



SOLIDARITY IN ACTION NATIONWIDE

Civil society members, cultural organisations, and political parties stage protests across the country yesterday condemning the recent attacks on Prothom Alo and The Daily Star. Demonstrations were held by the Gazipur Press Club, Narayanganj Cultural Alliance, Satkhira Press Club, the Society of Cultural Activists and Artistes of Cumilla, Journalists Working in Cumilla, and Ganosamhati Andolon in their respective areas, demanding that the perpetrators be brought to justice.

PHOTOS: STAR



Police yet to trace prime suspects' locations

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on December 12 while travelling on a battery-run auto-rickshaw in Dhaka's Paltan area. He breathed his last on December 18.

The briefing came amid questions over whether law enforcement agencies were taking the case seriously enough, as large-scale violence has been witnessed across the country in recent days centring on the incident.

Responding to the concern, Rafiqul said the authorities were taking the matter "very seriously".

So far, 10 people have been arrested, while the motorcycle used during the incident has been recovered. The weapon used in the shooting has been identified, he said.

He pointed out that multiple agencies were present at the briefing and said all relevant forces had been engaged from the very beginning of the incident.

"Therefore, claims that the government has not given importance to the matter are incorrect."

Asked about a photo circulating online of Faisal and Alamgir claiming to have been sent from India, Rafiqul said the matter was under investigation.

"Information is also circulating on social media that he may be hiding somewhere within Dhaka. We are verifying all such information with due importance."

Cyber experts are verifying claims that IP address tracking shows the accused has gone to India, adding that action will be taken against those spreading rumours, Rafiqul added.

Meanwhile, a Dhaka court yesterday placed two individuals — Sibion Dew and Sanjay Chisim — on a fresh five-day remand for allegedly assisting Faisal to flee to India through illegal routes.

At the briefing, Dhaka Metropolitan Police Detective Branch Chief Shafiqul Islam said that at the preliminary stage, nothing definitive was known about the motive behind the killing of Hadi.

"However, it appears that this was not a killing driven by personal

enmity; rather, it may have been politically motivated. That is our initial assessment," he said.

Police have not yet been able to arrest the main accused, Faisal and Alamgir, and therefore cannot make any conclusive comments about the motive.

"However, we are advancing the investigation by interrogating all those who provided shelter, assistance or stored weapons related to the incident," he said.

Questions were also raised about how, after being released from jail, a Chhatra League leader Faisal was able to carry out the incident in Dhaka and move freely.

"This issue was an important part of the investigation," Shafiqul said, adding that police are investigating the video footage of Hadi's alleged shooter sitting next to him on December 12.

Police are investigating who the person was, how he managed to sit beside Hadi, and through whose contact he reached there.

Asked how long it would take to reach a conclusion, the DB chief said it was not possible to give a specific timeframe but the case is being handled with the highest priority.

Responding to a question on whether the failure to identify the main accused's location even after 10 days indicated a failure of law enforcement, Rafiqul said the assessment of success or failure was up to others.

"However, we are continuing our best efforts. Police Headquarters, DMP, DB, RAB and BGB are all working together. Since there is a possibility of crossing the border, BGB has been involved from the very beginning."

Arrests sometimes happen immediately after a crime, while in other cases it takes time, he said, while urging fair assessment of law enforcement efforts.

About the possibility of Hadi's assassination being a political killing, Shafiqul said investigators had not yet reached a clear conclusion about whether any political party was

involved.

Addressing the issue of a fake motorcycle number plate, he said the original registration number of the motorcycle had been changed by Faisal's father.

The arrestee Abdul Hannan was interrogated and later detained under Section 54. His hearing is scheduled for today, and the process for his release is underway.

Regarding forensic testing of firearms, police said the recovered weapons have not yet been tested and will be sent for ballistic examination with court permission.

Police also recovered signed cheques in different names, but said the accounts contained no funds. Bangladesh Bank has been informed about the accounts.

Explaining the "Devil Hunt Operation Phase 2", Rafiqul said 900 arrests have been made exclusively under the operation and warrants have been executed.

The rate of criminal arrests has increased significantly compared to before, he said.

Meanwhile, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has found suspicious bank transactions totalling Tk 127 crore linked to Faisal.

Following data analysis from law enforcement and intelligence agencies, CID has launched a money laundering investigation under the Money Laundering Prevention Act, according to a press release, signed by Abu Taleb, additional superintendent (media) of CID.

During the drives, law enforcers seized multiple bank cheque books showing transactions totalling around Tk 218 crore, many of which remain incomplete.

Preliminary analysis indicates more than Tk 127 crore in abnormal transactions across accounts linked to the accused and his associates, possibly involving money laundering, organised crime and criminal funding.

CID said it is taking legal action to seize about Tk 65 lakh held in the accounts and is working to trace the original sources of the funds.

Ducusu blocks VC

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Sitora Begum Hall," he said, adding that Ducusu would submit a memorandum to the university administration regarding the demands.

The demonstrators also demanded action against teachers and officials who, they alleged, opposed the July uprising.

Shadik alleged that collaborators of fascism were still operating from the registrar building and engaging in conspiracies to destabilise the state.

"We have already lost Osman Hadi. We will allow no more concessions," he said, adding that Ducusu expects the university syndicate to swiftly meet the demands.

After the protest, Ducusu leaders submitted a memorandum to Pro VC Prof Sayema Haque Bidisha.

RU students

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However, the university administration decided to extend their tenure until fresh elections are held.

