

TRAVESTY OF JUSTICE IN BANGLADESH

**August 21 grenade attack case:
Conspiracy against Tarique Rahman**



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Conspiracy against Tarique Rahman**

A detailed report by

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the assistance of Bangladesh based journalist **Shatt-El-Arab**

January 10, 2018.

“The judiciary has been held hostage.”

Justice Surendra Kuman Sinha

Incumbent Chief Justice of Bangladesh

August 21 grenade attack case: conspiracy against Tarique Rahman

Mr Tarique Rahman, the senior Vice-Chairperson of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party -BNP, is currently facing a trial in absentia for his alleged involvement of the attack on Sheikh Hasina, the then Leader of the opposition, on August 21, 2004.

This paper examines how the police, judiciary, State machinery and most notably Awami League Government play their role to falsely implicate Tarique Rahman with the case, which is creating a classic example of judicial farce in Bangladesh.

1 The August 21 attack

The August 21, 2004, attack on Sheikh Hasina, the then opposition leader by some vested quarter, is a gruesome event in the political history of Bangladesh. But to understand the motive, target and the consequences of the attack, it is a necessity to have a look back how it happened.

1.1 Background

Back in 2004, the Awami League was in the opposition, and BNP led alliance was in the government. The Awami League declared to usurp the BNP government by April 30 of 2004 and called for a series a demonstration to topple the BNP Government.

This is widely known as ‘Jalil’s Trump Card,’ as the then General Secretary of Awami League, Abdul Jalil used to say, “*We will play the trump card in due time. We cannot reveal the contents of the trump card before the time comes.*” He proclaimed the time is the last week of April 2004.

The much-hyped trump card, however, fell flat. Awami League failed to dislodge the BNP government led by Begum Khaleda Zia.¹



published on Daily Prothom Alo says, a rally of Awami League will be held at the ‘Muktangon’ from 3 PM onward

¹ Jalil still sticks to 'trump card', archive.thedailystar.net/2004/04/27/d40427011515.htm

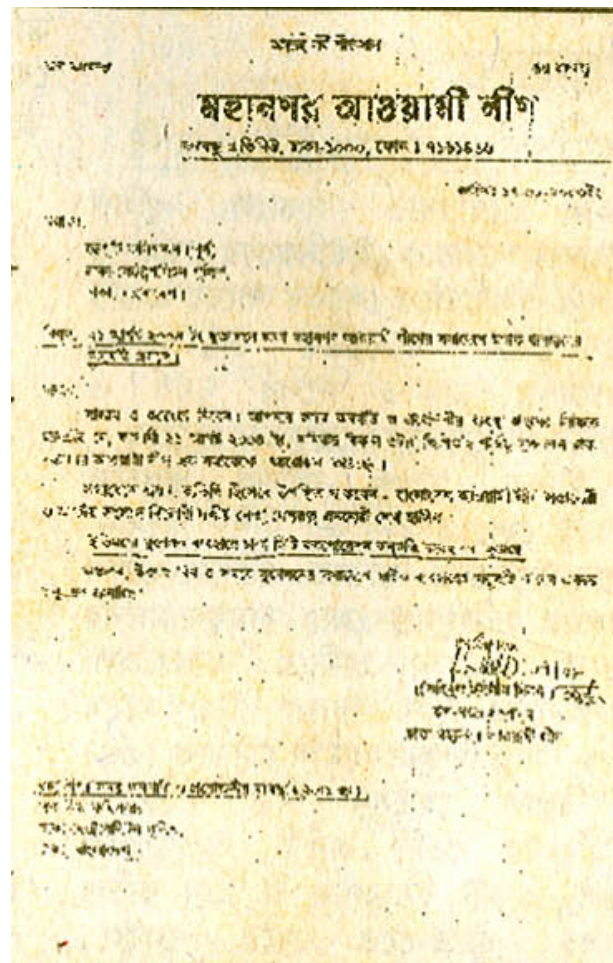
1.2 Venue

After the complete failure, Awami League went to a visible hibernation only to come back again in July 2004 with a couple of demonstration program against the government.

As a part of their regular demonstrations, on 14 August 2004, the Dhaka Metropolitan Awami League sought to use 'Muktangon,' a popular gathering place for demonstration in the capital, for a political rally on August 21, 2004.

On behalf of Awami League, an application was submitted to Dhaka Metropolitan Police (The application on the pad of Dhaka Metropolitan Awami League is attached with the paper), as well as to the Dhaka City Corporation.

The permission to use 'Muktangon' as the venue of the program was given promptly, and from the Awami League office, it was made confirm that a rally would be held at 'Muktangon' on August 21 of 2004.



Dhaka Metropolitan Awami League's application to use 'Muktangon' as the venue for August 21 rally of 2004

1.3 Sudden change of the venue immediate before the rally

All on a sudden, immediate before the scheduled time, the Awami League and the then leader of the opposition changed the venue of the said meeting and shifted in front of the party's central office at Bongobondu Avenue without notifying the Dhaka Metropolitan Police. Despite sudden change of venue, the law-enforcing agency

rushed to Bangobondhu Avenue to ensure the security of the meeting as well as Sheikh Hasina, who had been attending as the chief guest.

Why this change of venue at a crucial moment took place is still unanswered by the top leadership of Awami League. Many alleged the change paved the way to a tragic incident. It is worthy to mention that after the incident on August 21, 2004, all sections of the people condemned the attack. At the same time question was raised as to why the meeting was shifted from Muktangon to Bangabandhu Avenue in the last minute.

The then Member of Parliament Abdul Kader Siddique (Bir Uttam), a renowned freedom fighter, holder of the honorary “Bongo Bir” award, and the President of a Political party namely Krishok Sromik Janata League, in his speech in the Parliament on September 14, 2004, raised the question and made query as to why the place of the meeting was suddenly changed and shifted to a new place.

In an interview with renowned writer and columnist of India, namely Kuldeep Nayar, Sheikh Hasina accused Bangladesh Army for the grenade attacks in her meeting. The said interview was published at the daily Dawn in Pakistan on September 21, 2004.

Mufti Hannan in his confessional statement claimed that they were planning for the attack at Bangabandhu Avenue and from their Badda home, they started for Bangabandhu Avenue, where the venue was shifted at the very last moment. So, if the venue of the rally was not changed, the attackers did not have the opportunity to attack the rally.

