

July 31, 2010

Bulletin

RISE OF FASCISM

DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS DOCKED IN BANGLADESH



Police brutality on peaceful demonstration.

After two years of military backed interim government's rule, Bangladesh had a general election in December 2008, which brought the Awami League (AL) to power with a two third majority in the parliament. Following the election, the people of Bangladesh and the international community expected that this newly elected government would follow the path of democracy by establishing the rule of law, cooperating with the opposition parties and strengthening the democratic institutions. However, it is so unfortunate and dismaying that the ruling party in Bangladesh has resorted to repression of the opposition parties from the very beginning. They have already created a reign of terror throughout the country wherein political vendetta, establishing torture cells in educational institutions, rapes, mounting violence and murders have become a regular phenomenon. The rising expectations of the people have turned into rising frustrations. A brief account of the current situation in Bangladesh is as follows:

Political Violence and Killing: In the year of 2009, Odhikar, a human rights organization, reported that 251 people have been killed and 15,559 have been injured largely by the cadres of the ruling party. From January to mid February 2010, more than 45 people have been killed, and another 3 thousand people have got injured.

BDR Revolt and Army Massacre: In February, a total of 67 senior army officers including the Director General of the BDR (and his wife) were brutally killed by Bangladesh Rifles (BDR). Subsequently, a total of 29 persons died during the investigations. It has been reported that some government officials were involved in the carnage. The full investigation report has yet to be disclosed to public.

Campus Violence and Killing: Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), the student/youth wing of the ruling party Bangladesh Awami League (BAL) instigated clashes in 97 educational institutions that resulted in few dozen deaths, many injuries, and closing down of 77 campuses throughout the country. About a dozen people have been brutally killed due to their internal clash.

Crushing Opposition and Persecution of Political Leaders: The former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has been ousted from her residence. Many leaders of the opposition parties are facing harassments and confinements and their free movements are obstructed and denied by the government. Recently, the government has vowed to "exterminate" Bangladesh Jamaate Islami (BJI) and its student wing Shibir (known by the US govt. as a model Democratic Party in Bangladesh) through "combing operation". More than three thousands *Continued to page 6*

AWAMI ATROCITIES KNOW NO BOUNDS

Dr. M. Sayemi: While the result of the 2008 general election in Bangladesh generated a massive shock and awe for many, people began to have complacent breath as the military-led undemocratic government was over. However, the recent scenarios in Bangladesh show that "the thieves have been replaced by a dangerous gang of robbers." The current Bangladesh Awami League (BAL) government came to power with a mask of progressive vision, but all it has is retrogressive agenda largely orchestrated by its local ultra-secularist and fascist gangs. Here are some of the recent brutal legacies of BAL governments and its dangerous cadres:

Killing and Murdering:

Killing and murdering has become widespread since BAL assumed power three months ago. The unruly gangs of BAL activists not only brutally killed their political opponents, but also their own activists. The recent brutal killing of their own leader in Dhaka medical College is just one of numerous examples. If they kill their own leader so brutally due to internal factions and feuds, one can *Continued to page 6*



Militant Awami Cadres mercilessly attacking opposition supporter (28 oct, 2006)

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AWAMI LEAGUE'S TRANSITION TO ONE-PARTY DICTATORSHIP (BKSAL 1971-1975)

Azizul Karim: On 16th December 1971, a new country was born - Bangladesh. As a newborn country, Bangladesh had lots of hopes and aspirations. It was time for the "Father of the Nation" to materialize the dream that he had presented to the people. The liberation war had broken all the class barriers in the society. A great opportunity was created to forge a national unity leaving aside the age-old class differentiations. The people expected that the leaders would rise above the group and party

interest and would unite the people to harness their patriotism and productivities to rebuild the war torn country to fulfill the dream of a 'Golden Bengal'. 100 millions of Bangladeshis would find their rightful place in the world community with dignity and honour. historical heritage, distinct self identity, the vision of the able leadership, right direction, patriotism, sacrifices, hard work and above all united efforts of the nation could achieve cherished goal step by step with the passage

of time. Creation of a progressive, happy and prosperous Bangladesh and reaching its fruits at the doorstep of every citizen would have matched with the spirit of the liberation war. The independence would have then become meaningful. But the people had already become apprehensive about the sincerity of the leadership. Our political leaders had always done much sweet-talking than actual deeds. Promises had been even greater. People have heard such for

ages and got used to such empty promises. Who ever had gone to power had always failed the people. They had oppressed the people paying no heed to their demands. The isolation of the leaders from the people and their selfish interest were the main reasons for such betrayals. Our leaders mostly are alien in their own societies. That is why people are apathetic toward them. Once in power they do everything to meet their own vested interest *Continued to page 7*

TRIBUNAL FAILED TO SHOW FAIRNESS ON DAY ONE 20-MINUTE HURRIED HEARING LEADS WARRANTS OF ALREADY DETAINED JAMAAT LEADERS

Dhaka, July 26 – In 20-minute hearing on Monday, the International Crimes Tribunal issued arrest warrants against four Jamaat-e-Islami top leaders.

The obvious reason for this hurried move was to hinder the possible bail-out of the four Jamaat leaders who are already arrested in other cases, in which they might get bail.

The warrants were issued against Jamaat-e-Islami chief Matiur Rahman Nizami, secretary general Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, assistant secretary generals Mohammed Kamaruzzaman and Abdul Quader Molla for alleged crimes against humanity during 1971.

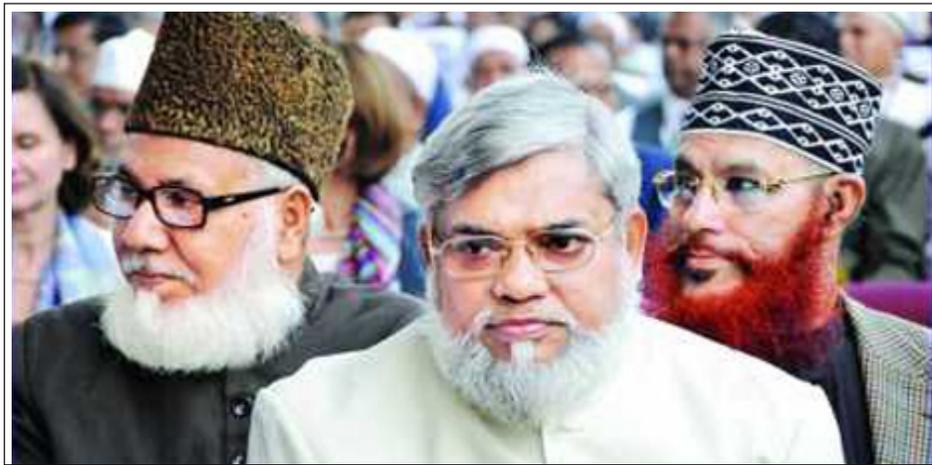
The Tribunal's 20-minute hearing considered an application filed on Sunday by the prosecution panel's chief Golam Arif Tipu with the tribunal's registrar Mohammed Shahinur Islam.

Special security measures were taken for the hearing which started at around 10.30am at the tribunal established in the old High Court building.

Tribunal members Mohammad Nizamul Huq, ATM Fazle Kabir and AKM Zahir Ahmed were all present in court.

Tipu told the hearing: "The four including Nizami are already arrested in other cases, in which they might get bail."

"Evidence might be destroyed if they stay free which might hinder investigations. The arrest



two times former MP and former minister (left) **Motiur Rahman Nizami**, former Minister and MP **Ali Ahsan Mujahid** (middle) and former MP and renowned Islamic scholar **Delawar Husain Saidee** still in jail for unfounded charges.

warrants needs to be issued to assist investigations," he added.

Mentioning rule 9 (1) of the Tribunal's rules of procedure Tipu said: "The prosecution has specific allegations against them. The arrest warrants could be issued upon them in line with the tribunal act."

The court then asked the chief prosecutor for specifics of the allegations.

"They were active in committing crimes including killings, genocide, looting, rape, arson as the collaborators of the occupation army at different places of Bangladesh during the Liberation War in 1971," Tipu replied.

"In-depth investigations are underway against them, so they should be shown arrested for the sake of investigation," he added.

The court then asked for information on the location of the crimes committed by the accused.

Tipu said, "They actively participated in these crimes throughout the country."

When asked for explanation why they should face further warrants since they are already in jail, the prosecution chief replied: "They were not arrested in relation to these crimes. Arrest warrants should be issued so that they cannot secure bail in other cases."

The tribunal then allowed the prayer ruling that, "In the interest of effective investigation, warrant of arrests should be issued against these four persons."

The tribunal set August 2 for submission of a report on whether the warrant had become effective.

The attorney general is his reaction to the order told reporters: "The petition was filed so that they cannot escape."

He also urged all people to assist the tribunal by providing information regarding the crimes against humanity during the war.

The government on March 25 formed the tribunal, prosecution panel and the investigation agency to try the long-awaited trials of the crimes committed during the 1971 War of Independence.

Earlier a Dhaka court on Monday remanded Jamaat-e-Islami chief Matiur Rahman Nizami, and secretary general Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed for three days, in an anti-terrorism case filed with Kadamtali police.

Judge Rokhsana Begum Happy of the Dhaka's Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court on Monday gave the order following a petition by Metropolitan Detective Branch inspector Sheikh Mahabubur Rahman for 10 days.

The judge also rejected applications for cancelling remand and bail for the Jamaat leaders.

RULING PARTY'S CHHATRA LEAGUE: THEIR REIGN OF TERROR

[When public outrage was at its height, the AL general secretary and the LGRD minister Syed Ashraf Islam, presumably to deflect public anger, had said that the Islami Chhatra Shibir had penetrated Chhatra League... Unfortunately, no one believed him. At least, not the poor, not the meek, nor the law-abiding citizen... They knew that if they had committed any of these excesses, they would have had to pay. They knew that to get away with any of these excesses, you'd have to belong to Chhatra League, writes Rahnuma Ahmed]

Apnader kacche desh boro, na Chhatra League boro? If anyone had asked the Awami League leaders this question right after the national elections in December 2008, they would have — without a shred of doubt — chorused, desh. Desh.

In all likelihood, they would have added, with utter indignation, How on earth can you even think of asking such a question? It is true undoubtedly for them those parties, those utterly corrupt ones which had led the previous government, i.e., the BNP-Jamaat government, you know, the ones that brought the country to ruin. Those whom the people resoundingly defeated in the elections... Why yes, their student wings were corrupt. Their leaders and followers were downright thugs, from top to bottom. They have nearly-wrecked the glorious tradition of our public universities. They worked closely with criminal syndicates, under the patronage of the infamous Hawa Bhaban. It is they, these evil forces, who are self-serving, they don't love the nation. Not one bit. And well, there's no point in asking about the Jamaat separately, what else can you expect of those who were opposed to the birth of Bangladesh? Their student wing, those Islami Chhatra Shibir guys, the rog kata bahini, going around cutting tendons. Absolutely barbaric. But again, what else can one expect of rajakars and al-Badrs... the previous political party government, the BNP-Jamaat government, it is they who sacrificed the nation on the altar of progress, development and democracy.

