JAIL KILLING DAY

How the horrors of November 3 transpired

A first-hand account of what happened inside Dhaka Central Jail on this day 46 years ago

MAHBUB UDDIN AHMED

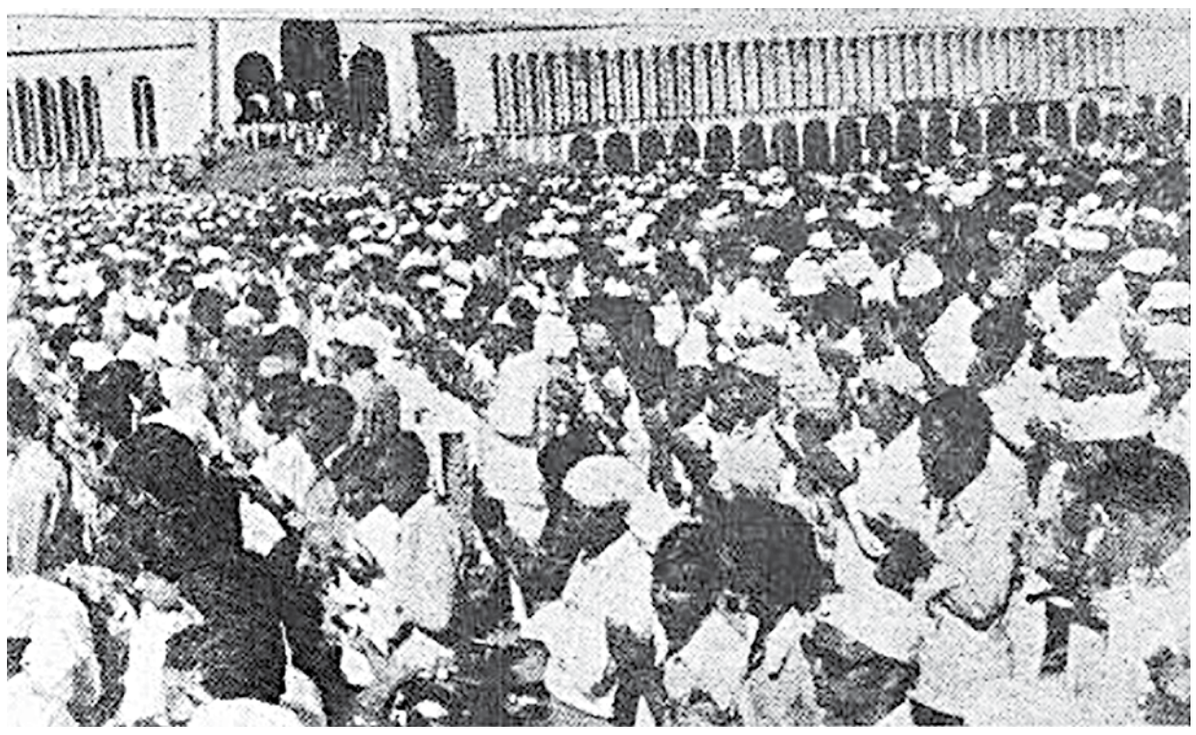
IT was in the early hours of November 3 when a warning bell went off inside the central jail in the heart of Dhaka city. As dawn approached, a sense of deepening fear engulfed the indoors of the new jail. It was home to the most important political figures of Bangladesh at that time: Syed Nazrul Islam, acting president of Bangladesh during the Liberation War and later the industries minister in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's cabinet; Tajuddin Ahmed, former prime minister of Bangladesh; Captain (retd) M Mansur Ali, prime minister of the country following the formation of Baksal, and AHM Qamaruzzaman, president of the Awami League under Baksal. They were accompanied by a large number of political prisoners too—around 50. They were all housed in one building consisting of three large rooms known as the new jail. In the first room lived Tajuddin and Syed Nazrul, with others. In the middle room was Qamaruzzaman, and in the third one lived Mansur Ali.

