

Little progress in Hefajat B’baria mayhem probes

MASUK HRIDOY, *Brahmanbaria*

One year after the Hefajat mayhem in Brahmanbaria, investigation of any of 55 cases filed in connection with the incident is yet to be completed.

According to police, 758 people have so far been arrested in the 55 cases. Of them, 120 are in jail and 638 are on bail.

Only 46 named in the first information reports (FIRs) have been arrested.

Locals alleged that the real culprits were yet to be arrested.

From March 26-28 last year, Hefajat-e-Islam, a Qawmi madrasa-based Islamist organisation, carried out the mayhem in different places of the district over Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Bangladesh on the occasion of the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

They vandalised and set fire to over 50 government and non-government offices, temples and Sur Samrat Ustad Alauddin Khan Museum.

Molla Mohammad Shaheen, additional superintendent of police (administration and crime) in Brahmanbaria, said as the drive to arrest the accused was ongoing, they could not complete the investigation.

He said 49 cases were filed with Brahmanbaria Sadar Model Police Station, four with Ashuganj and two with Sarail police stations.

Of the cases, 27 are under investigation with Brahmanbaria Sadar Model Police Station, 10 with the CID, nine with PBI, four with DB, three with Ashuganj and two with Sarail police stations.

Of the arrestees, 49 accused gave confessional statements before the court under section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the police officer said.

On January 12, 2016, Hefajat activists vandalised eight to 10 establishments, including Ustad Alauddin music academy.

Trump sues Clinton over Russia collusion accusations

AFP, *Washington*

Former US president Donald Trump filed a lawsuit on Thursday against Hillary Clinton, Democratic Party leaders and others alleging they falsely accused him of colluding with Russia ahead of the 2016 election.

“In the run-up to the 2016 Presidential Election, Hillary Clinton and her cohorts orchestrated an unthinkable plot — one that shocks the conscience and is an affront to this nation’s democracy,” the complaint filed in a federal court in Florida said.

Roaring nation and the slogans

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swing into action,” said Liberation War researcher and historian Muntassir Mamoon.

Another important aspect of the slogans is their creativity and rhythm. They have literary value, he said.

“Slogane Slogane Rajniti”, a book by valiant freedom fighter, journalist Abu Sayeed Khan, published recently, described how historical events were documented in such slogans.

“Slogans are integral to politics. They reflect the demands and political aims of certain groups and parties. Slogans indicate identities of political parties as well as characteristics of movements,” Sayeed says.

Sayeed’s book and “Bangladesher Gano Andolone Slogan, Placard O Poster” by Siddiqur Rahman Shapan compiled many slogans that were in use during the liberation struggle and other movements.

According to the books, during the Mass Upsurge in January, 1969, students, under the banner of Sarbadaliya Chhatura Sangram Parishad (All Student Parties Resistance Council), started chanting the slogan Joy Bangla (Victory to Bengal).

Sayeed wrote in his book that the slogan was first introduced by a Chhatura League activist in a meeting of the student organisation on September 15, 1969.

It became popular and was adopted by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Later, it turned into a battle cry during the Liberation War

in 1971, said Sayeed, now working as an advisory editor of the Samakal, a Bangla daily.

Joy Bangla was not merely a political slogan. It became a declaration of commitment to the motherland and a symbol of the national spirit and patriotism. Inevitably, it became the national slogan of Bangladesh.

“Students started to use the Joy Bangla slogan in 1969. But it became a popular slogan of the country during the Liberation War. It was also used to greet others at that time,” Muntassir Mamoon said.

The slogan united the Bangalees to fight the Pakistani regime, he added.

Siddiqur in his book said during the Mass Upsurge the uniqueness of the Bangalees became more evident. Slogans like Pakistan Zindabad (Long Live Pakistan) started to lose appeal.

During that period, slogans, such as Tomar Desh Amar Desh Bangladesh, Bangladesh (your country, my country, Bangladesh, Bangladesh), Tumi ke Ami Ke, Bangalee Bangalee (Who are you, who am I, we are Bangalee), were chanted frequently.