Whereas we, we are the party that won independence in 1971. Our student organisation, the Bangladesh Chhatra League was established before the Bangladesh Awami League itself, so, no, there can be no doubt... why, the BCL is part and parcel of the nation. Of its history. If you ignore the BCL, you ignore the nation's historic strug-

gles for democracy, you ignore the liberation war itself. The very birth of the nation. Both the AL and the BCL, we are devoted to the nation. We are indistinguishable from the nation. [We are the nation].

But soon enough, this glorious Awami League narrative began to suffer from hiccups. What BCL unleashed was so severe that Sheikh Hasina was obliged to step aside as its organisational leader last April. After the death of two students. Many more injured. Kicking out opponents to occupy and establish control over student halls of residence. Brandishing arms and firearms to establish supremacy. Turf wars between the BCL factions over leadership. Preventing contractors from submitting bid documents for purchasing equipment, for doing construction work. Within campus, outside campus. Extortion. Grabbing haat-ghat-math-pukur-nodi-nala... as the list of places being occupied kept getting longer, the prime minister expressed her disapproval. She stepped aside. She even refused to grant top BCL leaders who had rushed over, presumably to squirm apologetically until they regained her favour, an audience. At least that's what the newspapers reported.

Was it a good idea? Did her strong disapproval instil the fear of God in the BCL hearts? Did it prevent them from doing whatever they were doing? Make them mend their ways? Come to their senses?

Whatever the intent of the prime ministerial gosh, it has largely proven to be ineffective. This has raised a pertinent question in public minds: if the most high-ranking national leader cannot gauge the effect of her disapproval, why express it? Why bother? Why not do something else, something that will be effective? Some go a step further. The disapproval, they think, was for public consumption only. Whatever be their faults and blemishes, the Awami League and the PM need the Chhatra League.

But the BCL members have been the targets of violence, too. Faruque Hossain, a Rajshahi university student, was killed and dumped in a manhole. According to newspaper reports, by Islami Chhatra Shibir activists. Incidents of sporadic violence have occurred between the BCL and the ICS students on other campuses as well. These have spread elsewhere. Such as the Pabna Press Club incident. Two mess quarters where the ICS

students lived had been set on fire, allegedly by the BCL cadres. As a mark of protest, the ICS had called a press conference at the local press club. Local-level administration and police hurriedly advised the press club to cancel the event. The ICS agreed to the cancellation. But outraged the BCL activists insisted on turning up. On ransacking the rooms of the press club. On assaulting journalists.

Of course, it is no use blaming the BCL alone for what student fronts, particularly those belonging to ruling political parties, do. It is systemic, practised by all student fronts except those largely belonging to the left tradition. Here is a list of these 'excesses,' diligently compiled and published in a recent Shaptahik-2000 feature. Its writer has added, the list is far from complete (January 29, 2010):

- Picking a fight for no reason but to display superior physical/armed prowess
- Asserting control by whatever means, including killing one's opponent
- Taking protection money from contractors
- Forcibly evicting tender competitors (tender-baji)
- Illegal VOIP connection
- Forcibly stripping and photographing a girlfriend
- Drug dealing (phensedyl, yaba)
- Setting up adulterated pharmaceutical company
- Manufacturing forged documents (licences, passports)
- Using the names of leaders, even dead ones, for extortion
- Holding fierarms high, shooting blank rounds during processions and rallies
- Kidnapping neighbor's daughter
- Breaking out convicts from police custody
- Extorting money from seller of land
- Extorting money from buyer of land
- Taking protection money from contractors
- Beating up public works and water development engineer
- Assaulting a UNO, threatening him with death
- Grabbing land allocated for landless
- Evicting a martyred freedom-fighter's wife from her house
- Cutting off a ear for insufficient applause to leader's speech
- Blockading roads for extortion
- Raping and extorting money from sex-worker

- Illegally renting out government billboard space
- Grabbing river banks
- Commandeering government land for political party
- Leaning on police to file cases
- Leaning on police to withdraw cases
- Threatening teacher with gun to pass exams
- Counterfeiting money
- Severing tendons of arms and legs, plucking out eyeballs
- Beating up a good student for attending exams
- Blackmarketing
- Extorting money from korbani cattle market
- Grabbing korbani cattle-hide at throwaway price

An imposing list undoubtedly. Other excesses can easily be added. Such as, what-has-come-to-be-known as admission trade (better named, admission 'profiteering'). Three city colleges—Dhaka College, Eden Women's University College, Kobi Nazrul College—reportedly netted the BCL leadership one crore taka this year. Admissions could be purchased for Tk 20-25,000.

When public outrage was at its height, the AL general secretary and the LGRD minister Syed Ashraf Islam, presumably to deflect public anger, had said that the Islami Chhatra Shibir had penetrated Chhatra League. The BCL, he had claimed, was 'neither our front organization nor our associate organization.' Unfortunately, no one believed him. At least, not the poor, not the meek, nor the law-abiding citizen. In other words, the majority. They knew that if they had committed any of these excesses, they would have had to pay. They knew that to get away with any of these excesses, you'd have to belong to Chhatra League.

Sahara Khatun's attempts at explanation were similarly unsuccessful. When Abu Bakr Siddique, a Dhaka university student was killed this February as a result of factional fighting between BCL groups, the home minister had told the press, These are isolated incidents. It is no big deal. These things happen. What is more important is what steps we are taking... Steps? None. Obaidul Kader, Awami League MP and Presidium member, however, had sounded pretty honest when he had blurted out, The way Chhatra League is proceeding, it seems neither allopathy, nor homeopathy, nothing short of surgery will work.

While the prime minister recently expressed dismay at the Chhatra League's excesses. I feel sad when I read the news, she had said. This led BCL activists to promptly beat up journalists, of Shaptahik-2000, Budhbar.

A very literal understanding. No bad news. No sad PM. But once again questions have arisen: why does the PM insist on doing that which is either ineffective or easily misunderstood.

CLAIMS OF OWNERSHIP, POLITICS OF VENGEANCE

Dr. Abid Bahar: What is happening in Bangladesh in human rights violations by the present Awami League regime in power no doubt reminds us of some of the of violent regimes in some African and Asian countries. It continues to divide the nation and rule, and in the name of secularism, it launches anti Islam oppression and brings back the controversial issues of the 1972 constitution and reinforces the notorious Fourth Amendment. It also brings back the idea of father of the nation to imply Mujib and his family and the AL as if the owners the country. In Hasina's rule human rights is given a new definition that it applies only for the AL alliances. Instead of the respect for rule of law, the anarchy caused from the party's ownership mentality by its Jubo League, Student League cadres, and their widespread practice of thug culture of looting, tender grabbing, rape in hostels and murder of the opposition members, the country shows deteriorating signs of rights violations. Despite the tightly controlled TV and the print media by the government the violations reminds us of the 70's BKSAL's widespread violation of human rights. (2) The difference though is that with India directly controlling the information sector, everything is shown by the media as normal. Whereas in reality people find it as if the normalizing of the unthinkable. Sohel Taj. This is as if Bangladeshis is again back to the past 70th fascist system at a time when people were grasping for freedom of the press, the right to life, religion, and liberty that the UN document, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) so staunchly asked national governments to comply.

Post independence period and struggle for collective rights and individual rights: Bangladesh was born in its long fight against human rights violations by the rulers of Pakistan. In this struggle no doubt people fought for their collective rights such as economic rights, language rights, and among others for the minority rights. But as soon as the country became independent, the then ruling political party began to act like it owned the country and used the state as the medium of oppression to undermine the citizen's individual rights.



Children are not even spared.

The trend set in motion by the Mujib regime in the extra-judicial arrests and killings, in discouraging multiparty democracy, and Mujib's daughter Hasina's who began her political entry by asking for forgiveness for the misdeeds of the BKSAL brings the Human rights abuses back in her second term in office. The AL, a party largely by the thugs, of the thugs and for the thugs is not alone in the promotion of the culture of oppression. Following this trend, the successive political parties in power have also been abusing the judiciary and administration and unlawfully detaining the citizens opposing such violations.

Human rights and development: Contrary to the political party's promotion of a thug culture, scholars and human rights activists find protection of rights important because it opens the door for a country's stability and to its road to development. To stop human rights abuse advocates tend to "argue for increased codification of individual legal rights to protect them from state infringement of their natural rights." But the question is whether this is sufficient to dramatically change the existing trend is arguable. True, in violation of international legal standards, article

46 of Bangladesh's Constitution empowers parliament to pass laws that provide immunity from prosecution to any state officer for any act done to maintain or restore order, and to lift any penalty, sentence, or punishment imposed." (2) In view of the above scenario, instead of describing the events of human rights violations in detail, this paper emphasizes more on the importance of understanding the socio-political background behind such violation in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is a feudal society: Sociologically speaking, for most part Bangladesh is a feudal society. The present research reveals that ever since the independence of Bangladesh, in the name of democracy, the successive governments in essence had been promoting hero-worshipping and propagating the concept of feudal ownership of the country and it demands allegiance often by intimidation and violence and in this direction it tries to exclude and disown the opposition of even their rights to exist. The examples are in abundance. The AL government in its ongoing sweep against the opposition has been harassing the BNP by suing, arresting for simple matters as one BNP leaders recent remarks that Zia as the

first president of Bangladesh. (1) Khoka. This is cited by the AL as a gross violation of the constitution, which was actually made by the AL. The government in its witch hunt policy is also reviving the war crime issue settled by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the then president of Bangladesh. (1) In this attempt, after close to four decades the AL is identifying citizens in the opposition as the political outcasts by using such terms as "rajakar," (collaborator of the Pakistan army) in some instances it was even killing Jamat party followers in the open daylight. (1) You tube. Not long ago Ziaur Rahman, a valiant liberation war hero, and one of founders of modern Bangladesh was even branded by the existing AL leaders as being "a razakar" and now the AL government even officially removed his names from government institutions. So is the story of AL claim of the ownership of Bangladesh.

BKSAL is back: Few newspapers such as Amerdesh publisher, Holiday and the NewAge reporters, dared to criticize the government policies, were attacked and some reporters killed by the RAB, Police, and by the SL thugs. The Amerdesh editor was even physically attacked by the AL goons in UK. The scenario of human rights violations show that BKSAL of Mujib regime is back again. The grand alliance of Hasina is truly the BKSAL alliance of the past with the new addition of the autocrat Ershed lately joined in with Hasina. In its promotion of the so-called progressive politics, Hasina is bringing back the failed policies of the dictatorial BKSAL regime of the past. The arrest, persecution, attack by RAB shows Hasina's politics of confrontation. In further attempts to justify Mujib's BKSAL government that in the past was removed from power by the freedom fighters for its failures in the human rights promotion are now shown as a progressive government that should be followed as a model. Through propaganda, it promotes the victim complex that Mujib the great father of the nation was indeed a progressive politician murdered by misguided army officers.

To promote the AL politics and dehumanize the opposition,

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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

23 February 2010

BANGLADESH: POLITICALLY MOTIVATED ARBITRARY ARRESTS HAMPER IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATION OF CAMPUS VIOLENCE

The government of Bangladesh must refrain from arbitrary mass arrests, which appear to have been directed only at the opposition student activists. Criminal investigations must be impartial, regardless of the suspect's political affiliation or party membership. Moreover, the authorities must ensure that the detainees are brought promptly before a court and allowed to challenge the legality of their detention, that they are not at risk of torture or other ill-treatment, and that they have access to their lawyers, families, and proper medical care.

