Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his entire family, except for Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana, who were abroad then.

The scene at the 27 Minto Road was changing fast.

Abdur Rab Serniabat asked the attackers who was their commanding officer.

"What do you want? Why have you come here?" said Serniabat. "We have no commanding officer,"

the reply came.

Shahan Ara was holding her 10month-old son Sadek Abdullah (the

newly elected mayor of Barisal city) in her lap. Her elder son Sukanta Babu climbed down the staircases to his mother, asking her to take him on her lap. "Since Sadek was already in my lap, I

could not take him [Sukanta], " she said. Then Shaheed Serniabat held

Sukanta in his arms. As the attackers assumed that all the infrastructure. family members were present in the

room, they opened fire. Being shot, Shaheed tumbled down on his face with Sukanta underneath.

Serniabat was hit in the chest and Shahan Ara on the back.

The attackers left the room. As they were about get in the vehicle, someone who was not hit by bullets started Abul Hasnat, however, was not shouting from inside the house.

The attackers returned and opened fire again, indiscriminately.

"My father-in-law was just beside me and I was taking my son [Sadek Abdullah] in my lap. I lied down behind my father-in-law's back. Four

to five bullets hit my side. "My father-in-law fell on the score of 99.1.

The attackers left.

After a while, some policemen came from Ramna police station. They started searching for Abdur Rab Serniabat.

Shahan Ara came to know later that one of their security guards had called

The police officials checked her

Her husband Abul Hasnat came down from the upper floor. He hid himself in the bathroom. The army had gone there, but they did not find him because of the darkness.

Hasnat took his father's hand to check

Shahan Ara asked her husband to see the condition of Sukanta Babu. He pulled Shaheed in order to separate Sukanta. Suddenly, a groan gushed out of his chest, as if he breathed his last.

Sukanta was bleeding from his nose and the body of Arif Serniabat, son of Abdur Rab Serniabat, was lay nearby. A bullet had pierced through Arif's head. Rab Serniabat's daughter Baby Serniabat's body was lying beside.

Abdur Rab Serniabat, his son Arif Serniabat, daughter Baby Serniabat, grandson Sukanta Babu, and relative Abdul Nayeem Khan Rintu were all

Shahan Ara, her son Sadek, motherin-law and two sisters-in-law survived the massacre.

"I cannot forget their face to this day. Moments ago, they were having a chat, now they are all dead and cold,' Shahan Ara said.

The story is based on an interview with Shahan Ara in August last year at

her Kalibari Road house in Barisal.]

Dhaka ranked

FROM PAGE 1 and environment, education, and

Each factor in a city is rated as acceptable, tolerable, uncomfortable, undesirable or intolerable.

Dhaka scored an overall of 38 out of a possible score of 100. Dhaka scored 50 in stability, 29.2

in healthcare, 40.5 in culture and environment, 41.7 in education and 26.8 in infrastructure. The liveability ranking considers

that any city with a rating of 80 or more will have few, if any, challenges to living standards. Any city with a score less than 50 will see most aspects of living severely restricted.

Vienna of Austria was ranked the most liveable city with an overall

SOCIAL MEDIA

'Govt to set up new unit to monitor contents'

UNB, Dhaka

A new unit will be set up in the information ministry to analyse and inform about social media contents so that Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) can go for mea-

sures against offensive contents. State Minister for Information Tarana Halim said this while talking to reporters at the secretariat yesterday.

"We have a plan and we have taken an initiative to set up a unit. We will analyse the contents, posted at social networking sites, to prevent spreading of rumours, negative publicity and

contents which make people insti-

women and inform BTRC about such

gated and contents offensive for

contents," said the state minister. She also said the government has taken a project to boost the publicity activities of the government and the mass communication department will inform public about the country's development. It will disseminate the messages to all 4,554 unions of

the country, she added. Replying to a question about attack on journalists during the students' agitation programme in the city, Tarana said, "We have sent a letter to the Home Ministry and they will take steps after seeing the video footages. The medical expenses of the injured journalists will be borne from the Journalists' Welfare Trust Fund."