The Mass Upsurge started with the student’s unrest against the tyrannical rule of Ayub Khan. Peasants, artisans, and workers joined the movement, which followed another massive protest against the Pakistani rulers following the Agartala Conspiracy Case against Awami League chief Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and others.

In an interview, Sayeed

recalled the days saying that general people as well as members of the nationalist and left-leaning political parties gave slogans like Jago Jago Bangalee Jago (Bangalees, rise up), Tomar Amar Thikana Padma Meghna Jamuna (Padma, Meghna, Jamuna are our address), Tomar Amar Thikana Khet Khamar Karkhana (Field, farms and mills are our address), Joy Janata (Victory to the people), and many others.

He said left-leaning parties widely used the slogan Keu Khabe to Keu Khabe Na Ta Hobe Na Ta Hobe Na (Some will eat while others will go hungry — this won’t be accepted) during the Mass Upsurge.

Nationalistic parties later used the slogan. Following the Mass Upsurge, the Awami League won an absolute majority in the 1970 General Elections, but the Pakistani rulers declined to hand over power, triggering a massive protest known as the Non-Cooperation Movement.

It intensified during the month of March in 1971 when the Pakistani rulers postponed the session of the National Assembly. During the Non-Cooperation Movement, slogans like Bir Bangalee Ostro Dhoro Bangladesh Swadhin Koro (Valiant Bangalees, take up arms and free Bangladesh), Swadhin Koro Swadhin Koro Bangladesh Swadhin Koro (Liberate Bangladesh), Aposh Na Sangram Sangram Sangram (No compromise, only struggle, struggle and struggle), Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu, Tomar Neta, Amar Neta,

Section 144. Police opened fire on unarmed students, both male and female, who defied the section that day. The protestors chanted slogans, such as Rashtro Bhasha Bangla Chai, 144 Dhara Manbo Na (We want Bangla as the state language, we won’t abide by [Section] 144), Cholo Cholo Assembly Cholo (Let’s go to Assembly).

In 1954, Awami League, Krishak Sramik Party, Nizam-e-Islam and Ganatantri Dal formed the United Front, for the elections to the East Bengal Legislative Assembly.

During the battle of ballots, there were battles of slogans as well. Among the slogans used by Muslim league supporters were Nougai Vote Dile Bibi Talak Hoe Jabe (If you cast vote for Boat, you will get divorced), Huq, Bhashani Hindustaner Dalal (Huq and Bhashani are agents of India). United Front workers roared Purba Bangla Shayottoshashon Kayem Koro (Establish autonomy of East Bengal), Bichar Bibagh Prithak Koro (Separate the judiciary), Bhashani Bhashaichhe Nougai Haq Shaheb Tar Majhi (Bhashani has set the Boat floating, Haq is the boatman), League Shashoner Durgati, Dui Anay Matchbati (The miserable state of the League is evident because a matchbox costs two annas).

The Kargmari Conference convened by Maulana Bhashani in 1957, witnessed slogans carrying anti-West sentiments like Ingo-Markin Shamrajyobaad Dhongsho Hok Nipat Jaak (Down with US and UK imperialism) and Seato Cento Tyag Koro (Leave the Seato and Cento

contracts). Democracy-loving Bangalees took to the streets immediately after the 1958 coup d’état. They uttered Samarik Ain Manina (We don’t accept martial law), Ganotantrik Sarkar Chai (We want democratic government), Ayub Shahi Dangsho Hok (Down with Ayub) and others.

Students waged a movement against an education commission known as Sharif Commission in the early 1960s, chanting slogans such as Shikkha Bay Komate Hobe (Education costs should be reduced), Shikkha Khetre Baishamya Cholbe Na (There will be no discrimination in education), Roman Harale Bangla Lekha Cholbe na (Bangla cannot be written in Roman letters).

Students uttered slogans in favour of a democratic system as well as press freedom. They raised slogans like Ganatantrik Babostha Kayem Koro (Establish democratic system), Sangbadpatrer Swadhinata Dite Hobe (Freedom of newspapers must be ensured).