Last week more than 300 supporters of Islami Chhatra Shibir, the student wing of the opposition party Jamaat-e-Islami, were arrested in Dhaka, Rajshahi, Chittagong and other cities. The majority of them were picked up from dormitories or rented accommodation in and around university campuses. It is not known if any of them have been charged with a recognizable criminal offence.

The arrests followed a wave of violence at major university campuses in Bangladesh, where rival student activists of the ruling Awami League party and opposition parties have fought each other over control of university halls of residence. At least four students, one from Dhaka, two from Rajshahi, and one from Chittagong universities have been killed in the midst of these clashes since early February.

The death of the first student on 2 February at Dhaka University was due to violent clashes between two rival factions of the Bangladesh Chhatra League, the student wing of the Awami League. No members of this group

appear to have been investigated for his death. The government's apparent reluctance to investigate in this case further highlights the political motivations underlying its response to the violence at the universities.

Bangladesh Chhatra League members have also been involved in clashes with the Islami Chhatra Shibir at Rajshahi, Chittagong and other university campuses. While members of the Islami Chhatra Shibir have been the main targets of the mass arrests, Bangladesh Chhatra League activists have continued to clash and attack opposition supporters, with no accountability. Amnesty International acknowledges the responsibility of government authorities to prevent violence at the university campuses and bring those responsible for the killings to justice. However, the one-sided manner in which the police have carried out the arrests so far indicates

that criminal investigations into the violence are unlikely to be impartial or fair.

Raids on student residences have been carried out at random and any Islami Chhatra Shibir supporters found there have been detained. People have reportedly been arrested arbitrarily as police have made no efforts at the time of arrest to separate ordinary student members of the Islami Chhatra Shibir from those suspected of involvement in the attacks.

The majority of the detainees are being held in jails. More than 70 of them are detained at the Dhaka Central Jail; up to 100 at the Rajshahi Central Jail; and up to 70 at the Chittagong Central Jail. More students have been picked up from other cities. According to reports, lawyers were not allowed to meet them, so they have effectively been deprived of the right

to appoint legal counsel and apply for release on bail.

Between 30 and 35 of the Islami Chhatra Shibir detainees are reportedly in police custody under interrogation. Torture in police custody is widespread in Bangladesh. Detainees in police custody have no access to lawyers or family visits during the period of their remand even though there are legal provisions for such access.

The government's politically motivated response to the violence has allowed attacks by members of the ruling party's student wing to continue, including against news reporters covering these attacks. Bangladesh Chhatra League activists attacked and injured 11 journalists working for different Bangladeshi dailies who were covering Bangladesh Chhatra League's incidences of beating of other students on the Rajshahi university campus on 11 February.

Background

Violence at university campuses is a frequent occurrence in Bangladesh. Groups involved in the violence are student wings of the main political parties. These student groups are mainly Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL, affiliated to the Awami League, which has the majority of seats in Parliament but rules in coalition with 13 much smaller parties); Islami Chhatra Shibir, (Shibir, affiliated to Jamaat-e-Islami, currently in opposition), and Bangladesh Chhatra Dhal (BCD, affiliated to the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, currently in opposition). These groups have in the past reportedly kept arms and have used violence leading to deaths and injury of people. Political parties have pledged, but failed, to disarm them. None of the political parties has condemned the violence carried out by their own members, while often only blaming their opponents for the violence.



Victims of the raid described sustained and unprovoked beatings © Amnesty International

VIOLENT ATTACK ON MEDIA AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH

A. Government imposes ban on media Arrest and torture of Mahmudur Rahman, Acting Editor, Amar Desh

1. The publication of the Bangla-language daily Amar Desh has been closed as the government cancelled the declaration of the newspaper on June 1, 2010. The police sealed off the press of Amar Desh at about 11.00 pm that night.

2. On June 10, 2010, a bench of the High Court Division consisting of Justice Nazmun Ara Sultana and Justice Sheikh Hasan Arif ordered the continuation of the Amar Desh publication. But the police did not allow the press to be opened for publication, despite the directive from the High Court Division. On June 15, 2010, the Chamber Judge of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha, has stayed the order of the High Court Division for four weeks following an appeal to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court by the Attorney General for Bangladesh against the stay order granted by the Division Bench in this regard.

3. About 400 journalists and technical staff were working at the daily Amar Desh at the time of its closure.

4. At about 4 am on June 2, 2010 Mahmudur Rahman, the acting Editor of Amar Desh, was arrested by armed police from the newspaper office under a case filed by Md. Hashmat Ali at the Tejgaon Industrial Area Police Station. Police resorted to baton charging the protesting journalists in order to arrest Mahmudur Rahman.

5. After arresting Mahmudur Rahman, a case was filed accusing over one hundred journalists and other office staff on the allegation of beating Sub Inspector Md. Shafiqul and obstructing government duty. Apart from Mahmudur Rahman, other accused persons were Sanjeeb Chowdhury, Abdal Ahmed, Zahed Chowdhury and Alauddin Arif.

6. Earlier at around 9:00 am on June 1, 2010 the publisher of the newspaper, Md. Hashmat Ali, was allegedly picked up from his residence by the members of the National Security Intelligence (NSI). It is alleged that while sitting in the office of the NSI, Md. Hashmat Ali signed some blank sheets of paper and was then allowed to leave the office of that agency. The papers signed by Md. Hashmat Ali, now mention that although he handed over his shares of the newspaper sometime back to Mahmudur Rahman, the latter was still publishing Md. Hashmat Ali's name as the publisher; and due to this he was sued for publishing certain reports along with Mahmudur Rahman. However, earlier an application had been submitted by Mahmudur Rahman to the Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka, to include his name as the publisher of Amar Desh by replacing the name of Md. Hashmat Ali. But the district administration cancelled his application after keeping it pending for a long time as per government instructions.

7. It has been alleged that Mahmudur Rahman was taken to an unknown destination after his arrest. He was produced before the Court of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate following his arrest and the Court granted bail on the case filed by Hashmat Ali. The Court also ordered the police to question Mahmudur Rahman at the jail gate while police prayed for a five day remand. On June 2, 2010, the police baton charged an agitated group of people at the time of producing Mahmudur Rahman before the Magistrate Court. A case was filed with Kotwali Police Station on the same day of the allegation for beating policemen and accordingly the prosecution asked for seven-day remand by showing Mahmudur Rahman arrested under the same case. The Court granted three day remand under the Tejgaon Police Station case and one day remand under the Kotwali Police Station case.

8. On June 6, 2010, Mahmudur Rahman was shown arrested in a pending case filed at Uttara Police Station under sections 6(1) of (kha)/8/9(1)/11/13 of the Anti-Terrorism Act, 2009 and also in a sedition case filed at the Airport Police Station under sections 121/ka, 124/ka and 114 of the Penal Code. The prosecution applied for a 20-day remand under Uttara and Airport



The Editor of Amardesh and former energy advisor Mahmudur Rahman arrested and tortured.

Police Station cases and the Court granted a four-day remand in the Anti Terrorism Case under Uttara Model Police Station and another four day remand in the sedition case lodged at the Airport Police Station. Thus, Mahmudur Rahman was taken into remand for a total period of 12 days.

9. On June 8, 2010, Mahmudur Rahman said in the Court that, "I have been tortured. I wanted to eat when I was hungry. But the police did not provide any food or even a drop of water. This government wants to kill me. I might not be able to survive."12 He was again produced before the court on June 9, 2010 and was directed to be sent to Tejgaon Police Station under a three day remand however, he was taken to the Cantonment Police Station. On June 12, 2010, after being in remand for three days in relation to case No. 2 (6) 2010, under the Tejgaon Police Station, Mahmudur Rahman, was brought before the Court of Metropolitan Magistrate Kamrunnaha Rumi. He informed the Court that on the night of 10 June, 2010 at around 1.45 am, five men entered into his cell and forcefully removed his clothes. They then proceeded to jab him very hard with their elbows in his chest and back, whereupon he lost consciousness. When he regained his senses, he found himself lying in the room of the Second Officer of the Cantonment Police Station. He was sent to jail as the investigating officer at the Tejgaon Police Station did not appeal for further remand.

10. Meanwhile the Metropolitan Magistrate Rashed Kabir ordered that the police take Mahmudur Rahman into remand after court custody under the case filed under the Anti-Terrorism Act, 2009 following a prayer for remand on June 9, 2010. He was then taken to the Detective Branch office for interrogation and produced before the Court on June 16, 2010. The Court ordered that Mahmudur Rahman be sent to jail and undergo a full medical check-up as per the Jail Code. He then became ill in jail. On June 20, 2010, while undergoing treatment, Mahmudur Rahman was taken to the Detective Branch office again from the Dhaka Central Jail by the Detective Branch Police Inspector Manzur Murshed, who is investigating a sedition case lodged at the Airport Police Station, for interrogation. It was observed that when Mahmudur Rahman was going towards the van he could not walk properly and looked pale. Sources from the jail informed that Mahmudur Rahman has been suffering severe pain to his neck, head and feet due to torture.13

11. On June 23, 2010 at about 6.30 in the morning, Mahmudur Rahman was taken to an unknown location for 'interrogation' in the custody of the investigating officer

of the Detective Branch of Police Inspector Manzur Murshed. He was produced before the Metropolitan Magistrate Court of Mustfa Shahriar on June 24, 2010 where he mentioned that he was blindfolded and kept in a very small and dark room, handcuffed to the window bars from 7 am to 5 pm at the office of RAB-1. He questioned the court, "What is the definition of torture?" When he was detained in RAB-1 for interrogation he was forced to put his signature and thumb impression on blank papers. He was sent to the Dhaka Central Jail on June 24, 2010. On June 29, 2010, when his lawyer met him at the Dhaka Central Jail, he found him thin and ill. He was also complaining of pain at various parts of his body. His lawyer demanded his proper treatment at a specialized hospital.

12. It is to be mentioned that five cases have been filed against Mahmudur Rahman after his arrest and he was shown arrested into a pending case. He is still in the custody.

13. Odhikar is gravely concerned by the manner in which the cases have been filed against Mahmudur Rahman and the use of coercive techniques to break into the printing press to seal off the press and a newspaper office and to arrest an editor of a daily newspaper, allegedly without any arrest warrant. Odhikar also believes that the arrest of Mahmudur Rahman on such grounds will only add to the continuation of the suppression of the media by the State.

14. Odhikar has been protesting against the Anti Terrorism Act of 2009 from the very beginning. Odhikar has always expressed its concern regarding the use of this repressive law to suppress dissenting voices.

15. Torture in custody is a stern violation of human rights. Article 35(5) of the Constitution of Bangladesh states, "No person shall be subject to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment or treatment". On October 5, 1998, Bangladesh ratified the UN Convention against Torture. But the government does not follow the obligations under this international convention.

