



'Hasina, AL leaders behind BDR mutiny'

Finds probe commission, says massacre intended 'to weaken army'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An independent commission has accused former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and several senior Awami League leaders of orchestrating the 2009 Palkhaha massacre.

It named then lawmaker Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh as the "key coordinator" of the BDR mutiny.

The National Independent Investigation Commission, formed to probe the 2009 Bangladesh Rifles mutiny, submitted its final report to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at his residence yesterday after 11 months of investigation.

Commission members said their probe pointed to a "deliberate move to weaken the military".

At a press conference at the commission office, its chief Maj Gen (ret'd) ALM Fazlur Rahman said their inquiry had shed light on "why the massacre happened, who were involved, who destroyed evidence, who are liable, how it could have been prevented, why the military did not act, and how the plot was hatched".

Maj Gen (ret'd) Fazlur Rahman is a former director general of the BDR.

He named Hasina, Taposh, former

COMMISSION FINDINGS



Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh a key coordinator

Army wasn't allowed to quell mutiny; was asked to retreat

India a 'key beneficiary' of mutiny

lawmakers Mirza Azam, Jahangir Kabir Nanak and Sheikh Selim, former home minister Sahara Khatun, former defence and security adviser to the prime minister Tarique Ahmed Siddique, former DGF

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Tarique can return anytime he wants

Govt ready to issue travel pass, says foreign adviser; Khaleda's condition stable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman can return to Bangladesh anytime he wants, and the government can issue a one-time travel pass within a day, said Foreign Affairs Adviser Touhid Hossain yesterday.

"If today he says that he wants to return, we can issue a one-time travel pass tomorrow. He can board a plane the day after. There is no problem. It's entirely up to him."

Touhid was addressing a discussion organised by the Diplomatic Correspondents Association, Bangladesh, at the National Press Club.

The adviser's comment comes amid concerns over BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's health and discussions over Tarique's return home.

He noted that travel passes may be issued in cases where Bangladeshi citizens living abroad are without their passports.



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Fifty-three years after Bangladesh's independence, countless stories remain untold. This series brings you 12 accounts of resistance, defiance, valour, and sacrifice for the motherland. Part 1 tells the story of Aburkhill, the small village that sheltered refugees and freedom fighters during the Liberation War.

Aburkhill: A sanctuary for freedom fighters

AHMAD ISTIAK

Along the quiet banks of the Halda in Raozan upazila of Chattogram lies Aburkhill, home to the country's largest Buddhist community and, in 1971, an undeclared liberated zone. In those months of fire and flight, the village became both haven and stronghold, gathering fleeing families, exhausted soldiers, and an unlikely frontline of care and defiance beneath its canopy of trees.

Refugees began pouring into Aburkhill as the Pakistan army overran Chattogram in early April. When troops pushed into Raozan on April 13 through Madunaghat,

leaving behind 13 killing spots and ravaging Keranihat Bazar along with nearby Hindu-majority villages, hundreds of terrified Hindus crossed the Halda, clinging to the village as their last shelter.



TALES OF FREEDOM

Many escaping Chattogram city followed, believing Aburkhill would hold.

"We, hundreds of Hindu refugees, lived inside their homes," recalled 75-year-old Sharbindu Kanti Banik of Paschim Gujra, a nearby village. "Many later

left for India. We stayed. What the people of Aburkhill did for us is unforgettable."

The village's contribution to the Bangladesh Liberation War

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Fish stocks in the Bay drop nearly 80% in 7 years

Survey blames overfishing as pelagic species decline sharply

SUKANTA HALDER

Fish stocks in the Bay of Bengal have declined sharply in recent years due to overfishing, raising serious concerns about the sustainability of marine resources, according to a fisheries resource and ecosystem survey released yesterday.

The survey found that the stock of small pelagic species has fallen to nearly one-fifth of previous levels - down to 33,811 tonnes in 2025 from 158,100

tonnes in 2018.

This means pelagic fish, which live near the surface, have declined by 78.6 percent in seven years. The findings were shared at an event jointly organised by the FAO and the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock at a hotel in the capital.

The survey was conducted with support from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Norway.

The latest results follow a 2019 survey, which concluded

that marine fisheries were heavily exploited, with several species severely depleted. Highly exploited groups include Tiger shrimp, Indian salmon, and large croakers.

Abdullah Al-Mamun, assistant director of the Department of Fisheries and co-cruise leader of the survey, told The Daily Star that overfishing is the main reason behind the current situation. In 1985, around 100 commercial trawlers operated in

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KEY FINDINGS

Number of trawlers rose from about 100 in 1985 to 273

Survey records new marine species new to Bangladesh

Jellyfish abundance rising sharply in coastal waters

Skipjack tuna confirmed inside economic zone

REASONS

Overfishing by expanded industrial trawler fleet

Improper use of fishing technology

Illegal, unregulated fishing in marine areas

Use of harmful nets; rising microplastic pollution



PHOTO: STAR

Two shot dead at Khulna court gate

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Criminals shot two people dead in front of the gate of the Khulna Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court yesterday.

The two were Fazle Rabbi Rajon, 35, son of Ejaz of Rupsha upazila's Bagmara village, and Md Hasib Hawlader, 31, son of Abdul Mannan of Khulna city's Natun Bazar area.

Witnesses and police sources said a group of assailants on three motorcycles arrived at the spot around 12:30pm, opened fire, and at least stabbed one of the victims before fleeing the scene.

Rajon and Hasib were first taken to Khulna Sadar Hospital. They died when they were being taken to Khulna Medical

College Hospital from there.

Shafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Khulna Sadar Police Station, said the incident took place while the two were at the court premises to appear at a hearing in an arms case filed against them.

He added that Rajon and Hasib had six cases each filed against them with different police stations, including murder cases.

"They were also linked to Palash group and were released on bail two and a half months ago," the OC said, adding that the group is involved in various criminal activities in Khulna city.

He said no case was lodged till filing of this report around 10:30pm. "Rajon's uncle came to the police station to file

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Hasib



Rajon

GROUP QA

We deeply mourn the loss of our visionary leader, the founding pillar and guardian of thousands of families, the simplest and humblest human being.

Quazi A F M Zainul Abedin
Chairman, Group QA
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