1.3 As it happened

An Awami League rally was in progress at the Bangabandhu Avenue, and it was around 5.15pm at the fag end of the rally when Sheikh Hasina, the then opposition leader, started her speech from the top of an open truck.²

Suddenly apocalypse happened as one after another 13 grenades rained down the buildings around and blasted with perilous effects. At least 23 persons met the most excruciating death and hundreds of others maimed. AL's women's affairs secretary

² Minutes of MASSACRE, www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/minutes-massacre-130075

Ivy Rahman met the most brutal death one could imagine. Her legs were blown off from below her waist, and she sat like a statue in deep shock. A hundred others lay like her, some dead and some alive that nobody could differentiate.

A human-shield was built around Sheikh Hasina by Mohammad Hanif, late Dhaka City mayor, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Squadron Leader (retd.) Mamun and Nazib Ahmed.

Soon after the attack, Sheikh Hasina's security staff Maj (retd) Shoyeb Mohammad Tariquallah along with the people who built the human shield started approaching to personal vehicle of Sheikh Hasina. Major Mamun ran to the vehicle and opened its left door. Hasina huddled inside it. Nazib, Tarique, Shoyeb, Mamun and Maya followed.

As driver Abdul Matin started the vehicle, **it came under gun attack. Two bullets hit the left window**, by which Hasina was sitting.³

Undeterred, Matin speed away, but the assailants pursued the vehicle and attacked it from behind as it reached near Purnima restaurant, creating a large hole in the rear window. The front and rear wheels on the left side got punctured by bullets. Still, the vehicle moved a while, took a left turn to Zero Point and sped away.

Matin drove straight to Dowel Chattar via Nawab Abdul Gani Road and then took the road in front of the Central Shaheed Minar. The vehicle reached Nilkhet intersection through Jagannath Hall, Palashi intersection and Azimpur.

From Nilkhet intersection, the vehicle took a left turn and reached the BDR Gate, leaving New Market and Bangladesh-Kuwait Maitree Hall behind. It went directly through the BDR gate in Jigatola and then reached Sudha Sadan on Road-5 of Dhanmondi.

1.4 Violent protests by the AL

The AL and its allies enforced two-day countrywide strike, popularly known as hartal, protesting the attack that crippled the country on August 24 and August 25. Rail links collapsed during the strike.

³ Minutes of MASSACRE, www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/minutes-massacre-130075

2 Investigation

The following day of attack, i.e. on August 22, 2004, one Sub-Inspector of Motijheel Police Station of Dhaka Metropolitan Police lodged a First Information Report (FIR) with the Motijheel Police Station being case number 97 accusing “unknown” persons.

On August 26 the government announced that it would seek help of Interpol and FBI to investigate the carnage. At the same time, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) took over the charge of the investigation.

On August 29, due to the prompt communication from the government, led by Begum Khaleda Zia, the Interpol responded within a few days, and Interpol experts arrived in Dhaka, scanned carnage, scene and collected information from local investigators.⁴

FBI agents also arrived to probe the grenade attack on September 01, 2004.

Mr Joseph Cofer Black, coordinator, counter-terrorism of the US State Department arrived on 5 September and met Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and AL leader Sheikh Hasina.

On September 9 in 2004, a team from Interpol came to Bangladesh to investigate the attack. They talked with the investigation officer (IO) of the grenade attack case and the high officials from CID. They also visited the spot on Bangabandhu Avenue, collected evidence and examined video footage.

Fredy Brad Ford, a member of the Interpol, submitted a report on November 15, 2004.

In the report, he said, “*There were some shootings around the vehicle [of Hasina], more than ten rounds perhaps. The window on her side was shot twice and the back window five times. The vehicle was also struck by grenade pellets.*”⁵

A judicial inquiry commission was also formed to investigate the attack. The commission, claimed in its report to have identified the perpetrators of the carnage, but the head of the commission Mr Justice Joynul Abedin declined to disclose their identities, he hinted at the involvement of foreign forces apart from the local ones on October 2, 2004.⁶

⁴ AUG 21 BLACK DAY, www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/aug-21-black-day-130129

⁵ Interpol found evidence of shots fired at her car, <http://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/crime/2014/08/20/interpol-found-evidence-of-shots-fired-at-her-car/>

⁶ AUG 21 BLACK DAY, www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/aug-21-black-day-130129

The CID does not go for further investigation. Rather, it keeps wasting time by proceeding with the farcical investigation through the years of 2005 and 2006. The CID officials prepare for submitting the charge sheet on the basis of their investigation.⁷

The investigation of the case was conducted by as many as 5 (five) police officers, Detective Branch (DB), Criminal Investigation Department (CID) from the year 2004 to 2007. It needs to be mentioned that during the investigation of the case by the 3rd and 4th investigation officers accused Joj Miah, Shofiqul Islam Shofiq, Shariof Ahmed Alam, Abul Hashem confessed under Section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898.

3 A new conspiracy

On January 11, 2007, an army-backed caretaker government took charge of the country usurping a constitutional caretaker government led by President, which was according to Sheikh Hasina the ‘result’ of their agitation against the BNP government. The government was highly hostile, volatile and vindictive towards BNP leaders, in particular, Mr Tarique Rahman.

One of the first steps taken by the army-backed government was to arrest Tarique Rahman, the then Senior Joint Secretary General of BNP on March 7, 2007.

On March 15, 2007, Sheikh Hasina was allowed to leave for the USA to see her family members there without any bar. Hasina told reporters at the airport while leaving Bangladesh – *“The caretaker government [the army backed] is an outcome of the Awami League-led alliance’s movement.”*⁸

Subsequently, the political office of the Chairperson of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party - BNP, which was known as Hawa Bhaban, was raided on March 23, 2007, by joint forces. The joint forces seized the documents and CDs from the second and third floors of the secretariat.⁹

⁷ AUG 21 BLACK DAY, www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/aug-21-black-day-130129

⁸ It’s 1/11 amnesia, www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/it’s-1/11-amnesia-1752

⁹ Joint forces search Hawa Bhaban, <https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2007/03/23/joint-forces-search-hawa-bhaban>

During the caretaker government backed by the army, joint forces brutally tortured Mr Tarique Rahman while he was in police custody in the name of police remand. He was tortured to confess crimes that he had never committed.