B. Channel 1: closes down

16. A private television channel, Channel 1 was shut down by the government on April 27, 2010. A three-member team of the Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission led by S M Shahiduzzaman, Director (Legal and Licensing) went to the Channel 1 office at Uday Tower in Gulshan and switched off its transmission on the ground that it used rented broadcasting equipment. The Post and Telecommunications Minister Rajiuddin Ahmed Raju said, that Channel 1 had mortgaged its broadcasting equipment although the telecommunications law prohibited the transfer of frequency ownership and broadcasting equipment. As the owners failed to pay back

the loan, its broadcasting equipment had been auctioned. Meanwhile Channel 1 authority claimed that the bank auctioned its equipment and a company won the bid, although the auction winner had not yet made the payment. Thus the channel still owned the equipment.

17. The channel had more than 400 staff, including journalists, technicians and administrative officials. It is to be mentioned that Focus Multimedia Company Limited (CSB News) had been shut down for allegedly filing forged documents to obtain frequency allocation from the military backed 'Caretaker' government in August 2007.

18. Although the regulatory control of the telecommunication sector is an issue, it is also linked to the constitutional rights of freedom of speech and conscience. Due process of law should be followed in a transparent manner.

C. Government blocks Facebook

19. Despite the rhetoric of 'Digital Bangladesh', on May 29, 2010, the Bangladesh government blocked access to Facebook. The decision came after the arrest of Mahub Alam Rodin (30) for uploading satiric images of some leading politicians, including the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition. A team of the Rab-10 detained Rodin at Ranking Street in Wari, Old Dhaka, at about 00:30 in the morning. Moreover, the government was embarrassed when the report of the Anisuzzaman Inquiry Commission regarding the BDR mutiny was put up in Facebook, where the names of some high ranking government officials were mentioned. On June 5, 2010, the government withdrew its restriction on Facebook due to negative public reaction.

D. Journalists under Attack

20. Between January and June 2010, journalists have been attacked, assaulted and harassed in various ways. During this time, 02 journalists were killed, 52 were injured, 35 threatened and 29 were assaulted. 15 journalists were attacked.

21. On May 21, 2010, the President of the Gazipur Pouro Awami League, Advocate Waziuddin Miah and several others attacked Sohrab Hossain, a physically disabled editor of the local Daily Mukto Khobor over the publication of a certain news item.

22. Sayyed Nur, Farid Ullah and several other Chattra League activists led by the President of the Naikhongchori Chattra League, Taslim Iqbal, attacked Abul Bashar Noyon, the Naikhongchori, Bandaban representative of the Dailies Amardesh and Karnafuli. The Chattra League members also ransacked Noyon's office located at 'Media Palace' adjacent to the Union Parishad, where Noyon was working when the attack took place. The attack was related to the publication of a certain news item on May 1, 2010.

23. Senior journalist and regional correspondent of the Shaptahik 2000 in Sylhet Foteh Osmani, who was stabbed by a group of criminals on April 18, 2010, succumbed to his injuries at the Apollo Hospital in Dhaka on April 28, 2010. He was attacked with sharp weapons by criminals in front of the Eidgah in Sylhet while he was returning home from the Doladoli area of the city with a friend.

24. The supporters of the Awami League-backed Chattra League attacked two journalists in the Dhaka University campus. On April 4, 2010, a group of activists of Awami League-backed Chattra League led by Sajid Jahan Saikot, President of S M Hall17 unit of Chattra League beat up Fayeze Ahmed, reporter of the weekly 'Budhbar' and Anis Raihan, reporter of 'Shaptahik' in front of the Public Library on the Dhaka University Campus.

25. On February 23, 2010, Nurul Kabir, the Editor of New Age received death threats from an unidentified person.

26. On February 14, 2010, Touhodi Hasan, the Kushtia representative of the Daily Prothom Alo and Sharif Biswash, the Kushtia representative of Desh TV were beaten in front of the police by the Chattra League19 of Kushtia Government College unit, when they had gone to the scene to report the shutting down of the admission process by the members of the Chattra League.

US cannot question HP breach on war criminals Law Minister

Dhaka, July 29 (bdnews24.com)—The United States and the United Kingdom have no right to raise questions about “the violation of human rights” over the trial of war crimes and crimes against humanity during the 1971 war of independence, the law minister has said.

“I want to tell the US and the UK, where were your human rights when some 3 million people were killed, 0.2 million mothers and sisters were raped and around 10 million people were driven away from the country 39 years ago?” Shafique Ahmed snapped at a discussion at the National Press Club on Thursday

“Wasn’t the human rights violated then? No one has the right to question if those incidents are put on trial,” he added.

The British and the Americans have called upon the government to ensure transparency of the trial. The US is known as one of the anti-liberation war countries in 1971. It sent the seventh fleet for Pakistan.

The government on March 25 formed the tribunal, investigating agency and prosecution panel to those criminals.

The tribunal on July 24 issued arrest warrants against Jamaat-e-Islami chief Matiur Rahman Nizami, its secretary general Ali Ahsan Muhammad Mojaheed and two senior assistant secretaries general Muhammad Kamaruzzaman and Abdul Quader Molla for committing genocide, murder, rape, torture, loot, and arson during the war of independence.

He said the country’s judiciary was transparent and strong. “We want to show the world what human right is. The trial here will meet the global standards more than many other countries.”

“The criminals will be tried here. No one will be brought to justice for political motive. The trial will be held open,” he added.

Workers’ Party president Rashed Khan Menon, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal president Hasanul Haq Inu, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal general secretary Khalekuzzaman, Gonoforum president Pankaj Bhattacharyya, coordinator of the Sector Commanders Forum M Harun-or-Rashid also spoke in the discussion organised by the Communist Party of Bangladesh.

CPB president Manjurul Ahsan Khan presided

over the discussion, where general secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim presented the key-note paper. Selim in the paper demanded reinstatement of the 1972 constitution and annulment of the seventh and eighth amendments to the charter. Khalekuzzaman, however, said with the High Court judgment that the Fifth Amendment was illegal will automatically cancel the seventh and eighth amendments.

Menon said there will be some complications in implementing the verdict of the Fifth Amendment as the Eighth Amendment made Islam the state’s religion and the Fifth Amendment verdict termed religion-based politics illegal.

Justice Syed Amirul Islam said the country was turned to a religion-based state by the Fifth Amendment. “Now it is the biggest challenge to execute the higher court directions.”

He asked all to be united on this issue. “Moreover, the Jatiya Sangsad (parliament) will have to decide on the point of our nationalism.”

Inu said the verdict will create a line between ‘justice and injustice’. “No one will be able to grab power illegally from now on.”

WAR CRIMES TRIBUNAL: A KANGAROO COURT

- Professor Abu Rawsab (PhD)

The skepticism and doubts about a free and fair trial remain largely intact. The law under which those people (the opposition political leaders) are set to be tried is called The International Crimes (Tribunal) Act, 1973. The tribunal will simply be a “Kangaroo Court” because of the following reasons:

(a)The Evidence Act [1872 (1 of 1872)] and the Criminal Procedure Code [1898 (V of 1898)] application have been excluded by section 23 of the International Crimes (Tribunal) Act, 1973. Therefore, newspaper reports and hearsay evidence will be accepted.

(b)International Bar Association (IBA) has found out at least 17 loopholes in International Crimes (Tribunal) Act, 1973. The act does not guarantee any free and fair justice and protection for the convicted ones.

(c)Most of the judges and prosecutors are former party men of ruling coalition and hardcore supporters of the current regime, according to various authentic reports.

(d)The tribunal will try ‘crime against humanity’ rather than ‘war crime’. Crimes against humanity described in section 3(2)

(a) are very easy to prove through producing false witness-evidences in a domestic perspective and international community may be deceived. On the other hand, section 3(2)(d) describes ‘war crimes’ which will be very difficult to prove, as all players including India, Pakistan, Mukti-bahini all will come under the purview of the established (and clear) international standard of law. ‘War’, ‘insurgency’, ‘civil war’ and other related terms will play a huge legal role in case of ‘war crime’. It is easy to manipulate a witness for ‘crime against humanity’ than for ‘war crime’.

(e)The Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee as well as Fact Findings Committee have, according to various sources, already produced ‘concocted evidences’ through inducement and threat. All these false but professionally prepared evidences will be accepted in this tribunal.

(f)Media trial of some people has been completed by constant propaganda. A list of ‘war criminals’ has already been prepared before any investigation begins. The list ironically includes some people who were even 4-8 years of old in 1971!

(g)The tribunal will not try the actual war criminals, the 195 Pakistani army officers who were identified as war criminals but got released after a tri-party agreement between Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan.

(h)It will not try the Awami League cadres or freedom fighters, who also committed war crimes, including brutally killing many innocent people particularly Bihari Muslims in 1971.

(i)It intends to try only some collaborators targeting an opposition political party who supported a united Pakistan; but belong to neither the cohort of 195 identified war criminals nor of 752 guilty ones identified under the Collaborators Act, 1972.

(j)Finally, the current regime itself has a long record of ‘crime against humanity’ (such as 154 extra-judicial killings in 2009) as well as the manipulation of the legal apparatus and therefore expectation of a fare and free trial is a mere dream from this regime.

(k)The government is dictating the tribunal and it literally has power to determine which offence allegation it will take into consideration depending on investigation. It will certainly be a sham trial to prosecute the political opponents! Fair trial is not possible except under UN and under neutral judges of the democratic countries.

Political confrontation promotes depoliticisation only

Zoglu Husain: Bangladesh plunged into a new and deep political crisis as the government deliberately set itself on a collision course with the opposition, which many presume to be prompted from across the border. The overt objective of the government seems to be to crush the opposition for perpetuation of its power and its covert aim being to remove the obstacles in serving the Indian interest at the cost of the country.

According to some opposition quarters, the government thus acting as the obsequious minions of a hegemonic neighbouring country is bound to bring upon Bangladesh untold peril and dire consequences and, as poetic justice, upon itself

Desh are uncertain at this stage.

As regards the vague allegations against Mahmudur of his connections with “Islamic terrorism”, it needs to be remarked that, according to many, whatever there were in Bangladesh in the name of “Islamic terrorism”, were created in the main by India (such as JMB) and Israel (such as HuJI-B) for their ulterior motives of imparting blemish of “terrorism” and “failed state” to the country and thus making it a target of some foreign powers with the aim of subjugating the country by India in the common interest of those countries.

As to the present government’s attempt to gag

ed. In particular, certain government-sponsored acts of brutality drew public condemnation, as well as international criticism, such as, of Amnesty International.

The brutal beating up of BNP students’ affairs secretary Shahiduddin Chowdhury Annie MP jointly by BCL members and the police and later, as a total disgrace to medical profession, by BAL elements of hospital doctors and staffs when Annie was taken to hospital, was a case in point.

Similarly, thoroughly condemned was the joint attack of members of BCL and RAB in the peaceful house of the BNP standing commit-



Police and ruling party cadres assaulting opposition leaders.



too, which would be reaping a bitter harvest and, as such, it could be quite harsh and unkind too. Obaidul Quader, a BAL leader, vented out the recognition of this realisation when he said on 2 July 2010 that the present political confrontation could be “suicidal” for both the government and the opposition.