I was arrested and placed in the new jail, but in a different building. It was a newly constructed building called the "Ninety Cells," purported to accommodate important prisoners. Only the ground floor of the building had been completed.

I was put in room number one of the so-called "Ninety Cells." In the room to my left, Sergeant Kibria and Dulu were placed. Only a five-inch wall separated us, but the veranda allowed us space to move about during the daytime. However, after the dusk shutdown and lock-up, we could communicate as everyone was within a hearing distance. My room was exactly on the opposite side of room number one in the main building. The wall-to-wall distance could not have been more than 10 feet, with a small road in between the buildings. The front of the main building faced the back of ours, so we were well within the hearing range. Moreover, there was a hole on the wall in our toilet; with a bit of manoeuvring, we could take a peek outside.

At around 3am, the awful "dong-dong" of the warning bell shattered the night silence, much to the consternation and bafflement of the prisoners. We didn't yet know that an incomprehensibly brutal act of violence—the staging of a reprehensible savagery that was beyond anyone's wildest imagination—was about to transpire at the most secure place in the city.

We heard the sound of a large gathering of people outside. The voice of the jailer, Aminur Rahman, was clear; he appeared to be directing everyone to open the gates. We could hear a lot of movement and people discussing moving the inmates from different rooms. Aminur Rahman himself guided the inmates of room number one to the next room, leaving behind Syed Nazrul and Tajuddin. He also collected Qamaruzzaman from the second room, and Mansur Ali from the third room. The two rooms were locked again, but the first room was left open. To keep their peace of mind, the jailer informed the four leaders that some important representatives of the Mostaq government were going to visit them to discuss political issues, and that they were expected to arrive any moment.



A "gayebi janaza"—special prayer—is offered for the departed souls of four national leaders at the Baitul Mukarram mosque premises in Dhaka on November 5, 1975. SOURCE: **DAINIK BANGLA, NOVEMBER 6, 1975**

> *The killers were told that entering the jail at odd hours was prohibited, so they sought the intervention of Khondaker Mostaq Ahmad, who had positioned himself as the president of the country. Mostaq directed the jail authority to allow the killers to enter the jail and do their job. While this exchange of words was taking place, the officials of the jail were abused.*

In the meantime, the killers had already reached the jail gate, had a heated exchange with the jail authority, including the DIG prisons, over permission to enter the jail at that time. The killers were told that entering the jail at odd hours was prohibited, so they sought the intervention of Khondaker Mostaq Ahmad, who had positioned himself as the president of the country. Mostaq directed the jail authority to allow the killers to enter the jail and do their job. While this exchange of words was taking place, the officials of the jail were abused.

With the permission of the president himself, the contingent of killers, clad in black uniforms, entered the jail premises stealthily and hid in the shadows.

In the meantime, after the rearrangement of inmates among the rooms had been done, Aminur Rahman and his large team left. Soon afterwards, I heard the loud sound of a group of people doing a double march. They entered the open veranda of room number one, where the four leaders were waiting, and opened fire at point blank range. The bullets hit them straight, some ricocheting, missing the targets and hitting the walls. I heard Tajuddin exclaim, "Hey! What are you doing?" That was the last words I heard from him before he was shot, falling on his side on the cot. Syed Nazrul, already shot, fell on his front, while Mansur dived under the cot to save himself. He survived the attack, and as soon as the killers left, we heard him crying for help. *"Pani, pani!"* he asked for water.

The killings were done with automatic machine guns, within minutes. I recognised the weapons because I had used them in the battlefield against the Pakistan Army during the war. For a few long moments, I remained frozen, afraid to make the slightest of noise, lest the killers heard and came back to kill us. But we had not seen the last of this inhuman savagery yet. Hearing the groaning cry for help and water, one of the prison guards ran to the jail gate and informed the killers that some of the leaders were still alive. Upon hearing this, the brutal band of rogues returned in double march, this time with bayonets fitted to their weapons, entered the room, and bayoneted them all. The gruesome sounds of bayonets slicing through their bodies were gut-wrenching. Ensuring the physical elimination of the leaders of the country's struggle for independence, the rogues returned in a double march towards the gate. While leaving, I heard one of the killers say, "Hamid, be quick."