However, the 5th investigating officer took charge on August 22, 2007, and submitted his report commonly known as Police Report on June 09, 2008 accusing 22 persons including Abdus Salam Pintu, his brothers Moulana Tajuddin and Moulana Liton, HUJI boss Mufti Hannan, his brother Mafizur Rahman, Moulana Abu Taher, Sharif Shahidul Islam, Moulana Abu Sayeed alias Dr. Abu Zafar, Mufti Moin alias Abu Zandal, Abul Kalam Bulbul, Jahangir Alam, Arif Hasan Sumon, Jewel, Hossain Ahmed, Anisul Mursalin and his brother Mahibul Muttakin, Iqbal, Moulana Abu Bakar, Moulana Liton alias Jubayer, Uzzal alias Ratan, Rafiqul Islam Sabuj and Khalilur Rahman under Sections 324/ 326/ 120-Kha/ 109/ 307/ 302/ 34 of the Penal Code, 1860 and under Sections 3/ 4 / 6 of the Explosive Substances Act, 1908 (as amended in 2002).

The police report was submitted on the basis of confessional statement of HUJI boss Mufti Hannan, who was on police remand for 77 days to confess his guilt in 21 August carnage.

That at the time of submitting the said Police Report, the country was going through a state of emergency and ran by an army-backed caretaker government, which was extremely hostile towards the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and its leaders particularly Tarique Rahman. It is pertinent to mention that, in the said Police Report Tarique Rahman was not implicated, as there was no link or evidence found against him. The government did not leave a single stone unturned to indict Tarique Rahman with malicious incidents but failed as no evidence was found.

Court framed charges against the 22 accused on October 29, 2008. Sixty one prosecution witnesses examined and were cross-examined by the defence. None of the witnesses made any allegation against Tareq Rahman, Lutfozzaman Babur, Harris Chawdhury and others (who were made accused in the supplementary charge sheet).

4 The conspiracy renewed

After the controversial general election which was held on 29 December 2008, the Awami League came into power in 2009 headed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The government appointed a new Special Public Prosecutor to conduct the case, who filed an application on

June 25, 2009, before the Tribunal praying for further investigation. On August 03, 2009, the Tribunal allowed the application and passed an order for re-investigation of the case by appointing a new investigation officer. The Tribunal further ordered the authority concerned to submit the Police Report within two months.

As per the order of the Tribunal, the Government appointed Abdul Kahar Akanda to be the 6th investigation officer of the case on August 12, 2009. It needs to be mentioned at this stage that **Abdul Kahar Akanda was on retirement at the time of his appointment. It is necessary to mention here that he wanted a nomination from the Awami League to participate in the parliamentary elections held in 2008.**

This very special appointment triggered the question of his loyalty towards the Government formed by Sheikh Hasina followed by the then State Minister for the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Ministry giving a public speech on June 13, 2011, stating that ***Tarique Rahman will be implicated in the case and charges will be brought against him.*** The speech was delivered by the Minister during the pendency of the investigation. That statement was published in various newspapers in Bangladesh.

Mr Akanda submitted a supplementary Police Report on July 02, 2011, implicating Tarique Rahman as one of the co-accused. In his report, he relied on the 2nd confessional statement made by co-accused Mufti Abdul Hannan on April 07, 2011. The said Police Report stated that *Mufti Abdul Hannan met Tarique Rahman in the early year of 2004 at Tarique Rahman's office along with an MP. The co-accused Mufti Abdul Hannan alleged that Tarique Rahman gave him hope to assist of his activities in the grenade attack.*

4.1 Who is Investigation Officer Abdul Kahar Akand?

Abdul Kahar Akhand is considered as a politically biased figure in Criminal Investigation Department of Police who is extremely loyal to the ideology of Awami League. Therefore, he was assigned to investigate the Sheikh Hasina's father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's murder case.

The Awami League loyalist lost his job in 2002 after the BNP-led alliance assumed power in October 2001 for incompetence. He got his job back in January 2009 after Awami League assumed power.

Abdul Kahar Akhand, who was called back to duty to incorporate Awami League's agenda was the investigation officer of the sensational BDR Mutiny case; while

investigating he neglected his duties and failed to do his job properly as an Investigating Officer.¹⁰

While giving the verdict on BDR Mutiny case, the court on November 5, 2013, ordered for punitive departmental actions to be taken against CID Special Superintendent Abdul Kahar Akhanda for conducting the incomplete probe.¹¹

Kahar Akhand was assigned to investigate the August 21 grenade attack case on 12 August 2009 with a mala fide intention. Since he was sacked during the BNP government, therefore, his investigation was driven by taking revenge against the BNP leaders and ministers.

Political position, age save them from gallows

« PAGE 1 COLUMN 6

mutiny - he organised and brought out processions at gates no 1 and 5 of the Pilkhana headquarters.

The processions chanted slogans such as "BDR, Janata bhai bhai," (the BDR soldiers and the people are brothers), said the court that handed down death sentences to 151 former members of the paramilitary border security force for killing 57 army officers and 17 civilians during the two-day mutiny.

"One of his [Torab's] associates said the BDR men held clandestine meetings at his residence. The BDR men also contacted Pintu before the mutiny. He instigated the rebel soldiers to bring out processions inside the BDR headquarters," the court said in its judgment.

The prosecution proved that both of them were involved with the conspiracy. But considering their political profile and old age, they had been given life term sentences instead death, the court said.

The court in its judgment on November 5, however, ordered for punitive departmental actions to be taken against CID Special Superintendent Abdul Kahar Akhand, investigation officer in the BDR carnage case, for conduct-

ing incomplete probe.

Judge Md Akhtaruzzaman of the Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court also linked chief public prosecutor Anisul Huq and his deputy Mosharraf Hossain Kajal with the incomplete investigation.

Anisul Huq is now the law minister of the Awami League-led government. Kajal was one of the prosecutors of the Bangabandhu murder case as well.

"The investigator could not extract [any other] information from Torab apart from the confessional statement [that Torab had given]. He also told the court that none of the witnesses gave deposition against him. If nobody gave deposition, then why did he charge him [Torab]?" the judgment said.

The court suspected that the investigator did not record any witness account against Torab out of bias. The judgment against Torab was delivered on the basis of the confessional statement.

Meanwhile, for Pintu, the court took two witness accounts into consideration. The court also said Pintu was a feared person, especially among witnesses, because of his power and influence in his area. •

Court order on departmental action against Abdul Kahar Akhand documented on Dhaka Tribune February 24, 2014 edition

4.2 Supplementary Police Report

After 23 months of so-called investigation, Abdul Kahar Akhand submitted a supplementary police report accusing 30 more individuals, including politicians, senior officials of civil and military intelligence and law enforcement agencies on July 3, 2011.