The daily Amar Desh, a popular and powerful voice of the opposition, not belonging to any particular political party, was conspiratorially shut down as the NSI nabbed its publisher for six hours to get him to sign a few blank papers, which were then converted to complaints, framed by the NSI, to arrest the editor-in-charge, Mahmudur Rahman, at about 4 am on 2 June 2010 with a 200-strong police force, on ridiculously flimsy charges.

After arrest, new charges of conspiracy against the state and of patronisation of Highb-ut Tahrir were lodged against him, again conspiratorially.

Defying the concerns of the US and the UK embassies for freedom of the press and also defying the court order not to torture, which is forbidden by the constitution, the police later forcibly undressed him at midnight in remand, tortured and beat him up leaving him unconscious, while the paper was closed down by the supreme court for a month, within which time, new orders may be issued. In the circumstances, the future of Mahmudur and the daily Amar

the media, already previously, it closed TV channels, such as Channel-1 and Jamuna. By now, all the newspapers, indeed all print and electronic media, including online publications and websites, of Bangladesh are being controlled by the government through autocratic actions and intimidations, the TV talk shows being prevented from any dissensions and these shows are being directed to eulogies only for the government and its foreign allies. The government seems to be taking directions churned out of powerful computers of foreign lands.

Irrespective of whether anyone supports a particular party or not, it is in the interest of the citizens in a democracy to see that human rights, democratic rights and rule of law are respected and practised and that justice prevails in matters of governance and all walks of social and political lives.

Any incumbent autocracy should also learn from the history, for today’s power can evaporate tomorrow, as it generally does.

The countrywide general strike called by the BNP on 27 June 2010 on their 11-point demands and supported by many opposition parties, including BJI, was hugely successful and the picketing and processions of various groups of the opposition were also peaceful. But the BCL, police and RAB, according to reports, resorted to violence as they went on attacks, which were clearly seen to be unprovoked and premeditated.

tee member Mirza Abbas, a former Mayor, who was earlier arrested the same day. The people, who gathered in the house after his arrest, were beaten up brutally including women, among them were his wife and his 85-year old mother and, as stated by his wife, about 50 people were arrested.

BNP claimed that more than one thousand of their leaders and workers were arrested on the day and more than five hundred injured. Prominent among them, in addition to the two above, were Vice-Chairman Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury, Khaleda’s advisers Prof M A Mannan and Adv Ahmed Azam and Rajia Begum, secretary of women’s organisation, BJMD.

Clearly, many of these arrests were targeted in order to weaken and demolish the BNP organisation. The arrest of Mirza Abbas and filing of case against Mayor Sadek Hossain Khoka, who may be arrested later, are aimed at weakening the BNP in Dhaka. MP Annie was arrested to weaken the student organization BJCD, while BNP adviser, former foreign secretary and former ambassador to the US, Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury, to weaken foreign lobbying and Rajia Begum to weaken women’s organisation, BJMD. Similarly, the arrests of the secretaries of volunteer organisation Jatiatabadi Swechhaseb Dal, Fishermen’s organisation Motshojibi Dal etc. were targeted. The BNP termed these targeted attacks as *Continued to page 6*

RISE OF FASCISM

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workers and leaders of BJI and Shibir have been arrested, detained, and tortured. Two have already been killed by the law enforcement officers.

Abusing and Misusing Existing Legal Apparatus: While the issue was resolved completely in 1973, out of extreme political vendetta the government is committed to trying “war-criminals” who sided with Pakistan during the independence war in 1971 (targeting mainly the leaders of BJI) under *The Crimes (Tribunal) Act, 1973*. Many of the provisions of this law are against the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, Covenants on Civil and Political Rights 1966, and a host of others international legislations, and above all, the fundamental rights guaranteed in the Constitution of Bangladesh. It will certainly be a “Kangaroo Court”.

Press Harassment and Killing of Journalists: In the first three months of the current regime, 18 journalists were injured, 5 threatened, 3 attacked, and 4 assaulted, as well as a number of instances where the publication of news materials was obstructed by the authorities. Journalists criticizing the ruling regime’s human rights records are in constant death threats. Few have already been brutally killed over the last few months. The government imposed ban on the Daily Amaradesh, and Channel 1. The editor of Amaradesh, Mr. Mahmudur Rahman, was arrested on a false and concocted case and is under remand and torture. There were widespread reports that the government threatened the media for publishing the reports on the misdeeds of the party in power.

Extrajudicial Killings: Out of 38 persons killed/died in the first 6 months since January 2009, 28 of them died in crossfire. From amongst these 28 persons, 14 persons were killed by Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), 6 by the Police, 4 by RAB-Police, 3 by the Army and 1 by Detective Branch (DB) of Police. During this time, 6 persons were allegedly tortured to death by the police. In addition to these figures, 2 persons were shot by the Ansar, 1 person by the Police and 1 by the Forest guards. Extrajudicial killings have dramatically increased in recent days. Odhikar reports, during the period of January – June 2010, 61 people have been killed extra-judicially. It has been further alleged that of these people, 29 were killed by RAB, 25 by Police. In addition to this, 04 were killed during joint drives of the RAB and Police. Of these 61 casualties, 13 passed away while they were in custody of the law enforcement agencies.

Torture Cells and Rape House: In some universities, the youth/student wing of the ruling government has set up torture cells to inhumanly torture their political opponents and teachers. They have also established “rape and drug house”. Recently in Pirojpur, three hijab wearing girls were arrested, harassed, and tortured in police custody despite finding no clue of militancy. Previously a BCL cadre celebrated his “century of rapes” that drew media attention.

Moving towards One Party Rule: With the help of former Soviet-trained communist leaders (who have joined in the ruling government), the government is moving towards one-party rule crushing and banning opposition parties, democratic practices, and rule of law. The government has become not only aggressive but also extremely violent in wiping out all traces of other parties’ symbols. Numerous false cases have been filed against their leaders. During another regime (1971-1975), the ruling party’s former leader Shaikh Mujibur Rahman established “one party rule” based on Soviet model banning all other political parties and newspapers (except four state-controlled newspapers). Recently, following a court ruling, the government is committed to banning religion-based politics. It will not only undermine and exterminate people’s religious freedom and democratic pluralism, but also lead the leaders of various opposition parties to undergo unprecedented torture, detention, and execution, many of which have already started.

Minority Oppression: There are many instances in which the Hindu minority group has been oppressed by the ruling party. Recently a Hindu temple in Dhaka city has been demolished by the youth wing of the ruling party. Land grabbing from the minority by the thug-activists of the ruling party has been a common practice in Bangladesh.

Only credible elections do not guarantee democracy, human rights, and rule of law. We are urgently in need of the international cooperation and assistance to restore and preserve democracy, rule of law, human rights, freedom of movement, and minority rights in Bangladesh

For more, please visit
<http://www.odhikar.org>

CLAIMS OF OWNERSHIP

From Page 3

it places “mask of the devil” on the AL enemies to promote vengeance. Surprisingly and so naively almost all the cases against the AL man sued for

the allegations of mischief’s were withdrawn by the government with approval from the loyal courts showing the appearance of neutrality and the cases against the BNP leaders however were perused.

To tackle the opposition party, it controls the streets by the local godfathers, Joinal Hazari and the notorious Shamim Osmani’s are now back and with student involvement in campuses and additional security and support for human rights violators provided by India. In this status quo everything seem normal and good for the AL. However, these are no doubt the signs of the revival of the familiar BKSALi despotic trends of the past the present government is so devotedly trying to practice.

Politics of ownership and fascism:

Additionally, considering the hereditary leadership continued by the Begums especially Hasina Begum, and the AL’s prevailing theme of father of the nation (Pitha) or the announcer (Ghosok) by the BNP, the respective parties demand the ownership of the feud we also call Bangladesh. Based on the above existing scenario, there is little doubt that Bangladeshi political system is clearly feudal in the guise of being democratic. But in its modern mix in the staged election, the false promises and fake claims that the “government is devoted for the people because it is by the people,” and in the prevalence of intolerance to the opposition, and the return of a thug rule, the imposition of authoritarianism, the belief in a supra territorialism of Bengali nationalism over Bangladeshi nationalism, the tendency of hero-worship, Bangladesh governance could be described as the Bangladeshi brand of fascism at best. In contrast if we would like to call it a democracy that Bangladeshis proud to claim, and the constitution claims, I believe whether codifying human rights of the citizens or not, the present system will continue to be there until the realization among people that it is not the leaders or any of the party that owns the country, and in such a system only we would call a democracy where the formal institutions of bureaucracy (not any godfather or the SL) would be in charge of the distribution of wealth to the citizens.

Bangabandhu chatona:

In trying to understand the Bangladesh problems, it also reminds us the mentality of the Muslim League politicians in Pakistan of the 50th and the 60’s that they demonstrated that it is them only owned Pakistan and in Bangladesh we see similar trend as if the AL owns Bangladesh for Bengalis. This is not a sign of progress but of the existence of fascism. Mujib who founded the student League (was wrongly propagated by the as the founder of Awami League,) himself was a musleman in his student life. Records show he finished his matriculation at the age of 22 when regular students finish their higher university diplomas. In one occasion, he refused to pay fines to Dhaka University demanded for his non student like behaviour about his involvement in the fourth class employees association. These are not necessarily the model characteristics of a fatherly figure for a progressive Bangladesh. But no doubt among others he was also one who helped in the independence of Bangladesh. Having said this, however he shouldn’t be given credit for his gross human rights violations in the role of President of the country. What Mujib truly was is evident in his famous quotes in the post liberation period provided below:

“Seraj Sikdhar thumi Akhon Khotai?” (Where are you now, you Seraj Sikdhar?)

“Nokshal ke Dheka Matro Guli Korbei” (Shoot down Naxal, just at the sight !)

Jatir Pitha Hoichee Bola, Noitoo Lal Ghora Nabaidetham (The problem is I am the father of the nation otherwise I would have crushed them!)
Adebashis, Tomra Bangalee Hoyee Jao! “Tribals, You better become Bengalees!”

Those lines remind us of Mujib the leader of the thug of thug leaders. In addition, his one party rule, his banning of all the newspapers except four government papers, his paramilitary forces including the Rakhi Bahini killing his opponents, and his district governors comprised of the known thugs selected for ruling Bangladesh districts as the smaller feuds show the type of a leader, whose chetona (consciousness) the Hasina AL officially promotes is destined to create a feudal society born to become democratic.

Human rights awareness and development:

Contrary to the AL’s continued power politics, the ownership claims and the politics of vengeance, in South Africa we see even in their bitter racial divide Nelson Mandela used the politics of reconciliation and human rights development in the country which brought relative stability and peace. On the other hand in the battleground Bangladesh, after the 1/11 event, and the BDR mutiny, it is clear the forces opposing the pro-Indian government was also seriously weakened. Under the circumstances while the India chosen AL celebrates its triumph, the losers seem to be the common people of Bangladesh for losing its promise of both human rights and development. Whereas Bangladesh was born through its fight against human rights violation by the former

feudal rulers of Pakistan as if to save a plant called Bangladesh, the leaders that were trying to get light and air to help the plant drive toward blooming, now due to their return back to the politics of feudal wars and vengeance, it helps invert attacks to itself to stagnation in almost out of sullen spite.