In the meantime, one of the prison guards, most probably Motaleb, came to my cell and said, "Sir, all four are finished." As far as I can recall, Motaleb was the guard who ran to the killers to inform them that the leaders were not all dead yet.

Later in the day, around mid-afternoon, one of my brothers came to visit me at the jail gate. My relatives and siblings had been informed that I had been killed in jail as well, and he came to the jail to verify that information, managing permission from EA Chowdhury, the then DIG of Special Branch. On his arrival, I was escorted to the gate by Motaleb.

After speaking to my brother, on my way back to my room, I went straight to the dead bodies of our leaders. They were lying in utter disrespect. Offering a silent prayer, I went to one of the other rooms, where other leaders like Maya and Amu Bhai were waiting. Seeing them, I burst into tears, and so did they; separated by the bars, we could not comfort each other.

Around 11am the next day, Additional SP Abdus Salam came to the jail for post-mortem supervision. He was followed by ADC Dhaka Akmal Hussain. He was my batch mate from our Dhaka University days. He was also the private secretary to Captain Mansur Ali during the latter's stint as home minister. When he appeared in front of my room, we shook hands, then started crying. We could not embrace each other as the prison bars separated us. After a long exchange of words of comfort and deliberation, he left to attend his call of duty.

After the autopsies and other formalities, the dead bodies were taken out of jail after sunset and subsequently buried.

By now it is well-known that the assassinations of Bangabandhu and his family members and the four national leaders, as well as the killings of patriotic armed personnel like Brig Khaled Mosharraf, Bir Uttom, Col Nazmul Huda, Bir Bikram, and Major Haider, Bir Uttom, were all deeply connected to the losing side of the Liberation War. The entire gamut of conspiracies was hatched by the anti-liberation forces. They were afraid of Sheikh Mujib, who succeeded in liberating Bangladesh in spite of the deployment of all imperialist forces against him. In the initial killing spree, the conspirators thought they had succeeded, but time has proven that they failed.

Mahbub Uddin Ahmed, Bir Bikram, was a freedom fighter during the Liberation War of Bangladesh.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

The test of pandemic preparedness

JOSÉ MANUEL BARROSO

THE Covid-19 pandemic has instilled many harsh lessons for the world. But the most important one is that infectious-disease outbreaks pose a risk not just to public health, but also to global security. Like nuclear proliferation, terrorism, and climate change, Covid-19 has shown that pandemics can rapidly undermine social stability and economic well-being.

This point may seem obvious now. But before the Covid-19 crisis, infectious diseases barely registered on the global security agenda. If efforts to change that by establishing new funding and monitoring mechanisms for pandemic preparedness are to succeed, half measures won't cut it. To avoid a repeat of history, our preparations must reflect the true extent of the challenge. We must recognise that pandemics now represent one of the biggest—and most likely—threats to global security.

Preventing future pandemics will require not only the same level of investment as other global security threats, on which trillions are spent routinely, but also an entirely different way of thinking about global security. The pandemic represents a new form of globalised crisis—one that is both caused and exacerbated by the modern world's interconnectedness.

The Spanish influenza pandemic a century ago was not this kind of crisis. Back then, most people across the globe lived in less dense rural settings, and international travel was much slower and undertaken by only a small fraction of the population. But we saw something similar in 2008-09, when economies fell like dominoes. That was the first globalised crisis of this century, and we are now coming to grips with what will be the century's defining crisis: climate change.

The common denominator in each case is that the crisis demands solutions that no individual government can provide on its own. An infectious disease cannot be fought with traditional security countermeasures, such as economic sanctions, bilateral diplomacy, deterrence or military posturing. Rather, it calls for scientific collaboration, resilient healthcare systems, and long-term investments in global health networks. Shows of force and unilateral acts of national self-preservation are useless; global collaboration, strategic multilateralism, and transnational compassion are the only way out of this kind of disaster.