The supplementary police report includes opposition leaders like Tarique Rahman, Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, Lutfozzaman Babar and Harris Chowdhury.

¹⁰ BDR mutiny: Loopholes should be removed, www.weeklyholiday.net/homepage/pages/UserHome.aspx?ID=4&date=11/21/2014

¹¹ Political position, age save them from gallows, www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2014/02/24/political-position-age-save-them-from-gallows/

The police report was submitted on the sole basis of the 2nd statement provided by Mufti Hannan under coercion. This study includes the details of the torture methods used on him for the statement.

4.3 Mufti Hannan's statement

Mufti Hannan recorded a confessional statement at the court in 2011. His statement is the sole basis of implicating Mr Tarique Rahman in the case.

The excerpts from the second statement HUJI-B leader and the prime accused of August 21 case Mufti Hannan is given below for a further understanding of the case.

I, Mawlana Mufti Abdul Hannan Munshi, Mawlana Abdus Salam, Mawlana Abdur Rauf, Mawlana Tajuddin and Kashmiri citizen Abdul Mazed Butt held a meeting in 2004 in Mohammadpur Satmasjid road area, where we made a plan to kill Sheikh Hasina and other Awami League leaders. Tazuddin took the responsibility of collecting grenades and said his brother deputy minister Abdus Salam Pintu and the then state minister for Home Affairs Lutfuzzaman Babar would help us. We also decided to made contact with Tarique Rahman.

I am not able to recall the exact date or time but the next day Muradnagar MP Kaikobad (Kazi Shah Mofazzal Hossain Kaikobad) took us to Hawa Bhaban, where he introduced us to Tarique Zia and Haris Chowdhury. As we sought their help for our operation, Tarique Zia assured us all kinds of help in this regard.

In August (cannot recall the date), 2004, we got to learn about Awami League rally in Muktangan, Dhaka in protest of Sylhet grenade attack. We decided to carry out the attack on Sheikh Hasina and other Awami League leaders there. We again decided to meet Tarique Zia to implement our plan. Me, Mawlana Abu Tahel, Sheikh Farid, Mawlana Tazuddin, Mawlana Rashid went to Hawa Bhaban.

I saw Haris Chowdhury, Lutfuzzaman Babar, Jamaat leader Mujahid, Brigadier Rezzakul Haider (then director general of Directorate General of Forces Intelligence - DGFI), Brigadier Abdur Rahim (then director general of National Security Intelligence - NSI). Tarique Zia came a bit later. They informed Tarique about their plan to attack Awami league leaders, including Sheikh Hasina, and

sought their help. Then the BNP policymakers assured them all kinds of help from the administration.

During the meeting, Tarique told them not to go to Hawa Bhaban anymore. He told Mufti and his accompanies to maintain contact with Babar and Pintu, and continue their activities regarding the attack, added the statement.

The HUJI leader said, later he along with Ahsan Ullah Kazal and Mawlana Abu Taher went to Pintu's official residence on August 18. There they saw Pintu, Babar, Mawlana Tazuddin, Arif commissioner and Hanif Paribahan owner Mohammad Hanif. Pintu and Babar said to them that Arif and Hanif would provide them all the help they need and all kind of security would be given to them (HUJI activists).

On August 20, Mufti Moin alias Abu Jandal and Ahsan Ullah Kazal collected 15 grenades and Taka 20,000 from Pintu's house and took those to our Badda house. On August 21, 2004, as part of our plan, we carried out grenade attacks in front of Awami League office (Bangabandhu Avenue).

4.4 Indictment of Tarique Rahman

The court indicted Tarique Rahman along with PMO official Haris Chowdhury, former state minister Lutfuzzaman Babor, former cabinet minister Ali Ahsan Mujahid, and as many as 30 officials who had worked in different capacities during BNP Government by virtue of the supplementary charge-sheet.

5 Unbearable torture on Mufti Hannan

In the history of humanity, the case of Mufti Abdul Hannan Munshi alias Mufti Hannan could be written for surviving four hundred and ten days under severe torture in the remand home.

Bangladesh law enforcement agencies along with the court, remanded Mufti Hannan for four hundred and ten days (410 days) to extract one name from his tongue: Tarique Rahman. He was only spared from the torture after he finally signed a paper and recorded a statement citing Tarique Rahman as one of the accused of the August 21 attack on Sheikh Hasina.¹²

¹² Hannan forced to 'confess', www.thedailystar.net/news-detail-218710

Details of the torture he had to bear can be found in a petition filed by his counsel to the court. The statement read:¹³

To
Speedy Trial Tribunal no 1
Dhaka
Reference: Speedy Trial Case no 29/11
Mothijheel PS Case no 97(8) 04

Subject: Withdrawal petition of Recorded Confessional statement under rule 164
dated 07/04/2011

Sir,

I, the undersigned, Mufti Abdul Hannan Munshi, son of Late Munshi Nur Mohammad, Village Kotalipara, District Gopalganj, humbly submit that I do not know anything about the above-mentioned case. I was not accused in this case neither was I arrested in this case.

I was first arrested on 01/10/2005 on suspicion of being involved with the simultaneous bomb explosions all over the country that occurred on 17th August 2005. Based on this allegation, I was taken on remand by RAB and kept in the Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC). I was shown arrested in 10 cases. During the period of remand, I was subjected to physical torture. At the end of the remand period, no evidence could be found on the ten cases, and I was given relief from this case. Subsequently, I was transferred to Dhaka Central Jail.

On 11/10/2006, I was again taken on remand to the JIC for further 77 days. After about eleven months, towards the end of 2007, I was taken back to the JIC cell from Sylhet jail. There I was taken straight to the torture cell on the second floor. The RAB officers present there received me with a flower garland.

They asked me if I had any idea why I have been brought there. When I replied in the negative, they mocked me and said I had brought here for giving a confessional statement on my involvement in the grenade attack in the Awami League meeting on

¹³ BNP rejoinder, our reply, archive.thedailystar.net/newDesign/cache/cached-news-details-268452.html

21st August 2004. I was told by one officer that I must sign a prepared statement. If I refused to comply, I will be ruthlessly tortured and may even be killed. They said I would not have to say anything but only sign a prepared statement.

Next day, I was brought to the torture cell from the court, and I was told that I might have to sign the statement that night or the following morning.