2 'drug traders' killed in 'gunfight' with Rab

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Two alleged drug traders were killed in a "gunfight" with law enforcers in Cox's Bazar yesterday. Both the dead, Md Nizam Uddin,

30, and Ratan Rudra, 31, were from Chittagong's Lohagara upazila. According to Rab sources, the Rab-7 set up a check post on Cox's Bazar-

Chittagong Highway in Ramu upazila's Paner Chhara Bazar area early yesterday. Maj Md Mehedi Hasan, company commander of Rab-7, said when the

Rab team signalled for a fuel truck to

pull over, its passengers opened fire

on law enforcers around 7:00am. The elite force fired retaliatory shots, triggering the "gunfight". When the shooting stopped after a while, the Rab men found two bullethit men in the vehicle. The duo was rushed to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital

where doctors declared them dead. The Rab claimed to have recovered 4.5 lakh yaba tablets, a pistol, a revolver, two LGs and a huge amount of bullets from the truck which was going to Chittagong from Teknaf.

With the latest incident, at least 214 alleged drug dealers have been killed since the anti-narcotics drive began on May 4. Most of them were killed in so-called gunfights involving the police and Rab.

Editors' Council

FROM PAGE 16

rights of journalists. He had been an active member of numerous journalistic bodies in all of which he worked to uphold ethics of the profession to which he devoted his whole life, the Council said in a statement.

He obtained his bachelor and master's degrees in Bangla literature from Dhaka University. In his student life in 1962, he started his career as a university correspondent at the daily Azadi. Later, he worked in the daily Sangbad and the daily Ittefaq.

In 1999, he became the editor of Bangla daily Jugantor and in 2005, he joined another Bangla daily Samakal as its founding editor and served as the editor at the newspaper until his death.

Sarwar was awarded the Ekushey Padak in 2014 for his contribution to journalism. As chairman of the Press Institute of

Bangladesh (PIB), he was involved in improving the quality of journalism training, the Council said. Apart from journalism,

Sarwar was a member of the Bangladesh Film Censor Board's Appellate Division and had worked as a senior vice-president of the National Press Club several times. He also authored several books. "Sampadoker Jabanbondi", "Aumio Gorol", "Amar Joto Kotha", and "Swapna Beche Thak" are notable

among them, the Council mentioned. In a career spanning over five decades, Sarwar has left a rich legacy that will inspire journalists for years

to come, the Council said.

The Council conveyed its sincerest condolences to his bereaved family and prayed to the Almighty for the salvation of his soul.

Things remain almost same

FROM PAGE 1

College were killed on the spot as a Jabal-e-Noor Paribahan bus ploughed through a crowd while competing with another bus of the same company.

Following the students' agitation, the government, and transport owners and workers took up several measures to improve the situation on roads.

But still things have not changed that much with the authorities pointing out that the problems and mismanagement that continued for years cannot be removed overnight. They say it is important to create awareness among people so that they obey traffic rules.

Many buses continued to ply the city streets without legal documents while a number of drivers were found without valid licence. Buses picked and dropped off passengers on roads randomly. Many operators didn't operate buses for not having necessary documents. People were still risking their lives to

cross busy thoroughfares haphazardly.

violators as many of them didn't stop at traffic signals and failed to show licences and valid documents -- all too common pictures on the city streets. However, the student movement and subsequent police actions seem to have created awareness among a section of people with many of them turning up at Bangladesh Road

Transport Authority (BRTA) offices across the country to either update or get necessary documents. Experts say police crackdown following a certain situation exposed poor condition of the transport sector. This warrants many more immediate steps, not only enforcement of rules, to bring order in this very important sector.

YESTERDAY'S SITUATION

In the capital's Farmgate, Karwanbazar, Shahbagh, Science Laboratory intersection and Manik Miah Avenue areas, scores of people were seen waiting for buses as the number of public transport was relatively low yesterday. Whenever a bus came, people tussled

to get into it. Buses picked and dropped off passengers on the main roads. Many crossed the busy roads, ignoring the risk of being hit by a vehicle, though

footbridges were just yards away. However, some positive changes were also there. Police were seen strictly enforcing

the traffic rules as part of their 10-day

special drive against errant drivers. Most of the bikers were wearing helmets. There was also a drop in the number of vehicles using the wrong side of the road, and people were seen

cooperating with police.