Siddiqur Rahman in his book said that a widely-used slogan Jalo Jalo Agun Jalo (light the fire, light the fire), a translation of a Hungarian slogan, was introduced during the anti-Sharif Commission protests.

People of Bangladesh chanted slogans against communalism when communal riots hit Dhaka and its adjacent areas in 1964. Slogans have been in the soul of the Bangalees for centuries, manifesting their bold, rebellious spirit against oppression and injustice.



A man flees with his belongings as fire engulfs a vehicle and building following artillery fire on the 30th day on invasion of Ukraine by Russian forces in the northeastern city of Kharkiv, Ukraine yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Europe seeks to cut Russian gas

US, EU strike LNG deal to further isolate Moscow after its invasion of Ukraine; 300 feared dead in Mariupol theatre strike

AGENCIES

The United States will work to supply 15 billion cubic metres of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to the European Union this year to help it wean off Russian energy supplies, the transatlantic partners said yesterday.

The EU is aiming to cut its dependency on Russian gas by two-thirds this year and end all Russian fossil fuel imports by 2027 due to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Russia supplies around 40% of Europe’s gas needs.

Concerns over security of supply were reinforced this week after Russia ordered the switch of gas contract payments to roubles, raising the risk of a supply squeeze and even higher prices.

Senior US administration officials did not specify what amount or percentage of the extra LNG supply would come from the United States.

US President Joe Biden and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen also announced a plan to form a task force to cut Europe’s reliance on Russian fossil

fuels.

The Commission will work with EU countries to ensure they are able to receive about 50 bcm of additional US LNG until at least 2030. US LNG exports to the EU last year were about 22 bcm.

Meanwhile Germany, the EU’s biggest importer of Russian gas, said it has made “significant progress” towards reducing its exposure to imports of Russian gas, oil and coal.

However, Economy Minister Robert Habeck also said it could take until the summer of 2024 for Europe’s largest economy to wean itself off Russian gas.

On the battlefield, Moscow said it had destroyed Ukraine’s largest remaining military fuel depot, at Kalynivka near the capital Kyiv, using sea-borne cruise missiles.

Fireballs leapt into the air from the storage facility, while a smaller fire blazed from a severed fuel line and a huge plume of black smoke rose over the site, AFP reporters at the scene said.

“Fortunately, there were no casualties,” a security guard said at a

checkpoint near the depot, asking not to be identified.

But in the east, Russian strikes targeting a medical facility in Ukraine’s second city Kharkiv killed four civilians and wounded several others, police said.

Ukrainian troops are recapturing towns east of Kyiv and Russian forces who had been trying to seize the capital are falling back on overextended supply lines, Britain said yesterday, one of the strongest indications yet of a shift in momentum in the war.

A month into their assault, Russian troops have failed to capture any major Ukrainian city.

An offensive Western countries believe was aimed at swiftly toppling President Volodymyr Zelensky’s government was halted at the gates of Kyiv.

A senior US administration official said Washington and its allies were also working on providing anti-ship weapons to protect Ukraine’s coast. Ukrainian forces claimed on Thursday to have blown up a Russian landing ship in a Russian-occupied port.

Man stabbed to death in Bagerhat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bagerhat*

A man was stabbed to death in Bagerhat’s Mollahat upazila on Thursday.

The dead is Naim Khan, 28, an office assistant (LMSS) at the upazila’s social services department complex.

According to locals, Naim was playing ludo at a nearby shop around 8:30pm. He abruptly left the shop after someone called him over the phone.

A few moments later, a woman found him in a critical condition. He had severe injuries on his throat and hands.

Soumen Das, officer-in-charge of Mollahat Police Station, said Naim was first rushed to a nearby clinic and then to Khulna Medical College Hospital where on-duty doctors declared him dead.

Police arrest man fugitive for 22 years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinaajpur*

A man, who remained fugitive for 22 years to avoid imprisonment, was sent to jail yesterday for killing his wife on January 10, 2000.