When I told them that I know nothing about the grenade attack incident, the officers present began to beat me up mercilessly.

I was stripped naked and electric shock was given on my genital, ears, nose and tongue. The officers also continued to beat me endlessly with sticks and rods. They forcibly pulled out nine of my toenails. Pins were nailed and cigarette lighter was used on the exposed and wounded toes. Further pain was inflicted when they used stones to crush my severely damaged feet. My face and other parts of my body were exposed to 1000 watts electric bulb. The scars of that are still visible. In addition, during questioning, I was blindfolded and hung upside down.

On many occasions, I fainted. Torture would be resumed as soon as I regained my sense. They would often place a towel on my face and nose and throw chilli powder mixed hot and cold water. On many occasions, like ancient days, they would tie a brick to my private part. Torture would reach extreme levels when they would cut my skin using broken glass, and crude force would be used to tear my beard. I would be put on a very velocity rotating electric chair.

This type of physical and mental torture would put to shame even the barbaric age. When I had become totally delirious and disoriented, I was told that I would be made a State approver.

On 1/11/2007, I was produced in the court before a magistrate in a half-conscious state under Police and RAB guard. The Investigation Officer of the case was also present.

When the magistrate asked me about the August 21st grenade attack, I barely managed to inform the magistrate that I know nothing about

“I was stripped naked and electric shock was given on my genital, ears, nose and tongue. The officers also continued to beat me endlessly with sticks and rods.”

Mufti Hannan

Convict of 21 August Grenade Attack Case

it and hence I am not in a position to say anything about it. At this stage, the Investigation Officer informed the magistrate that as I was unwell and not in a position to talk, the magistrate should read from the prepared statement and record it as the statement of the accused. The magistrate did as advised by the Investigation Officer. When I was produced before the magistrate the time was midnight or just after that.

When I expressed my unwillingness to sign the prepared statement, the Investigation Officer cited my broken finger as the cause for me not being able to sign the statement. At this stage, a gentleman sitting next to the Magistrate took my injured hand and forced me to sign the statement. All this while, I was lying on the floor.

Records will show that at the time of the proceedings of the trial, I had prayed to the court for withdrawal of that so-called confessional statement.

On 03/08/ 2009, after submission of a fresh investigation report till submission of fresh charge sheet, I was taken on remand for long period of time, for a total of about two hundred days. During this period, I was not only tortured but also offered lucrative incentives in return for cooperation. Before recording the second confessional statement on 04/04/2011, I was brought to Dhaka Central Jail from Kashimpur jail around 11 o' clock at night. At the Jail gate, when I refused to sign a piece of paper given to me by jail super Touhidur Rahman, he hurled verbal abuse at me and even threatened me with death.

Next day that is on 05/04/2011 jail super, accompanied by deputy jailor came to me in cell no 6, room 6 around 7.30 AM. The jail super once again asked me to sign the same piece of paper. When I once again refused to do so, the jail super again threatened me with death.

The same evening, I was transferred to Sylhet jail, where I arrived on the morning of 6th April. But on 7th April 2011, I was returned to Dhaka jail. On reaching the jail gate around evening, CID official Fazlul Karim (Kabir), along with some other CID personnel took me in their vehicle and produced me before the Dhaka court. No jail official accompanied us at this time. In the court premises, I was kept waiting in a room meant for lawyers for some time. From there, Fazlul Kabir took me to the Magistrate's office.

AHMADIYYA MOSQUE ATTACK

Mufti Hannan on 5-day remand in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,
Khulna

Banned Harkat-ul-Jihad (Huji) kingpin Mufti Abdul Hannan has been taken on a five-day remand for interrogation in connection with the case recorded with Khulna Sadar police station on October 9, 1999 for bomb attack on Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat mosque at Nirala in the city.

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) Md Barekuzzaman yesterday granted the remand after Mufti Hannan was taken there amid tight security in and around the court at around 11:30am.

Investigation officer (IO) of the case Inspector Khandaker Miraj Billah of Khulna zonal office of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) had prayed for seven days' remand for the leader of the banned Islamist outfit.

Hannan was brought to Khulna District Jail from Kashimpur Jail at 8:50pm on Sunday.

Seven people were killed and 41 others injured, six of them seriously, in bomb attack at the time of Jumma prayers on October 8 in 1999 at Nirala Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat mosque.

The case recorded with Khulna Sadar police station on the following day was later transferred to CID as police failed to reveal real motive behind the bomb attack and arrest anyone in this connection.

Inspector Rawshan Ali of CID who was made first investigation officer of this case submitted final report to the court on November 23 in 2001.

The case was, however, revived on January 18 this year as prayed through a petition to the CMM's court by CID Inspector Khandaker Miraj Billah, the present IO.

"Mufti Abdul Hannan is still accused in 58 criminal cases recorded with different police stations of the country. The cases include the one recorded in connection with planting a 76kg bomb in an attempt to kill Sheikh Hasina who was then leader of the opposition in parliament," said Khulna Jail Superintendent Md Alam Khan.

When taken to the dock yesterday, Mufti Hannan protested granting of the remand prayer, saying, "I am already facing death penalty in a case. So, there is no need to torture me anymore in the name of remand."

Mufti Hannan on December 27, 2010, at the court claimed before the magistrate that he has been being tortured brutally in the name of remand and pleaded not to send him for remand again.

officials would ask me to say that prior to the

When I asked the Magistrate the reason for my presence in his office, he told me that I have brought here to record my evidence on the 21st August grenade attack. I was totally surprised by this.

At this time, Fazlul Kabir and Mr. Abdul Kahar Akhand of CID, who was already present in the room, handed over a piece of paper to the Magistrate, which they claimed to be my confessional statement.

The names of Tarique Zia (Rahman), Harris Chowdhury, Pintu and Babar, among others were mentioned in that so called confessional statement. When I refused to sign the so-called statement, I was told that I will be put to death in the prison.

Around 11 PM, the magistrate, in the presence of Kahar Akhand asked me to sign some blank pieces of paper, which I refused. I was then returned to Dhaka jail.

I was taken on remand on different charges, where Kahar Akhand and others would often blind fold and torture me. They would take me to different places and at times hand me over to RAB. These RAB

August 21st grenade attack, I had met Tarique Rahman, Harris Chowdhury, Abdus Salam Pintu in Hawa Bhaban and that Salam Pintu had provided the grenades and money for the attack. If I refused to do that, I would be killed.