Mustering a genuinely global response is necessary both to end the ongoing pandemic crisis and to avert the next one. PHOTO: **REUTERS**

Judging by the current global distribution of Covid-19 vaccines, we have yet to muster the necessary response. The coronavirus is still winning, and a lack of global coordination is the principal reason why. Instead of finding ways to work together towards common solutions in the face of an unprecedented crisis, key governments are still putting their national interests first, at the expense of the global response we need.

The global solution to the vaccine distribution problem is the Covid-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) facility established last year. By ensuring equitable access to vaccines for people in the poorest countries, COVAX is not only saving millions of lives and protecting hundreds of millions more, but it is also offering the best path to recovery. Even from a strictly economic standpoint, COVAX is far more cost-effective than any form of fiscal or monetary stimulus.

There are now more than 1.5 billion vaccine doses being produced in the world each month—an astounding feat less than a year after the first vaccine was approved, and just 18 months into the pandemic. It is predicted that a total of more than 12 billion doses will have been produced by the end of this year. Yet, while that is enough to vaccinate every adult on the planet, we are still a long way from doing so, because the vaccine distribution is so inequitable. Shockingly, only 3.1 percent of eligible people in low-income countries have received at least one dose, on average, compared to more than 71.1 percent of people in high-income countries.

This disparity is both morally wrong and dangerously short-sighted. By prolonging the pandemic and allowing more opportunities for the virus to generate new variants, it ultimately harms everyone. But this failure will not be corrected until governments start acting globally. Although more than 190 countries support COVAX, many governments are struggling to balance between protecting their own populations and acting in ways that serve everyone's interest in global health and economic recovery.

Mustering a genuinely global response is necessary both to end this crisis and to avert the next one. It is not just individuals' health that is at stake. As Covid-19 has shown, pandemics can push millions of people into poverty and place unprecedented restrictions on their mobility. Such conditions can subvert even traditionally stable countries, by increasing the threat of political polarisation, civil unrest, and violence. The longer the crisis continues, the greater that threat.

Globalised crises require that we globalise critical resources—in today's case, vaccines. The G20 governments have the power to lead the way by ending the vaccine-hoarding and export bans that have impeded supplies, and by donating more doses to COVAX. But as urgent as such measures are, they are mostly band-aids—solutions to a crisis within a crisis. To avoid a repeat of Covid-19, we need more expansive pandemic preparedness mechanisms built around the model of globalised resources that COVAX pioneered. We cannot wait until the next outbreak has already become a global security threat. By that time, it will be too late.

José Manuel Barroso, a former president of the European Commission and former prime minister of Portugal, is the chair of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

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পরিচালকের কার্যালয়
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মুজিব শতবর্ষ MUJIB 100
মুজিব বর্ষে স্বাস্থ্য খাত এগিয়ে যাবে অনেক ধাপ

স্মারক নং-ডিএনসিসি ডিসিএইচ/সংগ্রহ-১/২০২১-২০২২/দরপত্র/০০১ তারিখঃ- ০২/১১/২০২১ইং

" ২০২১-২০২২ ইং অর্থ বৎসরে আহ্বানকৃত দরপত্র সংশোধনী বিজ্ঞপ্তি "

ডিএনসিসি ডেডিকেটেড কোভিড-১৯ হাসপাতালের ২০২১-২০২২ ইং অর্থ বছরের মালামাল সংগ্রহের জন্য স্মারক নং-ডিএনসিসি ডিসিএইচ/সংগ্রহ-১/২০২১-২০২২/দরপত্র/০০১ তারিখঃ-১৯/১০/২০২১ ইং মোতাবেক বিভিন্ন বাংলা ও ইংরেজি দৈনিক পত্রিকায় বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের মাধ্যমে উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র আহ্বান করা হয়। উক্ত প্রকাশিত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তিটি নিম্নলিখিতভাবে সংশোধন করা হলো ঃ-

