



3.9kg cocaine seized at Chattogram airport; Bahamian detained

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A large consignment of cocaine, weighing 3.9kg, was seized from Chattogram's Shah Amanat International Airport yesterday.

Statia Shantae Rolle, 54, a citizen of the Bahamas, was arrested while trying to retrieve the package from the airport's "lost and found" department around 10:30am.

Inspector Dewan Mohammad Zillur Rahman from the Directorate of Narcotics Control said Statia arrived in Chattagram from Brazil via the United Arab Emirates on July 13. However, she did not claim her luggage and went to a hotel.

Yesterday morning, she arrived at the airport to claim her luggage and was arrested.

Chittagong Customs officials said the market value of the seized cocaine may be approximately Tk 60 crore.

Why must brute

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these are not scenes from a battlefield but from campuses of universities. University campuses that resemble riot scenes. Student protesters who had gone to the emergency centre of Dhaka Medical College Hospital with their wounded fellow protesters were beaten up inside the hospital. Is this why young people go to universities – to either get beaten up or to be part of groups that do the beating?

Unfortunately, that is how students are divided on our campuses.

So why the show of restraint in the beginning? It was clear that at first, the police and the Chhatra League were given instructions by their bosses to remain calm and not take any action against the students. But as soon as the high-ups in the government made dismissive comments criticising the movement, things started to take an ugly turn. The AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader at a press conference on Sunday remarked that the Chhatra League was ready to give an apt answer to the "audacious behaviour" shown on the campuses (by leaders of the anti-quota movement). Such a direct call for action gave them the green signal. True to their reputation, the members of the student body swooped on the students and "taught them a lesson" for daring to be vocal and defiant.

It is tragic that a student body that was once at the forefront of the most significant movements of our history has been turned into the bully boys (and girls) of the ruling party. These young men wielding rods and sticks are also university students. Why should students beat up other students for a cause that would ordinarily unite them? Why do the large numbers of the police force become silent bystanders when helmet-clad goons pounce upon unarmed university students?

These are naïve queries in a reality where even peaceful protests are seen as threats to power and are clamped down upon with full force. For some reason it was thought that this time the government would show tolerance and listen to the young, passionate young men and women who believed that their voices would be heard, their needs would be addressed. All they have been asking for is a fair chance in life, an equitable system of opportunities to compete for government jobs and the realisation of a dream that can be attained through merit and hard work. Are these aspirations unwarranted for young people of an independent nation?

It's a shame that they call themselves Razakars: PM

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Agreements for the FY 2024-25 at the Prime Minister's Office.

"Our only target is to establish the spirit of the Liberation War. Lakhs of martyrs shed blood and lakhs of our mothers and sisters were tortured. We won't forget their contribution. We must keep that in mind."

The PM said her government took legal action against the war criminals involved in mass killing, looting, and torturing of women.

"Many of them were executed following trials and thus the repressed got justice," she said.

Hasina said, "I felt sorry when I heard yesterday the students of Ruqayyah Hall calling themselves Razakars. Do they know what happened there on March 25, 1971? Some 300 girls were killed, and 40 others were taken to the Pakistan camps and raped."

Referring to some gruesome incidents carried out by the Pakistan forces in 1971, the premier said the female students did not see these oppressions on streets in 1971. "So, they are not ashamed of calling themselves Razakars."

"What country are we in? What spirit do they believe in? What lesson

did they learn? What did they learn? It is my question," she added.

Hasina said the Liberation War is a matter of our pride.

People left their homes and fought for independence risking their lives following the call of the father of the nation and achieved victory, she said.

Those who were in Razakar, Al-Badr, and Al Shams Bahini unleashed inhuman torture on the people, she said, adding, "Don't forget it."

"We have to march forward with the spirit of the Liberation War after taking lessons from it," the PM said.

Those who were in power for 21 years after the assassination of the father of the nation on August 15, 1975, failed to give the country anything, she said.

Hasina said the pro-liberation force Awami League has changed the country with massive development work over the last 15 years after assuming power.

"Bangladesh is now a changed country ... Bangladesh has earned a dignified position on the global stage," she added.

"Let's take the country ahead. This Bangladesh will move ahead. We will move around the world keeping our heads high ..."

Panic at DMCH emergency

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Other demonstrators accompanied the injured.

Meanwhile, alleged BCL members were stationed on the adjacent road when student protesters gathered near the hospital.

Witnesses further alleged that before the BCL attacks, quota protesters assaulted at least three people at the hospital, suspecting them of being Chhatra League activists.

A female DU student in the hospital, requesting anonymity, said, "We thought the hospital was safe, but unfortunately, BCL activists entered."

Hasan Abdullah, a patient, said, "Around 5:30pm, I saw people running away from the hospital, which scared me."

Another patient, Rina Begum, said, "A young man was being beaten in front of the hospital's emergency department. An Ansar member intervened to calm the situation. Attacks inside the hospital are never acceptable."

Speaking to this newspaper, patient Jafar Hossain said, "I was scared as soon as I saw boys carrying sticks. They even attacked an ambulance."

An Ansar member, speaking anonymously, said the patients were frightened and many had left the hospital prior to the attacks without receiving treatment.

A student, also wishing anonymity, said, "No one is leaving the hospital out of fear."

Brig Gen Md Asaduzzaman, director at DMCH, said their services were disrupted due to the attacks.

"To control the situation, we allocated more nurses and doctors to the emergency department," he said, adding that the injured from both groups are receiving treatment.

Journalists were barred by the attackers from taking photographs or recording videos. Some also had their phones checked.

Hospital sources said police and Ansar members were able to bring the situation under control around 9:00pm.

OCTOBER 4, 2018

Government scraps quota system for class-I and class-II jobs in civil service.

JUNE 5, 2024

HC rules circular scrapping freedom fighter quotas illegal.

JUNE 9, 2024

The government challenges HC rule with Supreme Court.

JULY 1, 2024

Students and jobseekers start demo, seeking reform to the quota system.

JULY 4, 2024

Supreme Court upholds High Court verdict for the time being.

JULY 7, 2024

Protesters launch "Bangla Blockade".

JULY 9, 2024

Two DU students file petition seeking stay order on HC verdict.

JULY 10, 2024

SC orders status quo on the quota issue for four weeks.

JULY 11, 2024

HC says govt can change, reduce, or increase the ratio or percentage of quotas.

JULY 14, 2024

Late-night student protests rock DU, other campuses over PM Hasina's "disparaging remark".

JULY 14, 2024

In its full verdict, HC declares abolishment of freedom fighter quotas in govt jobs illegal.

JULY 15, 2024

Public university students come under attack while staging demos at various campuses protesting PM's remark.