Since my arrest, I had to suffer more than four hundred days of remand during which I was subjected to inhuman physical and mental torture. As a result of this, my vision has been badly affected and I also suffer from memory loss.

I was not involved with the 21st August grenade attack in any way. I have never been to Hawa Bhaban nor have I ever met Tarique Rahman, Harris Chowdhury or Mr. Babar. I do not know Mr. Pintu nor have I ever visited his house. I have never met any of the other accused.

On 27th September, 2011, I, voluntarily and in full knowledge, hereby sign this withdrawal petition in the court, as prepared by my appointed lawyer, having found it to be correct.

6 Clouds of mystery

So far, the attack of August 21 has been a mystery. The statement of Mufti Hannan had many loopholes; we would discuss those in the following part.

Besides, the statement in many cases has differed with the other indicted suspects of the crime.

6.1 A different statement by Maulana Abu Bakar

The Rapid Action Battalion on November 6 of 2014 arrested Maulana Abu Bakar Siddique alias Hafez Selim Hawlader, 35, a top leader of the banned Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HUJI) and also an accused in the August 21 grenade attack case.

This is to mention that, according to the first confessional statement of Mufti Hannan, this Abu Bakar Siddique was among the attackers on August 21, his name was mentioned in the first charge-sheet of the case and also survived in the second charge-sheet.

মৃত্যুদণ্ডপ্রাপ্ত জঙ্গি আবু বকর খেজার ওলামা লীগের ব্যানারে আ.লীগের সমাবেশে যায় হুজি জঙ্গিরা?

নিজস্ব প্রতিবেদক

রমনার বটমুন্ডে বোমা হামলা মামলায় মৃত্যুদণ্ডপ্রাপ্ত ও ২১ আগস্ট খেজার হামলা মামলার অভিযুক্ত আসামি আবু বকর সিদ্দিক ওরফে হাফেজ সেলিম হাওলাদারকে (৩৫) খেজার করেছে র্যাব।

গতকাল বৃহস্পতিবার র্যাবের সদর দপ্তরে সংবাদ সম্মেলন করে র্যাবের আইন ও গণমাধ্যম শাখার পরিচালক মুফতি মাহমুদ খান বলেন, আবু বকরকে বুধবার রাত আড়াইটার দিকে র্যাব-১০-এর একটি দল ঢাকার কেরানীগঞ্জ থেকে খেজার করে। বকর নিষিদ্ধ জঙ্গি সংগঠন হরকাতুল জিহাদের (হুজি) সদস্য। তিনি ২০০৪ সালের ২১ আগস্টের হামলায় খেজার ছুড়ে মেরেছিলেন। দুবার আফগানিস্তানে গিয়ে প্রশিক্ষণও নিয়েছেন।

২০০৮ সালে আদালতে সিআইডি'র দেওয়া অভিযোগপত্র অনুযায়ীও, ২১ আগস্ট হামলার ঘটনায় যে কয়েকজন খেজার নিষ্পেক্ষ করেছিলেন, তাদের একজন আবু বকর।

গতকাল দুপুরে র্যাব হেফাজতে থাকা আবু বকর সাংবাদিকদের বলেন, তিনি ও হুজির আরেক সদস্য আহসান উল্লাহ কাজলসহ আরও কয়েকজন ২১ আগস্ট খেজার হামলার আগে আওয়ামী ওলামা লীগের ব্যানারে নিয়ে 'জয় বাংলা', 'জয় বঙ্গবন্ধু' স্লোগান দিয়ে শেখ হাসিনার সমাবেশে গেছেন। তিনি দাবি করেন, ২০০৪ সালের ২১ আগস্ট সকালে তার পূর্বপরিচিত হুজির নেতা কাজল তাকে ফোন করে 'প্রোগ্রাম আছে' বলে জানিয়ে ঢাকায় আসতে বলেন। তখন তিনি কিশোরগঞ্জে একটি মাদ্রাসায় শিক্ষকতা করতেন। তিনি ঈশা খাঁ পরিবহনে সকাল ১০টার দিকে



পর দণ্ডপ্রাপ্ত ১১শে আ.লীগের সিদ্দিক

রওনা দেন। সাড়ে ১২টার দিকে গুলিস্তানে নামেন।

আবু বকর বলেন, ঢাকা পৌছানোর পর তাকে দুপুরে খাওয়ান হুজি নেতা কাজল। বিভিন্নজনের সঙ্গে পরিচয় করিয়ে দেন। এরপর প্রেসক্লাবে গিয়ে তারা আসরের নামাজ পড়েন। সেখানে ওলামা লীগের সভাপতি আখতার হোসেন বুখারি ও গাজীপুরের জয়দেবপুরের একটি মসজিদের ইমামসহ ৪০-৫০ জন টুপি পরিহিত লোক ছিলেন। এরপর তারা সবাই ওলামা লীগের ব্যানারে মিছিল নিয়ে 'জয় বাংলা, জয় বঙ্গবন্ধু', 'শেখ হাসিনা এগিয়ে যাও, আমরা আছি তোমার সাথে' ইত্যাদি স্লোগান দিয়ে বঙ্গবন্ধু এভিনিউ'র দিকে যান। সেখানে যখন পৌছান তখন আওয়ামী লীগের তৎকালীন সাধারণ সম্পাদক আব্দুল জলিল বক্তব্য দিচ্ছিলেন। এরপর শেখ হাসিনা বক্তব্য দেন। কিছুক্ষণ পর বিকট শব্দে বিস্ফোরণ হয়। এরপর আবু বকর দৌড় দিয়ে বায়তুল মোকাররম মসজিদে যান। সেখানে মাগরিবের নামাজ পড়ে কিশোরগঞ্জে চলে যান।

তবে হুজি নেতা মুফতি হামানসহ অন্য আসামিদের জবানবন্দী ও সিআইডি'র দেওয়া অভিযোগপত্র অনুযায়ী, ২১ আগস্ট সকালে রাজধানীর বাড়ডায় কাজলের বাসায় হামলায় অংশগ্রহণকারী সবাই একত্র হন। তাদের মধ্যে আবু বকরও ছিলেন। ওই বাসায় তারা দুপুরের খাবার খান। তারপর কয়েক ভাগে ভাগ হয়ে হামলাস্থলের দিকে রওনা হন।

কেবল ২১ আগস্ট খেজার হামলা মামলায় নয়, আবু বকর ২০০১ সালের ১৪ এপ্রিল রমনা বটমুন্ডে বোমা হামলার ঘটনায় জড়িত এরপর পৃষ্ঠা ২১ কলাম ২

A Daily Prothom Alo article on the statement of Maulana Abu Bakar

In the confessional statement and the charge-sheet of CID, Mufti Hannan allegedly said that all the attackers before leaving for the attack met at a house located in Badda of the capital and cross-checked their plan, including Maulana Abu Bakar Siddique on August 21.

