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BDR massacre 'int'l conspiracy' to keep AL in power: AG

UNB, Dhaka

Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman yesterday said the Pilkhana massacre was part of an "international conspiracy" to keep Awami League in power.

"It wasn't a mutiny; it was rather a planned murder. In the Pilkhana massacre, we lost the nation's brave sons. Their loss was an attack on the sovereignty of Bangladesh," he said while speaking at a shadow parliament organised by Debate for Democracy at the FDC in the capital.

By killing 57 army officers, the then AL government created an atmosphere of anarchy in Bangladesh, he said, adding that many of the masterminds still at large.

Efforts are on to bring them to justice.

He said the activists of Chhatra League and Jubo League, dressed in BDR uniforms, were allegedly involved in the massacre.

Hasan Ahmed Chowdhury Kiron, chairman of Debate for Democracy, said just two months after AL returned to power under Sheikh Hasina's leadership for a second term, the Pilkhana massacre occurred.

"It remains a dark chapter in our history. It was carried out to weaken the army and prevent any strong force like the BDR from existing," Kiron said.



Cleaning works going on at Dhaka Central Shaheed Minar, ahead of International Mother Language Day to be observed on February 21. On the day, the nation will pay tribute to the 1952 Language Movement martyrs.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

OPERATION DEVIL HUNT 986 more held in last two days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 986 people were arrested nationwide in the last two days (from Thursday afternoon to yesterday afternoon) as part of the ongoing Operation Devil Hunt.

Of them, joint forces arrested 477 people in the 24 hours from Friday afternoon to yesterday afternoon, according to the Police Headquarters.

Additionally, 870 others, who were either accused or wanted in previous cases, were arrested during the same period.

During the drive, law enforcers recovered a foreign pistol, two magazines, 20 rounds of bullets, three knives, two machetes, and three hammers.

On Friday, the joint forces arrested 509 people as part of the operation, according to the PHQ. A further 948 arrests were made on the day, which fell outside the purview of Operation Devil Hunt.

This brings the total number of arrests under the operation to 4,401 as of yesterday afternoon.

The government launched the operation on February 8 to restore law and order following the attack on "students and people" in Gazipur.

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JULY UPRISING State forces, AL perpetrated gender-based violence

Details UN report, also documents instances
of revenge assaults on women post Aug 5



FILE PHOTO

ARAFAT RAHAMAN

The United Nations fact-finding report has exposed disturbing accounts of gender-based violence during the July uprising last year, with women protesters facing physical assaults, rape threats, and arbitrary detention.

Supporters of Awami League, Chhatra League, and state security forces carried out the violence, as per the report released by the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) in Geneva.

It alleges these actions were aimed at silencing women's activism during the mass protests.

The report details how female protesters were subjected to assaults specifically designed to humiliate them based on gender.

"Assaults on female protesters often targeted specific body parts such as the face, chest, pelvis, and buttocks. The perpetrators sought not only to inflict pain but also to humiliate and degrade women specifically because of their gender," the report said.

These attacks were often accompanied by gender-based insults, with women being labelled as "whores," "sluts," and "prostitutes".

In one particularly shocking incident in early August in Dhaka, a group of men armed with bamboo sticks apprehended a woman, searched her belongings, and assaulted her after finding a Bangladeshi flag in her bag. They tore her hair, ripped her shirt, and groped her while hurling sexualised insults.

In another case in July, two Chhatra League supporters allegedly threatened to rape a female protester, her mother, and all the women in her family before assaulting her and making sexually explicit remarks.

The report documents multiple instances of violence against female protesters in Dhaka and other cities, including Cumilla, Savar, Sylhet, and Rangpur.

Female students at Dhaka University and Eden Mohila College were among the primary targets. On July 14, Chhatra League supporters poured hot water on female students at Eden Mohila College as they attempted to join protests at DU.

The following day, a group of around 50 BCL supporters, both male and female, attacked women from Eden College as they prepared to protest. One victim was severely beaten and later attacked again while receiving treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

On August 4, two female journalists, documenting protests in Shahbagh, were threatened with violence by AL supporters, highlighting the dangers faced by those reporting on the unrest.

The report also details the mistreatment of female detainees, particularly at the Detective Branch headquarters on Minto Road.

Five women arrested for attempting to join a protest were beaten with sticks at a police station in Dhaka, resulting in bleeding and severe bruising. One senior officer reportedly took pleasure in beating

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11 of a family burnt in gas cylinder blast

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 11 family members, including four children, suffered burn injuries in a gas cylinder explosion in Ashulia on Friday night.

The incident occurred around 9:30pm on the second floor of a two-storey building owned by Amjad Bepari in the Gomail area of Ashulia, Savar.

The victims are Zahura Begum, 70, Surjo Banu, 55, Md Monir Hossain, 43, Soheli, 38, Sumon Mia, 30, Shiuli Akhter, 25, Sharmin, 25, Chamin Mahmud, 12, Mahadi, 7, Swad, 4, and Suraya, 3.

Locals and eyewitnesses said garment worker Sumon lives in a rented flat on the second floor with his wife and two children. Relatives had gathered at Sumon's home on the occasion of Shab-e-Barat. While making rice cakes (pitha) on the occasion, a gas cylinder exploded, engulfing the entire flat in flames.

Injured Soheli said, "I went to visit my brother

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It's time we set a new foreign policy: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh should adopt a new foreign policy that reflects the country's evolving geopolitical realities following the fall of the Sheikh Hasina, said speakers at a seminar yesterday.

The seminar, titled "Geopolitical Challenges and Strategic Imperatives for Post-Hasina Bangladesh", was organised by the Bangladesh Institute of Policy Studies (BIPS) at the Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka.

Presiding over the discussion, BIPS Chairperson CAF Dowlah, a retired professor of economics and law in the US, emphasised the need to reduce Bangladesh's heavy reliance on India.

"Under Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh placed all its eggs in one basket, depending excessively on India for trade, connectivity, and national security. Going forward, the country must diversify its strategic partnerships," he said.

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Under Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh placed all its eggs in one basket, depending excessively on India for trade, connectivity, and national security. Going forward, the country must diversify its strategic partnerships.

CAF Dowlah
BIPS Chairperson

Siblings shot in Pallabi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A businessman and his sister were shot and injured by miscreants in front of the sister's house in Dhaka's Pallabi early yesterday.

The victims are Md Jasim Uddin, 44, and his sister Shahinur Begum, 32, said Assistant Sub-inspector Md Masud Alam of Dhaka Medical College Hospital police outpost.

The incident occurred around 3:30am at section-II of Mirpur, and both were taken to DMCH for treatment.

Jasim, who lives in Kashimpur, Gazipur, with his family and runs a furniture business, had been visiting his sister in Mirpur for the past week.

He claimed that five days ago, he had helped the police apprehend a local mugger named Sohag, and since then, Sohag's associates had been threatening him.

On the night of Shab-e-Barat, after his prayers, Jasim stepped outside his sister's house, where he got into an argument with

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