The convict is Anwar Hossain, 55, of Dinaajpur’s Phulbari upazila, said police.

On Thursday, he was brought to Phulbari Police Station with the support of Dhaka police. Dhaka Metropolitan Police arrested him during a raid in the capital’s Bhatara area.

Ashraful Islam, officer-in-charge of Phulbari Police Station, said the murder took place on January 10, 2000, at a rented house in Uttar Sujapur village of the upazila.

Bar council election on May 25

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The election to Bangladesh Bar Council, the statutory body regulating the country’s lawyers, will be held on May 25 to elect its 14 executive members.

The voting will be held from 10:00am to 5:00pm at the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) in Dhaka and all the civil courts at the districts and Bajitpur, Ishwarganj, Durgapur, Bhanga, Chikandi, Patia, Satkania, Banshkhal, Fatikchhari, Sandwip, Hatia, Nabinagar and Paikgachha thanas.

According to the council sources, around 50,000 lawyers, who have registered with the Bangladesh Bar Council, are entitled to cast their votes in the election.

Rab rescues 58 trafficking victims, mostly Rohingyas

STAR REPORT

Rab rescued 58 people, mostly Rohingyas, off Teknaf coast in Cox’s Bazar early yesterday. They were being trafficked to Malaysia by a trawler through the Bay of Bengal.

Rab members also arrested two trafficking gang members and seized their trawler, said Rab-15 Commander Lt Col Khairul Islam Sarker.

The arrestees are Mohammad Soheli, 32, of Cumilla’s Chandina upazila, and Mucha Kalimullah, 42, of Cox’s Bazar’s Kutubdia upazila.

On information, Rab raided a point in the sea near Shamlapur coast in Teknaf upazila around 4:30am and rescued them, he said.

Of them, 57 are Rohingya refugees and one Bangladeshi, he added. Of them, 11 are children and 24 women.

‘There’s no justice here’

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provide the cost of his two children’s education. Prity’s brother Sami is an SSC examinee. Prity used to tell her mother not to worry as she would soon be financially contributing to the family.

But her life came to an abrupt end on Thursday night when she got shot by an assailant who opened fire at a local Awami League leader on a busy street in the capital’s Shahjahanpur.

Police said she got shot as happened to be at the scene.

“Where would I seek justice? There is no justice here,” Jamal said as he waited for his daughter’s body in front of the morgue at Dhaka Medical College yesterday morning.

“There is no peaceful environment in this country. If there was, no such firing would have taken place,” said the 54-year-old father.

The family lives at a rented flat in West Shantibagh.

Jamal works at a factory in Mirpur. As

the descendant of a freedom fighter, he gets a government allowance that helps the family survive.

“The bullet hit the left side of her back. I saw her photo... No parents should see such a death of their child.”

Asked if he would file a case, Jamal said, “We are poor people. What will happen after filing a case?... I can’t think of these things. My daughter is gone.”

Prity’s mother Hosne Ara said her daughter was supposed to begin working from April 1 at a salary of Tk 15,000.

For the last four days, Prity was at her friend Sumaiya’s house in Khilgaon area. From there, she was returning home on Thursday evening.

But her mother called her to tell her not to return because there was a guest in the house and not enough room to sleep.

She got shot when Prity was going back to the house of Sumaiya, who was with her at the time.

Momen defends

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Belarus, Syria, North Korea and Eritrea joining Russia in opposing the measure. There were 38 abstentions, including China, India, South Africa, Iran and Cuba. Bangladesh voted in favour of the resolution.

Momen yesterday said, “We’re always a peace-loving country. We’re always against wars...”

Referring to a Sri Lankan representative, Momen said the western countries have been trying

to make them part of the war by force. “They’re dragging us into the politics of the west. That’s not acceptable.”

Bangladesh has not changed its position even after a recent partnership dialogue with the US, he added.

Asked whether there was pressure from another country, Momen answered in the affirmative and said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her government do not bow to any pressure.