The decision was taken by Vice-Chancellor Saleh Hasan Naqib and Registrar Ittekkharul Alam Masud.

Rucusu General Secretary Salaudhin Ammar, general secretary of the Rajshahi University Central Students Union (Rucusu), objected to the extension and demanded the immediate resignation of the six deans.

In a Facebook post, Ammar said that despite the expiry of their tenure, the administration allowed the "pro-Awami League deans" to remain in office and extended their terms until the next parliamentary elections scheduled for February 12 next year.

He warned that students would intensify their movement if the deans did not resign voluntarily.

In another post, Ammar said he would personally visit the six deans with resignation letters and hoped they would step down peacefully, warning of further mobilisation if the demand was ignored.

Also yesterday, Ammar and several students went to the chambers of some deans and teachers accused of Awami League affiliation, but none were present on campus at the time.

"We have prepared a documented list of teachers who stood against students during the July movement. The deans were informed by phone about the demand, but none came to campus. I called the six deans personally. We will publish a final list and press for their resignation accordingly," Ammar said.

RU VC Naqib could not be reached for comment.

Continue movement

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Mogbazar, marking the martyrdom of Osman Hadi, an aspirant for Dhaka-8.

On December 12, Osman Hadi was attacked while travelling by rickshaw near the water tank area in the capital's Bijoynagar. Two assailants arrived on a motorcycle and shot him at close range before fleeing.

Osman Hadi, who was later flown by air ambulance to Singapore for advanced treatment, died on Thursday.

Amid the state mourning on Saturday, he was laid to rest beside the grave of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam in the Dhaka University area following his janaza, attended by hundreds of thousands of people.

At the doa mahfil, Omar Bin Hadi recalled his brother's struggle to establish an "Insaaf-based Bangladesh".

He stated that they were not seeking any financial assistance or donations for Osman Hadi's family. "Our only demand is that you complete Osman Hadi's unfinished revolution. If you agree, pledge that you will not rest until an Insaaf-based Bangladesh is established."

"The revolutionary movement that Osman Hadi started, the movement for which he was martyred, must be completed by the people of this country."

Meanwhile, Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar, who presided over the doa mahfil, said the nation was concerned about who among the July fighters might be targeted next after Osman Hadi.

Calling on the government to take swift action, he said the shooting and

killing of Hadi left candidates in all 300 constituencies worried about their safety.

The Jamaat leader said, "A section of journalists and stakeholders are saying on television talk shows, and poets and writers are writing, as if there can be no election unless the Awami League participates. Through this narrative, anti-hegemony forces are being taken to the brink at gunpoint."

He added that the shooting of a candidate the day after the election schedule was announced showed it was not an isolated incident but part of a "package programme", warning that there might be more in the series.

The Jamaat leader opined that the chief adviser and the chief election commissioner could not evade the responsibility for the killing.

It is shameful that the chief election commissioner termed the attack an isolated incident, he said.

According to Porwar, attempts to re-establish "fascists" into the polity in the name of an inclusive election and a "refined Awami League" would not be accepted by the people, as it would endanger the nation's identity.

He also urged the government to place before the nation the steps taken so far to arrest the killers and ensure justice since Osman Hadi was shot.

"If the killers have fled abroad, there are foreign missions and embassies, as well as various mechanisms, including prisoner exchange agreements with India. All of these must be used. The United Nations has expressed interest in investigating Osman Hadi's killing; if necessary, their logistical support should be taken," he said.

Three drown as vehicles

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returned home from Singapore about a month ago and was undergoing driving training in Narayanganj city in preparation to go back abroad.

He met the accident while returning home after completing his training, the police official said, quoting family members.

Meanwhile, Md Rakibuzzaman, inspector-in-charge of the Baktaboli river police outpost, told this correspondent that the ferry departed from the eastern ghat of Baktaboli for the western ghat, carrying vehicles, and passengers.

The truck was likely left in gear while boarding the ferry, and the driver failed to control it when it suddenly moved forward. All five vehicles sank into the river, the inspector said, adding that said the truck driver fled the scene.

Pinkie, wife of another victim Rafique, said she was crossing the river with her husband and their two children. They were on the way from her in-laws' house to her parents' home.

At the time of the incident, she and the children were standing beside the motorcycle while her husband was on it. When the truck hit the bike, she fell onto the ferry's deck with her two children, but her husband fell into the river along with the motorcycle and went missing.

In another development, the district administration has formed a nine-member committee, led by Additional District Magistrate Naima Islam, to investigate the incident, and the body has been asked to submit a report in the next seven working days.

Serious act

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Hubbard and a former OFAC investigator, said the vessel has not been sanctioned by the US.

"The seizure of a vessel that is not sanctioned by the US marks a further increase in Trump's pressure on Venezuela," Paner said. "It also runs counter to Trump's statement that the US would impose a blockade of all sanctioned oil tankers."

Slain 7-year-old's father blames rival

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setting the house on fire.

His wife, Nazma Begum, managed to break through a tin fence and escape with their sons — Md Habib, 4, and four-month-old Amir Hossain.

Belal said he suffered severe burns while trying to rescue his daughters Salma Akter Smriti, 18, and Samia Akter Bithi, 14. At the time, his youngest daughter Ayesha Akter,

7, was standing amid the flames, repeatedly crying, "Abbu, save me! Take me with you!"

"The intensity of the fire was such that despite hearing my daughter's screams, I could not save her. What could be more tragic for a father?" he said, demanding justice.

Ayesha died on the spot. Salma and Samia are now undergoing treatment at the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery in Dhaka.