পূর্বে প্রকাশিত বিজ্ঞপ্তির ক্রমিক নং	পূর্বে প্রকাশিত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি			সংশোধিত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি		
	গ্রুপের বিবরণ	দরপত্র তফসীলের মূল্য	দরপত্রের সহিত টেন্ডার সিকিউরিটি মানি জমা দেওয়ার পরিমান	গ্রুপের বিবরণ	দরপত্র তফসীলের মূল্য	দরপত্রের সহিত টেন্ডার সিকিউরিটি মানি জমা দেওয়ার পরিমান
ক্রমিক নং ০৬ এর গ্রুপ নং ০৪	এমএসআর সার্জিক্যাল ইকুইপমেন্ট	১০০০.০০	৩০,০০০/- (ত্রিশ হাজার)	এমএসআর যন্ত্রপাতি মেরামত	১০০০.০০	৫০,০০০.০০ (পঞ্চাশ হাজার)
০৯.	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রির তারিখ ও সময়	২০/১০/২০২১ ইং তারিখ হতে ১৯/১১/২০২১ ইং তারিখ পর্যন্ত। প্রতি কর্মদিবসে সকাল ৯.০০ ঘটিকা হতে বেলা ২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত। উক্ত তারিখ ও সময়ের পর কোন দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রি করা হবে না।		দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রির তারিখ ও সময়		২০/১০/২০২১ ইং তারিখ হতে ২২/১১/২০২১ ইং তারিখ পর্যন্ত। প্রতি কর্মদিবসে সকাল ৯.০০ ঘটিকা হতে বেলা ২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত। উক্ত তারিখ ও সময়ের পর কোন দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রি করা হবে না।
১০.	প্রি-বিড সভার তারিখ ও সময়	১০/১১/২০২১ ইং, বেলা:-১২.০০ ঘটিকায়।		প্রি-বিড সভার তারিখ ও সময়		১৫/১১/২০২১ ইং, বেলা:-১২.০০ ঘটিকায়।
১১.	দরপত্র গ্রহনের তারিখ ও সময়	১৯/১১/২০২১ইং তারিখ, বেলা:- ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।		দরপত্র গ্রহনের তারিখ ও সময়		২৩/১১/২০২১ ইং তারিখ, বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১২.	দরপত্র বাক্স খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	১৯/১১/২০২১ইং তারিখ, বেলা:- ১.০০ ঘটিকায়।		দরপত্র বাক্স খোলার তারিখ ও সময়		২৩/১১/২০২১ ইং তারিখ, বেলা ১.০০ ঘটিকায়।
১৬.	গ্রুপ নং-০২ মেডিসিন এর বেলায় কেবলমাত্র "সিএমএসডি"-তে নিবন্ধিত প্রতিষ্ঠান অংশ গ্রহন করতে পারবেন। তবে বিদেশ হতে আমদানীকৃত ঔষধের বেলায় ঔষধ প্রশাসন অধিদপ্তর কর্তৃক NOC/রেজিস্ট্রেশন প্রাপ্ত যে কোন সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান অংশ গ্রহন করতে পারবেন।			বিদেশ হতে আমদানীকৃত ঔষধের বেলায় ঔষধ প্রশাসন অধিদপ্তর কর্তৃক NOC/ রেজিস্ট্রেশন প্রাপ্ত যে কোন সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান অংশ গ্রহন করতে পারবেন।		

এছাড়া বিজ্ঞপ্তির অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী বলবৎ থাকবে।

কর্ণেল মোঃ মিজানুর রহমান খান
ভারপ্রাপ্ত পরিচালক
ডিএনসিসি ডেডিকেটেড কোভিড-১৯ হাসপাতাল
ফোনঃ ০২৪১০৮২২৭৭

GD-1975