Interestingly, in the first confessional statement, Mufti Hannan claimed Abu Bakar had his lunch with Ahsanullah Kajal and others at the Badda home.

Before RAB and the media, Maulana Abu Bakar Siddique admitted that he was at the August 21 rally.

He claimed that he came to Dhaka from Kishoreganj around 12:30 PM on that day completely unaware of the alleged plot.

He detailed his entire day in front of the media. He claimed that he was then a teacher of a madrasah in Kishoreganj and he used to know HUJI leader Ahsanullah Kajal after meeting him at Baitul Muqarram Mosque in 2003.

On August 21, 2004, he was asked by Kajal to come to Dhaka for a program. He left Kishoreganj by 10 AM in an Isa Khan Paribahan bus. He reached Dhaka by 12.30 PM and was dropped by the bus at Gulistan area.

And after reaching Dhaka, one of the attackers Kajal called him and asked to join him in front of the Jatiya Press Club, where they had lunch together.

On the contrary to the statement of Mufti Hannan, Maulana Abu Bakar Siddique claimed straight before the media of the country that Kajal introduced him to the then president of Awami Olama League (a religious wing of Awami League) Maulana Akhter Hossain Bukhari. They offered Asar prayers together at the Jatiya Press Club

mosque.¹⁴ He also saw 40-50 activists of Awami Olama League, a pro-Awami League religious group, and he met with an imam from a mosque of Gazipur.

Death row convict Huji man held

FROM PAGE 1

and was paraded before the media at the Rab headquarters in the capital's Uttara yesterday.

At the press briefing, Rab Media Wing Director Commander Mufti Mahmud Khan said Siddique was a close associate of top Huji leader Mufti Abdul Hannan, another death row convict in the Ramna carnage case.

Siddique had been living in Keraniganj after hiding his identity, added the Rab official.

A Dhaka court in June handed the death penalty to eight Huji operatives,

including Hannan and Siddique, and life term imprisonment to six others in the Ramna carnage case. The carnage took place during the Pahela Baishakh celebrations in 2001.

During primary interrogation, Siddique told the elite force that he got acquainted with Mufti Hannan in 1992 when he was a student at Cawhardanga Hafizia Madrasa at Tungipara in Gopalganj.

"He [Hannan] used to visit the madrasa frequently and give lectures on his experience with Afghan militants. He used to motivate the students and

teachers," Siddique told the briefing.

Rab official Mahmud said thus motivated by Hannan, Siddique actively took part in both the Ramna carnage and the 21 August grenade attack in 2004.

The gruesome attack killed 24 people and injured scores.

Siddique protested his innocence in both the cases. He, however, said he was at the August 21 rally. He came to Dhaka from Kishoreganj around 12:30pm that day after a certain Kajal Ahmed called him for an "important job".

He claimed Kajal then introduced him with the then president of Awami

Olama League. They offered Asar prayers together at the Jatiya Press Club mosque. He then marched towards the rally venue in a procession of the Olama League.

"I sat about five feet away from the barricade. Suddenly I heard huge blasts. I ran away and took shelter at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque. After offering Maghrib prayers there I headed for Kishoreganj," said Siddique.

He said he got introduced with Kajal, a Huji leader, at Baitul Mukarram mosque earlier that year.

Contradictory statement by Abu Bakar Siddique, one of the associates of Mufti Hannan according to Police, on August 21 attack

He then marched towards the rally venue in a procession of the Awami Olama League chanting slogans, "*Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu*" and "*Sheikh Hasina, go ahead, we are with you*".

There in the demonstration, he sat about five feet away from the barricade. Suddenly he heard huge blasts and started running away only to take shelter at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque. After offering Maghrib prayers there, he headed for Kishoreganj.

6.2 Statement changes behind closed doors

On May 13, 2010, Mufti Hannan shouted the names of two Awami League leaders- AL's Religious Affairs Secretary Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Gopalganj District Unit's Joint General Secretary Mahbub Ali Khan- before a crowd of journalists who were waiting at the premises of Gopalganj district court and alleged that duo was the mastermind behind the attempted murder of Sheikh Hasina at Kotalipara in 2000. This news was published on May 14, 2010 edition of The Daily Star.¹⁵

However, Mufti Hannan's confessional statement changed when it was recorded by the magistrate under section 164. He, in the confessional statement, admitted of

¹⁴ Death row convict Huji man held, www.thedailystar.net/death-row-convict-huji-man-held-49146

¹⁵ 2 AL leaders involved, www.thedailystar.net/news-detail-138377

planning the attack on Sheikh Hasina at Kotalipara in 2000, probably due to the torture on Mufti Hannan.

The level of torture on him reached to such an extent that Mufti Hannan on December 27, 2010, said, *“I am already facing death penalty in a case. So, there is no need to torture me anymore in the name of remand.”* (See The Daily Star December 28, 2010, edition)

6.3 Hurried execution

The indictment of Tarique Rahman stands solely on the confessional statement of Mufti Hannan that was recorded during the rule of present Awami League Government.

2 AL leaders involved

Hannan tells court about Kotalipara plot to kill Hasina

A CORRESPONDENT, Gopalganj

Mufti Abdul Hannan, the prime accused in the attempted murder of Sheikh Hasina in Kotalipara, Gopalganj, yesterday named two AL leaders for their alleged involvement in the plot.

The two leaders are AL's Religious Affairs Secretary Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Gopalganj District unit's Joint General Secretary Mahbub Ali Khan.

“Quiz the two leaders for truth. They know everything,” Hannan was shouting at journalists who were waiting outside



SEE PAGE 7 COL 4

Mufti Hannan claimed the Awami League leaders' involvement with a murder attempt on Sheikh Hasina in 2000 that gave her a political boost back in 2000

mouth that challenges the previous one, which implicated Mr Tarique Rahman in the case.

