

Tajuddin Ahmad

FROM PAGE 12

In 1971, while Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was imprisoned in Pakistan, Tajuddin Ahmad was entrusted with the responsibility of leading the liberation effort. He formed the provisional government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and, as prime minister, led the country through the armed struggle against Pakistan.

Following independence, he served as prime minister until Sheikh Mujib's return to the country. He later took on the role of finance and planning minister in Sheikh Mujib's cabinet. On October 26, 1974, he resigned as per Sheikh Mujib's directive.

After Sheikh Mujib was assassinated on August 15, 1975, Tajuddin Ahmad was placed under house arrest.

On the night of November 3, 1975, while imprisoned in Dhaka Central Jail, he was brutally murdered along with three other national leaders -- AHM Qamaruzzaman, M Mansur Ali, and Syed Nazrul Islam.

Judicial panel

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"On July 16, several unexpected incidents occurred centring around a rally organised by a new political party. Lives were lost. Nothing is more valuable than human life," the adviser said.

On that day, daylong running battles involving Awami League followers and law enforcers over a National Citizen Party (NCP) rally in the southern district town killed at least five people and injured more than 50.

"The chief adviser sent us here to convey his message that the government is deeply concerned about the incident and wants to ensure such occurrences never happen again. The administration has been instructed to take all necessary measures in this regard," he said.

Fouzul Kabir said his visit is an initial fact-finding mission.

"The commission will investigate the events thoroughly. I urge journalists to assist the commission by providing information and evidence. Through the commission's report, we will learn what actually happened, why it happened, and what could have been done to prevent it," he said.

He said that the scale of violence on July 16 took everyone by surprise, and the government wants to draw lessons from it.

"Despite limited resources, law enforcement agencies and the army put great effort into handling the situation. Many of them, along with journalists, were injured while performing their duties. We are here to appreciate their commitment," he said, adding that those responsible for attacking police or torching vehicles would be brought to justice.

"We will make every effort to ensure that normal life, business activities, and peace are not disrupted further," he said.

Meanwhile, three more people were arrested in raids in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of arrests to 325 in connection with the violence, said police.

Bangladesh writes

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USTR fixes a date for the talks, he said.

Upon the return from the second round of negotiations, Bangladesh has prepared its formal proposal to the US as the negotiations will have to be completed by the end of this month.

The Trump administration is scheduled to impose new reciprocal tariff rates for the countries concerned from August 1 unless the pause on reciprocal tariff schedule is extended further.

The position paper outlines Bangladesh's commitments to increase imports of US goods and reduce duties on certain items, along with non-trade commitments that the government has deemed non-harmful.

Bangladesh has agreed to reduce tariffs on several US goods and increase imports from that country as part of the broader negotiation process.

For example, the government signed an agreement on Sunday to import 0.7 million tonnes of wheat from American suppliers annually. Talks are also at an advanced stage to procure 14 Boeing aircraft.

Some 1,322 factories, which are members of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and mainly export products to the US, will face a difficult time if the tariff rate is not reduced at the end of the negotiations.

Of the factories, 100 export 91-100 percent of their goods to America, according to data from the BGMEA.

Forty-six companies export 81-90 percent of their goods to the United States; 91 export 61-80 percent; 87 export 41-60 percent; 176 export 21-40 percent; and 822 export up to 20 percent, the BGMEA data said.

Bangladesh seeks zero duty or a tariff rate lower than Vietnam's.

Due to the new 35 percent tariff imposed by the Trump administration, the local exporters fear losing the competitiveness in the US market, where Bangladesh last year exported garment items worth over \$8.2 billion.

BGMEA President Mahmud Hasan Khan, who is hopeful for a reduced tariff in America, said the extension of the pause is up to the Trump administration as the time is running fast towards August 1.

However, the US retailers and brands expect that the tariff rate will be borne by the local garment and fabrics suppliers to reduce the burden of the 35 percent tariff, he added.