AWAMI ATROCITIES KNOW NO BOUNDS

From Page 1

imagine how dangerous and heinous they are for their political opponents. Every day people are witnessing the extreme savagery and ferocity of BAL activists in Bangladesh. In the year of 2009, Odhikar, a human rights organization, reported that 251 people have been killed and 15,559 have been injured largely by the cadres of the ruling party. From January to mid February 2010, more than 45 people have been killed, and another 3 thousand people have got injured.

Pilkhana tragedy and displacing blames:

The world was totally stunned to see the worst form of gruesome killing of 57 army officers and their families and burning and dumping the corpses in Pilkhana, Dhaka on February 24-25, 2009. All these were done largely with the direct behest and active involvement of BAL government. The State Minister Jahangir K. Nanak has already fled the country once investigation began to dig into his linkage to the notorious carnage. The more tragedy is that rather than bringing the killers to justice, the government has taken a very comprehensive approach which involves procrastination, diverting people’s attention to something else, wiping out evidences by the deaths of perpetrators and witnesses in custody, rewarding some killers in Dubai airport, blaming the victims and sanctifying the perpetrators. If the BAL government fails to establish true justice, it will generate grave consequences for Bangladesh. There is a widespread apprehension that the investigation report may not even be published.

Torture cell:

The BAL cadres in most universities including Jahangirnagar and Rajshahi have set up torture cells to inhumanly torture their political opponents. The victims include their own activists posing challenges for leadership, political opponents, and teachers. The methods of torture are so brutal and inhuman, they sometimes eclipse the methods applied in Abu Gharib prison and Guantanamo Bay. The extreme tortures by BAL arms thugs have already claimed many innocent lives.

Rape and Drug House:

Many BAL activists in many universities and institutions have very successfully established rape house. Many innocent female students are victims of this grave inhumanity. While all these practices are very open secret, people and the victims do not voice out against these because of potential grave consequences. The inhumanity of these rapists sometimes reach to such an extreme verge that they—rather than being remorseful—celebrate their actions in a boastful manner. Manik, a BAL cadre in Jahangirnagar University, openly celebrated his “rape century” when he completed raping 100 girls that drew a huge media coverage! Apart from inhuman rape, many BAL controlled hostels turn to drug house at night.

Burning people alive:

The extreme brutality of the BAL cadres takes many forms. One of the gravest forms is burning people alive. One of the well cited examples is setting fire on a bus full of passengers by BAL cadres. Around a dozen innocent people were brutally burnt to death. One of the most savage BAL cadres, who later on became an MP, used to burn people alive in the flaming fire in brick fields. As reported by one of his close associates, “the odor and the weird sound of the burning corpse make him very happy!”

Dancing on the corpse:

October 28, 2006 is one of the most horrible days in the history of humanity. The unprecedented rejoice and elations over the Nobel Peace Prize won by Dr. Muhammad Yunus were still mounting everywhere in Bangladesh. The whole world suddenly became stunned and terribly shocked to see the gruesome political violence created by BAL activists. The unruly BAL activists started mercilessly beating their political opponents to death with poles and oars and dancing on the corpses with joy! The second shock—deeper than ever—appeared when instead of eschewing these violence and gruesome murders, further violent strategies were adopted and an attempt was made by some BAList intellectuals along with their political masters to justify the former violence with a view to blaming the victims and sanctifying the oppressors. None of these brutal murderers were put to justice, rather the victims families were put in extreme intimidation and harassments.

The above are just few of numerous instances of BAL brutality in recent times. The total history of BAL’s

savagery, fascism, inhumanity and gross human rights violations is parallel to none. The Hindu minorities who often support BAL regimes are also the grave victims of BAL atrocities. Recently BAL cadres demolished a Shib Mandir (Hindu Temple) in Dhaka in a broad day light, and the local court surprisingly refused to take any case against these fascist cadres. The extreme brutality of the BAL-created “Rakkhi Bahini” and “BAKSAL” is still in the imagination of elderly generation, if not in younger generations’ mind. The same patterns of the brutality are currently going on in full swing and in various ugliest forms, not occasionally but almost daily: murdering, raping, looting, grafting, plundering, intimidating, containing, lying, fabricating, insulting, and many others. The current BAL regime is a total reign of fascism and a dangerous tyranny.

Ironically, rather than focusing on these BAL rag-tags’ gravest forms of savagery and inhumanity, the BAList media and intellectuals are very discursively and deliberately diverting people’s attention to something else, such as war-criminals and Jongis. While the war criminals and Jongis are serious issues to be resolved, people need to be very careful of how blames of all social owes are reduced and transferred to the issues of war-criminals and Jongis! Bangladesh and its people are totally unsafe and extremely unfortunate to have the Neo-Nazis on power. We all must resist this extreme fascism. We must not betray our conscience!

Political confrontation promotes depoliticisation only

From Page 5

“political persecution”.

At this present tempo, any leader of the BNP, including Khaleda, may be arrested and the BNP should have no illusions of any kind about that. The government seems to be cutting off the twigs and branches of BNP, before felling the tree.

Even recently Hasina claimed that Khaleda was involved in the bombing of August 21, 2004 at Hasina’s meeting. Is it a hint?

The writing seems to be on the wall for the government. The complaint of the opposition against the government include: rampant corruption, armed terror, murders, grabbing, misrule, oppression of citizens, repression, partisan control of administration, judiciary, ACC, law enforcing agencies, educational and other institutions etc. The people’s discontent and swelling rage are gradually cutting the ground from under the feet of the government.

Additionally, its declared intent to serve Indian interest at the cost of the country has added fuel to the fire. The total silence of the government against Indian border atrocities such as killing of nine hundred innocent unarmed Bangladeshi villagers in ten years by contravening the Geneva convention, and incidents such as forcible intrusion and occupation of Bangladeshi agricultural lands in the Jaintapur border area are not going unnoticed. The people are getting further enraged.

No wonder Indian media are hinting at a possible military coup. Coup or not, the government is already finding itself in a tight corner. Within one and a half years of its coming to power, the government seems to have started tottering.

It is in this charged backdrop that the BNP emphatically won the CCC election held on 17 June 2010. It is the first time since 1/11 2007 that the law enforcing agencies did not interfere in the balloting system.

What internal and or external influences were there at work is not crystal clear, but the returning officer Jasmine Tuli set an example of acceptable, free and fair election, just as the general elections of 1991, 1996 and 2001 were acceptable.

In the recent Bholra-3 by-election, the loser BNP candidate Maj (Retd) Hafiz complained of DGFI, NSI, SB etc. campaigning against him. About the general election of 29 December 2008, former BAL secretary Abdul Jalil said that the Hasina government came to power through understanding with the army. Gen (Retd) Ershad also said that without the help of the army, this government would never come to power. These three leaders summed up the situation of these rigged elections. Thus, the people who termed the CCC election a turning point are more than justified. It boosted up the spirits of the BNP camp.

The highly successful general strike of 27 June 2010 called by the BNP camp is indeed a notice served on the government. And the more the government resorts to repression and persecution, the more the people will be mobilised against it.

What is more, if the repression exceeds the level of tolerance, some sections of the BNP and the BJI, which are involved in constitutional politics for the last three decades, may be driven underground along with sections of other opposition parties, as the opposition did during Mujib regime of 1972-75.

In order to play a good role in history, the political parties need to learn from the history.

AWAMI LEAGUE'S TRANSITION

From Page 1

and later justify their deeds with power and position. The people remain enslaved in the merry go round of betrayal and deception. The politicians always placed their self-interest above the interest of the nation. Even at times the country and the people became sacrificial goats to meet their greed and lust. Soon after stepping on the soil of the independent country Awami League came out with the ambiguous slogan of “Mujibbad”. After three and half years when “Mujibbad” was proven to be an empty slogan Sheikh Mujibur Rahman like any other power hungry dictator promulgated 4th amendment and took all powers in his own hand by forming one party autocratic regime of BKSAL. This unprecedented constitutional coup de’ tat was called his ‘Second Revolution’. As he usurped absolute power apparently things for a while looked calm on the surface but beneath that uneasy calm political and social conditions were fast deteriorating. The main reason for such deterioration was the presumption of the rulers that by dishing out favours and benefits rule can be perpetuated forever. They depended on this belief because of their lake of understanding of the complexities of the newly independent country. It’s problems and solutions were beyond their perception. They lacked any ideology, conviction, experience and vision. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman like other third world dictators considered his own ideas and thoughts to be the ultimate. He never cared to take any advice or suggestion from any one, other than his ‘kitchen cabinet’ comprised of his family members. His all knowing attitudes were to a great extent responsible for his administrative failure. He also did not have a clear idea about the difference between party and the state. This became clear even in 1956-57 when he deferred with the then Chief Minister Mr. Ataur Rahman Khan. Mr. Khan wanted to keep the administration totally neutral. He knew that if the administration were brought under the party control then it would be difficult to run the administration efficiently. But Sheikh Mujib refuted his contention and said, “The administration has to accept party domination. Not only that administration will just help and assist the party to execute its policies, but the administration will also be helping in increasing its influence among the people”. Mr. Ataur Rahman Khan had to surrender to Sheikh Mujib as he was then considered very powerful in the party. Thus during this time Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the Minister of Commerce and Industries indulged in rampant corruption, nepotism and misuse of power. He used his power in giving out permits, licenses, bank loans, and sanction to establish industries to people who were loyal to him and his cronies. After taking over the reign of Bangladesh he started ruling the country in the same old style. Some were given money, some undue promotions, appointments as the directors of the abandoned business concerns and industries, license permits, dealerships etc. to buy support and personal loyalty. This is how only within two and half years a total anarchy was created in the economic sector. Many of his confidants were also involved in smuggling in collaboration with the Marwaris. Thus under the patronization of Awami rule a new class of ‘novo’ rich grew like mushroom. They accumulated from national resources but did not reinvest into the economic cycle. Most of their wealth was spent in non-productive sectors or transferred abroad. With these people Sheikh Mujibur Rahman wanted to establish ‘GOLDEN BENGAL’ in the country. It was really very hard to understand what he was up to? Was it his ignorance or cunning mechanization? Was it appropriate that he should place his party’s interest over the national interest? Did the nation expect that from him? It was not only his party people who got involved in rampant corruption. His immediate family members were also involved. Gazi Golam Mustafa who was a close confidant of Sheik’s family became famous as ‘Kamble Chor’ in the country for his open misappropriation of relief goods being the Chairman of the Red Cross. The donors and the international relief agencies also came to know about his malpractices. International press and media became very vocal against this notorious thief. His only brother Sheikh Naser not only garbed the abandoned properties and businesses in Khulna his hometown, but also became one of the ringleaders of the smuggling activities. All his nephews Sheikh Moni, Abul Hasnat, Sheikh Shahidul Islam not only became politically very powerful, they also amassed enormous wealth under the patronization of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. His sons, particularly Sheikh Kamal also got involved in amassing fortunes and other unethical activities such as Bank robberies. Regarding the state of corruption during Mujib’s regime, the reputed journalist Lawrence Lift Shulz wrote in the Far Eastern Economic Review on 30th Aug 1974. “Corruption and malpractices are nothing new. But Dhaka people thinks the way the corruption and malpractices and plunder of national wealth that had taken place during Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’s regime is unprecedented”. It was virtually impossible for the government to gain any economic or political achievements with such loots and plunders in a newly independent war ravaged country. The looters did not plough back their ill-gotten wealth in the national economy; they spent that fortune

for their luxuries and comforts. But the government had to pay heavily as its image got tarnished in the eyes of the people and the world.