Mir Rezaul Alam, additional commissioner (Traffic) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), claimed that the Traffic Week saw a huge success as people became aware of the traffic rules. All the quarters -- from government

officials to media persons to common people --helped traffic police enforce the rules, which had not been possible in the past, he told this newspaper last night. "We are happy. We want to create a

culture where people will follow the

law," he said, adding that strict enforcement of traffic rules will continue. Prof Moazzem Hossain, a former director of the Accident Research Institute (ARI) at Bangladesh University of Engineering and

the number of unfit vehicles and drivers with fake licences is huge. This special Traffic Week has exposed poor enforcement of traffic rules in the past, he said.

It, however, has also created awareness among people about traffic rules, and thus people in large numbers turned up at BRTA offices to either update or get necessary documents, he said

Prof Moazzem said it is not possible to bring positive changes in transport sector with the enforcement of law alone. Rather, the government should immediately introduce scientific traffic management system, provide training to drivers, and establish proper signalling system and terminal management.

"We have a long way to go as we are yet to start many things to bring discipline in the sector," he told this newspaper.

ASSOCIATIONS CHECK

DOCUMENTS

Vigilant teams of transport owners and workers checked documents of vehicles and drivers at several points in the capital for the sixth consecutive day yesterday. On Manik Mia Avenue, a vigilant team

led by Khondaker Enayet Ullah, general

secretary of Dhaka Road Transport Owners' Association (DRTOA), checked documents of vehicles as well as drivers for around two hours from 12:30pm. They handed over several underage drivers to a BRTA mobile court, which

was also conducting a drive in the same

ing licences for light or medium vehicles whereas they were supposed to have licences for heavy vehicles. Enayet Ullah said the team wrote

would issue show-cause notices to the bus owners. He said that as per their previous Bikers topped the list of traffic rule decisions, they would not allow any-

brought to a total stop," he told report-

abolish the system of daily contracts with drivers and helpers. Many bus owners rent out their

vehicles to drivers on daily contracts. In

this practice, drivers pay a specific amount to the owner, and to maximise profits, they drive recklessly to make as many trips as possible in a day. Meanwhile, the mobile court led by Executive Magistrate Mazharul Islam

those Tk 16,000 for violating traffic The court also jailed two middle-

Another BRTA mobile court conducted a drive in BRTA's Ekuria office area. It filed cases against 21 vehicles violation of traffic rules.

successful. Contacted, Mohammad Sohel Rana, assistant inspector general (Media and Public Relations) at the Police Headquarters, said the law enforcers fined errant drivers and vehicles over Tk

The Traffic Week, which began on August 5, was extended for three days

till yesterday. The traffic policemen lodged cases

Besides, legal action was taken against 74,228 drivers for breaching traffic rules such as driving vehicles on the wrong side, using hydraulic horns and not carrying

proper documents, it mentioned. The law enforcers also seized 5,418 vehicles, it added.

FROM PAGE 16 and, while not known to the MI5 domestic spy agency or Britain's counter-

identified or reported to police," Basu said. "There is no intelligence of further danger to Londoners or the rest of the UK in connection with this incident." Police said a silver Ford Fiesta was

driven through a group of cyclists and pedestrians during the morning rush hour before hitting a barrier in front of the Houses of Parliament at 0637 GMT. Camera footage showed the vehicle

taking a wrong turn before veering

officers jumped to safety. British Prime Minister Theresa May said her thoughts were with the people



GD-1960

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Many of the bus drivers were carry-

down the problems of the buses and

one run services on the basis of daily contracts with drivers and helpers. "We will resume our activities after the Eid vacation, and continue those until the practice of daily contracts is

On August 8, DRTOA decided to

filed cases against 15 vehicles and fined

men for various terms.

and also fined those Tk 45,500 for TRAFFIC WEEK ENDS Police have claimed that the Traffic Week which ended yesterday had been

7 crore for violating traffic rules across the country in the last 10 days.

against 180,249 vehicles for breaking traffic rules in six metropolitan police areas, and eight ranges and highway ranges, according to a statement of Bangladesh Police.

'Terror attack'

Technology, said it's very clear now that terrorism network, was known to police. "At this early stage of the investigation, no other suspects at the scene have been

across the road and into a security lane leading to parliament before smashing into the protective barrier as two police

সিলেট গ্যাস ফিল্ডস লিমিটেড বিদ্যুৎ ও জ্বালানি নিরাপত্তা সর্বোচ্চ অগ্রাধিকার

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