Mass arrests and crackdown continue



THE JULY THAT ROCKED BANGLADESH

JULY 23, 2024

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

On July 23, 2024, the government issued a circular radically overhauling the quota system in public service recruitment. According to the new directive, 93 percent of civil service positions would now be filled through merit-based recruitment, up from the previous 44 percent, while the remaining 7 percent would be reserved under various quotas.

The circular, which came in line with the Supreme Court's order, was to take immediate effect and apply across all grades of government, semi-government, autonomous, semi-autonomous, statutory bodies, and corporations in the case of direct recruitment via examinations.

Student leaders rejected the circular outright, saying it lacked proper consultation. At a press briefing held at the Dhaka Reporters Unity, Nahid Islam, one of the key coordinators of the quota reform protests, stated, "Before issuing the circular, the authorities should have held a dialogue with students and other stakeholders. We'll not accept the circular as the final resolution."

He strongly criticised the government for the bloodshed and loss of life. "We demand a policy-making dialogue involving the stakeholders in a conducive environment. Besides, we urge the government to form an independent commission to avoid such controversies in the future," he said. He reaffirmed that the movement would continue until justice was delivered for those killed and injured.

Meanwhile, the state's crackdown on

protesters and perceived agitators continued unabated. Over 1,100 individuals were arrested across Dhaka and various districts in the 36 hours leading up to 6:00pm on July 23. At least 133 cases related to recent violence had been filed at different police stations in the capital. Authorities also announced the continuation of the nationwide curfew until further notice.

In response to the increasing arrests and detentions, 22 current and former faculty members from the Department of International Relations at Dhaka University issued a statement, expressing grave concern and demanding the immediate release of detained students.

Tragically, the death toll continued to climb. Three more people, including a student of Chittagong University, died from injuries sustained during the clashes. Hridoy Chandra Tarua, a third-year student of the Department of History, succumbed to his

Dhaka's hospitals, especially Dhaka Medical College Hospital, remained overwhelmed with patients suffering from bullet and shotgun pellet wounds. Many victims claimed they had no involvement in the protests and were merely bystanders or commuters caught in the line of fire during police and BGB action.

Internet connectivity, which had been completely shut down for five consecutive days, was partially restored in select areas across the country, bringing some relief to citizens amid the ongoing turmoil.

The Dhaka University administration attempted to assure students of their safety, declaring that no student would be harassed in future for holding legitimate programmes to realise their logical demands. The administration also pledged to reopen the university as soon as possible.

The international community reacted strongly to the continued violence. The



A prison van carrying over 40 individuals, who had been arrested the previous day in connection with violence, arrived at the CMM Court. Around 500 detainees were produced before the court, which sent most of them to jail on the afternoon of July 23, 2024.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

injuries at Dhaka Medical College Hospital in the morning. An unidentified youth, aged around 22, died at the National Institute of Neurosciences and Hospital. Another youth, Shuvo Shil, 24, passed away at a hospital in Savar. These fatalities brought the total number of deaths since July 16 to at least 150.

United Nations, the United States, and the United Kingdom all condemned the bloodshed during the student protests. Expressing alarm over the situation, they raised concerns about its potential impacts on the economy and the broader well-being of the Bangladeshi people.

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Following the meeting, Prof Nazrul addressed the students and said, "Your demands are reasonable. On behalf of the government, I assure you that they will be fulfilled. We are here as guardians to express our sympathy.

"Steps are underway for compensation, rehabilitation, and trauma management support for the affected families."

He also assured students that directives would be issued to the air force to avoid flying aircraft over densely populated areas.

Addressing allegations that students were assaulted by army personnel after the crash, the adviser said, "On behalf of the government, we apologise for the misconduct by the force members who behaved inappropriately with you. We will take appropriate action regarding this."

However, the words did not assure the protesting students. After his remarks, students began chanting slogans calling the adviser a "fraud". The situation became chaotic as shoving and scuffles broke out, forcing the advisers to retreat into Building 5 again, where they

Tensions escalated around 2:13pm when hundreds of students chanted "Bhau, Bhau" ("fake, fake") and clashed with police guarding the building where the meeting was taking place.

Protesters threw brick chunks and blocked journalists, accusing the media of misreporting the number of casualties, said witnesses.

The police then momentarily drove

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