The government became isolated from the people. Against the promise to turn Bangladesh into ‘Golden Bengal’ the ruling elites turned Bangladesh into a “bottom less basket”. The common people viewed this as a national betrayal. They became dejected with the Awami League leadership. Awami League lost the people’s support, which was so vital for any government to govern. Gradually they also lost the support of many powerful quarters within the government itself. Their support within the students, youths and armed forces eroded substantially.

An agricultural country Bangladesh is heavily dependent on the nature. It was a gigantic task to feed 100 millions people in a devastated country. The donors and the international communities came forward generously to help Bangladesh in its reconstruction. Till 30th December 1973 Bangladesh received grants and aid credit amounting 1.4 billion US Dollars. Beside through UNROB huge amount of relief assistance was also provided. In spite of this all the hopes and aspirations of the newly independent nation got lost into the nightmare of AWAMI-BKSAL miss rule.

AWAMI-BKSAL period is the dark chapter in the history of Bangladesh. Volumes would not be enough to write the full history. On Jan. 25, 1975 with a stroke of pen Sheikh Mujibur Rahman killed democracy and imposed on the nation the yoke of one party rule of BKSAL. He snatched away from the people freedom of press, freedom of expression, fundamental rights along with all political rights. All national dailies and periodicals were banned except 4 government-controlled dailies. Constitutional rights of the judiciary were also high jacked and was brought under the administrative control. Rule of law thus was buried.

The period of AWAMI-BKSAL rule was full of barbaric atrocities. The history of AWAMI-BKSAL rule was basically history of murder, rape, loot, oppression, plunder, famine, capitulation to the foreign exploiters, white terror and above all betrayal to the spirit of the liberation war. People could never be able to forget those horrifying memories. In the name of socialism they plundered the national wealth, they kept the border open for the smuggling, for their mismanagement of the economy the country got recognized internationally as the ‘bottomless basket’. There was no famine in Bangladesh during or just after the war but hundreds and thousands of people had to die out of the man made famine of ’74 during the rule of AWAMI-BKSAL.

Sheik Mujib and his government presented the people fascism in the name of democracy, social injustice in the name of socialism, national disunity in the name of Bengali nationalism and communal disharmony in the name of secularism. In this way after subjugating the whole nation in a state of gasping suffocation all the opposition was crushed systematically through state terrorism with a view to close all the constitutional and democratic avenues to bring any change of government. The nation was thrown into an era of total darkness with no hope to breathe afresh.

It was Awami League of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman that mortgaged the national independence and state sovereignty signing the 25 years long-term unequal treaty with India. By creating Rakkhi Bahini, Lal Bahini, Shechha Shebok Bahini and other private Bahinis AWAMI-BKSALISTS unleashed an unbearable reign of terror killing 40000 nationalists and patriotic people with out any trial.

On 24th Feb 1975 President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman through a decree announced formation of the only political party of the country Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League or BKSAL. He also declared himself to be the chairman of BKSAL. In the 3rd article of the announcement it was stated, “Till any further order from the President all the members of the Parliament of the defunct Awami League, all its members, Cabinet Ministers, deputy Ministers, state Ministers will be considered as the members of the BKSAL. Bongo Bir Gen. Osmani and Barrister Mainul Hossain decided to defy this order and not to join BKSAL instead they both resigned from their Parliament membership. Due to the announcement of the so-called ‘national party’ all other political parties got abolished. Finally CPB, NAP Muzaffar and Awami League got merged into BKSAL. Out of the 8 opposition members in the Parliament 4 joined BKSAL.

On 6th June 1975 the organizational structure and the constitution of BKSAL was announced. That day names of 115 members central committee were announced. In that 115 members-- vice President, Prime Minister, speaker, deputy speaker, Ministers, deputy Ministers, state Ministers, 3 Chiefs of the army, navy and airforce, DG BDR, DG JRB and the secretaries of all the ministries were included.

The Executive Committee of BKSAL:

(1) Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, (2) Sayed Nazrul Islam, (3) Mansoor Ali, (4) Khandakar Mushtaq Ahmed, (5) Abdul Hasnat Mohammad Kamruzzaman, (6) Abdul Malek Ukil, (7) Prof. Yusuf Ali, (8) Manaranjan Dhar, (9) Mohiuddin Ahmed, (10) Gazi Golam Mustafa, (11) Zillur Rahman, (12) Sheikh Fazlul Haq Moni, (13) Abdur Razzak.

List of the Central Committee of BKSAL:

(1) Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, (2) Sayed Nazrul Islam, (3) Mansoor Ali, (4) Abdul Malik Ukil, (5) Khandakar Mushtaq Ahmed, (6) A.H.M Kamaruzzaman, (7) Mahmudullah, (8) Abdus Samad Azad, (9) Yusuf Ali, (10) Fani Bhushan Majumder, (11) Dr. Kamal Hussain, (12) Sohrab Hussain, (13) Abdul Mannan, (14) Abdur

Rab Shernyabat, (15) Manaranjan Dhar, (16) Abdul Matin, (17) Asaduzzanan, (18) Korban Ali, (19) Dr. Azizul Rahman Mallik, (20) Dr. Mozzaffar Ahmad Choudhury, (21) Tofayel Ahmad, (22) Shah Moazzam Hossain, (23) Abdul Momen Talukder, (24) Dewan Farid Ganj, (25) Professor Nurul Islam Choudhry, (26) Taher uddin Thakur, (27) Moslemuddin Khan, (28) MD Nurul Islam Manju, (29) AKM Obaidur Rahman, (30) Dr. Khitish Chandra Mandal, (31) Reazuddin Ahmad, (32) M. Baitullah, (33) Rahul Quddus(Secretary), (34) Zillur Rahman, (35) Mohiuddin Ahmad MP, (36) Sheikh Fazlul Haq Moin, (37) Abdur Razzaq, (38) Sheikh Shahidul Islam, (39) Anwar Choudhry, (40) Sajeda Choudhry, (41) Taslema Abed, (42) Abdur Rahim, (43) Abdul Awal, (44) Lutfur Rahman, (45) A.K. Muzibur Rahman, (46) Dr. Mofiz Choudhry, (47) Dr. Allauddin, (48) Dr. Ahsanul Haq, (49) Raushan Ali, (50) Azizur Rahman Akkas, (51) Sheikh Abdul Aziz, (52) Salahuddin Yusuf, (53) Michale Shushil Adhikari, (54) Kazi Abdul Hakim, (55) Mollah Jalaluddin, (56) Shamsuddin Mollah, (57) Gaur Chandra Bala, (58) Gazi Ghulam Mustafa, (59) Shamsul Haq, (60) Shamsuzzoha, (61) Rafiqueuddin Bhuiya, (62) Syed Ahmad, (63) Shamsur Rahman Khan, (64) Nurul Haq, (65) Kazi Zahurul Qayyum, (66) Capt.(Retd) Sujjat Ali, (67) M.R. Siddiqui, (68) MA Wahab, (69) Chittaranjan Sutar, (70) Sayeda Razia Banu, (71) Ataur Rahman Khan, (72) Khandakar Muhammad Illyas, (73) Mong Pru Saire, (74) Professor Muzzaffar Ahmad, (75) Ataur Rahman, (76) Pir Habibur Rahman, (77) Sayeed Altaf Hussain, (78) Muhammad Farhad, (79) Motia Choudhury, (80) Hazi Danesh, (81) Taufiq Inam(Secretary), (82) Nurul Islam(Secretary), (83) Fayezeuddin (Secretary), (84) Mahbubur Rahman(Secretary), (85) Abdul Khaleque, (86) Muzibul Haq (Secretary), (87) Abdur Rahim(Secretary), (88) Moinul Islam (Secretary), (89) Sayeduzzaman(Secretary), (90) Anisuzzaman(Secretary), (91) Dr. A Sattar (Secretary), (92) M.A Samad(Secretary), (93) Abu Tahir (Secretary), (94) Al Hossaini (Secretary), (95) Dr Tajul Hossain(Secretary), (96) Motiur Rahman. Chairman. TCB, (97) Maj. Gen K.M. Safiullah, (98) Air Vice Marshal Khandakar, (99) Comodore M.H.Khan, (100) Maj Gen. Khalilur Rahman, (101) A.K. Naziruddin, (102) Dr. Abdul Matin Choudhury, (103) Dr.Mazharul Islam, (104) Dr.Sramul Haq, (105) ATM Syed Hossain, (106) Nurul Islam, (107) Dr. Nilima Ibrahim, (108) Dr. Nurul Islam PG Hospital, (109) Obaidul Haq Eiditor Observer, (110) Anwar Hossain Manju Editor Ittefaq, (111) Mizanur Rahman BPI, (112) Manawarul Islam, (113) Brig. A.M.S. Nuruzzaman DG Jatiyo Rakki Bahini, (114) Kamruzzaman teachers Association, (115) Dr. Mazhar Ali Kadri.

In the same declaration 5 sister organisation of BKSAL were also formed:-

General Secretaries:

1. Jatiyo Krishak league Fani Bhushan Majumdar
2. Jatiyo Sramik league Professor. Yousuf Ali
3. Jatiyo Mahila league Sajeda Choudhury
4. Jatiyo Jubo league Tofayel Ahmed
5. Jatiyo Chatra league Sheikh Shahidul Islam.

The general Secretaries nominated were most trusted confidants of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The members of the central committees of these organizations consisted of members taken from CPB, NAP Muzaffar and Jatiyo league of Ataur Rahman Khan.

In accordance with forming of BKSAL on 16th June 1975, News Paper Cancellation Act was promulgated. Under this Act only four nationalized dailies were allowed to be published along with a few weeklies. Rests were all banned.

Thus after complete burial of democracy the whole country was subjugated under unprecedented reign of white terror. Being denied of personal security the people was suffocated and became hostages in their own homeland under the tyranny of the autocratic BKSAL rule. The political leaders and workers alike miserably failed to grasp the famous doctrine, “Of the people, by the people and for the people.” Thus people could not achieve their cherished dream in spite of their glorious straggle and sacrifice. All their efforts had got lost once again in the blind alley because of the betrayal of the leadership.

An Appeal to the International

From Page 8

ten Jamaat men on the streets of Dhaka on broad day light on that day.

Recently a number of police personnel entered the chamber of Barrister Abdur Razzak, a Jamaat leader and senior advocate of Bangladesh Supreme Court (who is also the law counsel of the detained Jamaat leaders) to intimidate him. The government is not allowing lawyers to meet the detained leaders in custody. As a result, complications arise in respect of legal assistance and thus the government is obstructing the normal course of the rule of law. Even the family members are not allowed to meet the leaders.

On 9 Feb 2010, a member of the student wing of Awami League named Faruk Hossain died at Rajshahi University; and subsequent media reports suggest that he was killed because of intra-party factional clashes allegedly over money extortion and other illicit interests. There were 12 other political murders in Bangladesh in February 2010 involving the ruling party men, but the government had singled out one incident and used it to continue its renewed wave of repressive measures. Since the Awami League came to power, thousands of

students belonging to Bangladesh Islami Chhatra Shibir of Dhaka and other Universities have been ousted from their dormitories and many of them cannot come to the campus to attend classes. Many of them have been attacked even in the exam halls while the panicked Shibir students were sitting for exams; and that in the presence of helpless teachers. Torture of Shibir students by Chhatra League at the DU campus has become a regular and taken-for-granted incident. Members of the student wing of the regime have established secret torture cells and rape houses at different educational institutions in Bangladesh.

In order to persecute Jamaat leaders, the regime exploits the public sentiment of the 1971 liberation war. If the events of the 1971 war were the main reason for these arrests and tortures, a number of Awami League and Jatiya Party leaders holding ministerial posts in the current government would have been in prison by this time for their role in 1971. One of the incarcerated Jamaat leaders, Maulana Delwar Hossain Saidee entered active political life in the late 1980s. And his arrest explains the extent of manipulation of 1971 events by the regime.

The main reason for all political repression on Jamaat is its opposition to giving corridor to India at the expense of the country’s national security and independence. Jamaat is also opposed to government’s decision to give India permission to use the sea ports of Chittagong and Mongla and Ashuganj river port. Jamaat and BNP have protested the government’s silence about India’s pernicious plan to build Tipaimukh Dam on the River Barak. Like the existing Farakka Dam, this new Dam will be disastrous for the people of Bangladesh and will increase their sufferings.

The overwhelming victory of the opposition candidate in the recent election of Chittagong City Corporation (the second largest metropolitan centre in the country) with a big margin made it clear that the regime had lost public support. All these tortures and political oppression point to the regime’s desperation to remain in power mainly with the help of a big neighbouring country.

The above account gives only a partial picture of the misrule of the current regime. It will require reams of papers and heaps of writers to describe the extent of brutalities and incarceration the regime is perpetrating to leaders and activists of opposition parties including Bangladesh Nationalist Party and Bangladesh Jamaat Islam and their student organizations. All kinds of human rights violation including rapes and unlawful tortures are dragging Bangladesh into a failed state. Repression on opposition political leaders and activists may lead the country to a civil war, which the international world does not want to happen in Bangladesh – a country already beset with so many other problems like poverty and environmental disasters. Under the circumstances, we request all governments to put maximum pressures on the current Bangladeshi regime in order to prevent it from committing further political repression and human rights violations. It is obvious that the regime is heading to a one-party political system perhaps in the model of 1975. If the west turns a blind eye to the regime’s war on democracy for the fact that Awami League is known as a secular party and that it is torturing political leaders and activists belonging to an Islamic party, the people of Bangladesh will have to bear the brunt of all consequences.

Democracy Crisis in Bangladesh

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rule of law in Bangladesh and increase the volatility that already exist in the region.

A Bengali dissent living in Washington D.C. area, who asks not to be identified by name for fear of family reprisal, said that “If a great country like America continues to support this government’s repressive policies, it will alienate the majority of the Bangladeshi people who embrace pluralism, democracy and political change through peaceful means.” The coalition describes itself as a human rights and democracy advocacy campaign for the people of Bangladesh, and stated that the primary goal of the campaign is to call the American people and government to adopt new policies in support of democracy and human rights in Bangladesh. The group also calls on the United Nations Human Rights Council to launch an investigation into human right abuses in that nation.

5th amendment replaced 4th amendment

From Page 8

, which will be helpful for some enemy countries of Bangladesh to portray the country as a breeding place of fundamentalism and two, the amended constitution would repeal the provision of care taker government , which brought military backed Fakruddin Government to power in January 2007. After the passing of caretaker government bill, I wrote an article in the year 1996 in the Weekly Holiday , the title of which was “ Dances of Many Veils of Caretaker Government Bill ” The matters demands a long explanation and debate. The Writer is a journalist and former Legislative Fellow of the US Congress.

An Appeal to the International Community and Human Rights Organizations

By Shimul Chaudhury

I am writing this note with a heavy heart to draw your kind attention to the tyrannical rule that is turning my beloved country Bangladesh into a police state. The regime has waged an all-out war against democracy and against democratic institutions. Since it came to power in early 2009, it has been torturing leaders of opposition political parties and has been stifling dissent voices. A previous Awami League government, on 16 June 1975, had closed all newspapers except for four under government control and banned all other political groups. Similarly, the current regime has been thwarting opposition political activities including rallies and has shut down television channels like Channel-1 and Jamuna TV, and the second most widely-circulated vernacular newspaper Amar Desh.

Mr. Mahmudur Rahman, editor of the Amar Desh, has been arrested and severely tortured in police custody (on remand of several days) by unidentified people; while on remand he was blindfolded, stripped naked and tortured so brutally that he fainted and remained senseless for many hours. The people in Bangladesh do believe that Mr Rahman has been the target mainly for his newspaper columns where he talked about the circumstances in which about 60 army officers were killed on 25 February 2009 with alleged complicity of the government and also about the involvement of some very powerful persons, including PM Sheikh Hasina's son Mr Joy, in various financial irregularities.

On 27 June 2010 during a daylong political strike, the police burst into the house of Mr.

Mirza Abbas, former Minister and former Mayor of Dhaka, and beat up his family members including his very old mother and domestic maids. The entire country was astonished at the torture on Mr. Shahiduddin Choudhury Anny MP by ruling party men on the street of Dhaka in the presence of the police. More astonishing is that the police instead arrested Mr. Choudhury and put him on remand for 4 days and then sent him to prison. Many other opposition leaders including former foreign secretary and ambassador Mr Shamsheer Mobin Choudhury (who is partially disabled) were tortured on that day by the police and the regime's party men and then incarcerated.

On 29 June 2010, the regime arrested the three topmost senior leaders of Jamaat Islam on a blasphemy allegation, which the country people found not only unfounded and pointless but also ridiculous and laughable. Sensing the futility of the allegation, the regime rushed to sue them on some other flimsy cases; and now they are on successive remands (a euphemistic term for torture in police custody in the Bangladeshi political vernacular) of many days each. Two other central Jamaat leaders have recently been arrested despite the country's High Court rule that ordered the government not to arrest or harass them. One of them, Mr Kamaruzzaman told the court that the maltreatment he received while he was being tortured in police custody in the name of remand could not be expressed in words. While their sons and sons-in-law went to see them in police custody, the police arrested all of them and put them on remand.

Hundreds of other mid-level leaders have also been arrested and put on remand countrywide; around 5 thousands Jamaat and Shibir activists have been arrested from rallies and from their homes through nocturnal raids in the recent weeks. Arrests have continued unabated. All central leaders of Jamaat have been unlawfully barred from going abroad.

The police have not been allowing any meeting, procession, protest rally of Jamaat and Shibir in any place around the country including capital city Dhaka since February 2010. The Dhaka

Metropolitan Police Commissioner recently told Jamaat and Shibir people not to hold any protest rallies. How and where has the police officer got such authority to deprive people of their constitutional and human rights?

Awami League has systematically been brutal in its treatment of rival political parties. On 28 October 2006, its party men killed in broad day light nearly a dozen unarmed Jamaat-Shibir men on the streets of Dhaka. The whole world saw on television screens how Awami hooligans beat up to death

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Police brutally attacked a Jamaat activist during a peaceful demonstration.

DEMOCRACY CRISIS IN BANGLADESH

WASHINGTON, July 22, 2010 / PRNewswire

via COMTEX/ -- A coalition of faith leaders and human right activists (The Coalition for Freedom and Democracy in Bangladesh) is calling upon members of congress and the state department to express their disapproval of the series of arrests

and political crackdown against the political opposition to the Awami League (AL), the ruling political party in Bangladesh.

The AL came to power in December

2008 after two years of military rule. Bangladesh often referred to as a moderate

"democratic developing" country is the home of ten percent of the world Muslim population.

This coalition is concerned that the current Awami League government is suppressing free speech and the right of dissent in that nation. Over the last eighteen months, the AL has closed down newspapers and a television station, neutered an independent



judiciary, and unjustly arrested many opposition leaders and students. On June 29th, 2010, the Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General of the Bangladesh

Jamat Islami (BJI), the largest democratic

Islamic party and part of the political opposition, were arrested on what many human rights groups have categorized as frivolous charges.

A member of the coalition, Reverend Grayland

Hagler, stated that "our government must not betray the values of democracy and open governance for the people of Bangladesh. The support for autocratic regime

betrays our values as Americans and citizens of the world. As people of faith we must be advocates for global justice."

Also, the American Muslim Task Force for Civil Rights and Elections, a national Muslim umbrella organization, expressed concern that these crackdowns both jeopardize the

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5th amendment replaced 4th amendment-that produced BAKSAL, not 1972 constitution.

Moinuddin Naser : The Fifth Amendment to the constitution, (which has been changed and modified by the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, not repealed entirely,) in fact replaced the fourth amendment to the constitution (which switched the multiparty democratic system into one party BAKSAL rule). Indeed , the 1972 constitution was replaced by the fourth amendment to the constitution which was adopted within five minutes of its introduction, by the then Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. And through this amendment , Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman became President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman . The fifth amendment retained the Presidential System of the government which was inherited from the Fourth Amendment. But after the constitution's seventh amendment, 11th amendment and 13th amendment the part of the fifth amendment related to multiparty democratic system became redundant. The fifth amendment however promulgated through martial law proclamation, while the other amendments were adopted through constitution amendment bill introduced in parliament. .That is the major demerit of 5th amendment. But to repeal BAKSAL, there was no alternative. So the fifth amendment was not touched until it fulfilled its mission. As such the Supreme Court's ruling regarding the rescinding of fifth amendment to the constitution demands more comprehensive elucidation., not in terms of rhetoric, but in terms of substantive changes of the constitution.

To the utter surprise of the constitutional experts the 'Bangladeshi Nationalism' as envisaged in the fifth amendment has been retained by the Supreme Court , while the article related to political parties' regulation allowing the religion based party to do

politics as was incorporated in the fifth amendment to the constitution has been repealed and replaced by the article as was inscribed in the 1972 constitution. However the seventh amendment to the constitution made Islam, State Religion. But it is a matter of great conflict that in one hand the Supreme Court gave verdict to rescind the religion based politics, on the other hand it has just kept its eyes closed regarding making 'Islam State religion.'

The constitution amendment committee however has been given power to amend the constitution what the government said, "in compatible with the contemporary situation"

The matter demands a through review.

If the Bangladeshi Nationalism is retained by the constitution, whether can it be called rescinding of fifth amendment? Not at all. Who asked Supreme Court to retain that part? Once Bhavani Sen Gupta an Indian scholar, who helped working out water treaty between the Dev Gowda government of India and Awami League government of Bangladesh, said in an interview with this correspondent that Bangladesh should be developed on the basis of Bangladeshi Nationalism. The Supreme Court restored the preamble of the 1972 constitution, but remained silent about Bismillah, which was inserted during Fifth Amendment. So the confusion is deep seeded and that is greater than what we think.

Out of all the debates two things are clear to me that the government specifically mentioned about. One , whether the amended constitution would ban the religion based political party, forcing the hundreds of thousands of religion based party cadres to go underground

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