In this circumstance in order to prove the guilt of Mr Tarique Rahman the presence of Mufti Hannan was necessary for testifying him. Interestingly, the government in a hurried procedure has already executed death sentence of Mufti Hannan on April 12, 2017, in the Sylhet Grenade attack case.

This is an unprecedented action by the government at this stage of the trial. With the death of Mufti Hannan, many mysterious have been buried and may never be solved

The only reason to execute Mufti Hannan is to ensure that no other statement can never come out of his

Since Mufti Abdul Hannan filed an application for retraction of his confessional statement, presumably if Mufti Hanna was alive, he would have given his true version during his testimony. That triggered the Government to kill Mufti Hannan judicially, which prompted the present Government to make guilt of Mr Tarique Rahman.

6.4 AL's own investigation differs from Mufti Hannan

Awami League's chief Sheikh Hasina, on June 13, 2005, held a press conference at her office. The press conference was called to provide a brief of the investigation report prepared by Awami League after an internal investigation into the August 21 grenade attack incident. The narrative provided by Sheikh Hasina is:

Prime Minister (Begum Khaleda Zia), her son and heir apparent Tarique Rahman, Home Minister of State Babar, Civil Aviation Minister of State Nassiruddin, and PMO Parliamentary Affairs Advisor S.Q. Chowdhury organised the attack by "at least 50 criminals" in cahoots with the police.

The attackers were given training at Dewanganj in Jamalpur, and prior to the attack, they held a series of meetings at Thanthonia Bazar in Bogra.

Four persons wearing veil offloaded a consignment of arms from a tinted jeep in Tarique's in law's residence at Dhanmondi on the night of August 20. The arms were used in the attack on the Awami League rally.

Police fired tear gas after the attack to provide cover for the fleeing assailants.

After the attack, the criminals, who were earlier given training at Dewanganj in Jamalpur, went for Singair in Natore where a petrol pump owner gave them shelter.¹⁶

Anyone with simple common sense can understand that from the very beginning Sheikh Hasina was trying to implicate Begum Khaleda Zia and Tarique Rahman with the gruesome attack of August 21, 2004.

Interestingly, this investigation report prepared by Awami League is completely contradictory from the one extracted by Mufti Hannan through coercion.

¹⁶ NEW ALLEGATIONS OF AL INVOLVEMENT IN THE AUGUST 21 GRENADE ATTACK,
https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/05DHAKA2798_a.html

7 Influencing the court in Awami League style

In Bangladesh, it is widely perceived that any judge or even justice who goes against the will of Awami League government led by Sheikh Hasina meet with dire consequences.

Seeing the scenario of the country, and the way Awami League influence the judiciary, the Chief Justice in an event commented “*We could not fully establish the rule of law yet. Not to mention India, Sri Lanka and Nepal that are far ahead.*”¹⁷

This example can prove the comment of Chief Justice of Bangladesh. However, subsequently, the Chief Justice Mr Sinha was compelled to leave the country and still he is in exile in Canada as a did not follow the dictation of the present Government in the famous Judgment of 16th amendment of the Constitution case.

7.1 Judge fells in hot water after acquitting Tarique Rahman

Mr Md. Motahar Hossain was a trial judge of a case of Mr Tarique Rahman. His only fault was that he acquitted Mr Tarique Rahman, the son of Begum Khaleda Zia and the Senior Vice-Chairperson of BNP from the so-called money laundering case that was filed by the Awami League government in order to malign him.¹⁸

In his verdict on Tarique Rahman’s involvement in a money laundering case filed by Anti-Corruption Commission on October 26, 2009, after Awami League take over power, the judge after perusing the documents, read:¹⁹

“As regards co-accused Mr Rahman, the trial court, based on an extensive appraisal of depositions of the Prosecution Witnesses, found Mr Rahman not guilty. The court forwarded the following reasons in acquitting Mr Rahman:

(i) Key Prosecution Witness No. 6 Khadiza Islam in her deposition did not implicate Mr Rahman in this case or link him to any offence. She did not state that Mr Rahman had ever demanded any money from her or had threatened

¹⁷ Rule of law not fully established, www.thedailystar.net/backpage/rule-law-not-fully-established-1399051

¹⁸ Tarique Rahman, son of Bangladesh Opposition leader Khaleda Zia, acquitted in money-laundering case, <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/tarique-rahman-son-of-bangladesh-opposition-leader-khaleda-zia-acquitted-in-money-laundering-case-541367>

¹⁹ Former judge Motahar flees to Malaysia, thedailynewnation.com/news/1096/former-judge-motahar-flees-to-malaysia.html

her to pay any money to convict Mamun or ever had promised to get her any work order;

(ii) Khadiza herself was the best and most competent witness on who had demanded money from her for getting her the work order, said the court. Being the best witness, Khadiza did not utter Mr Rahman's name even for once in her depositions or deposed to have received any demand or threat or promise to get her the work order;

(iii) Prosecution Witness No. 1, Mir Alimuzzaman, the investigation officer, in this case, stated in his Investigation Report that convict Mamun had demanded money from Khadiza for getting her the work order. He did not mention Mr Rahman's name in the Investigation Report but stated in his deposition in court that Mr Rahman had demanded bribe from Khadiza, which the court found to be a material self-contradiction; and

(iv) The Investigation Report contained that Mr Rahman had voluntarily disclosed about his possession and use of Supplementary International Gold Visa Card No. 4568-8170-1006-4122 issued against convict Mamun's bank account with City Bank, Singapore in a wealth statement he had submitted on 7 June 2007 to the Anti-Corruption Commission (the Commission) in response to a notice dated 19 May 2007 issued by the Commission calling for a statement on his wealth.

(v) Such disclosure, for the trial court, demonstrated that Mr Rahman had no intention to conceal his possession and use of the supplementary visa card and thus have made no attempt to make any concealment. Thus, absent any mens rea and non concealment on Mr Rahman's part, the trial court found him not guilty and acquitted him of the charge of money laundering."

Due to the verdict, the judge was compelled to leave the country to save his life and now he is exiled in Malaysia.

After the verdict was delivered, that acquitted Mr Tarique Rahman, on November 17, 2013, from the false charges of money laundering, with the government direction the Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) went after the judge.²⁰

An ACC team, after the verdict, launched a preliminary investigation against the so-called “discrepancies” in the wealth statement of the judge. They interrogated two stenographers of two separate Dhaka courts to get information on the judge's wealth. They are- Md Abul Hossain of Speedy Tribunal-4 and Nurul Islam Mollah of Special Judges Court in Dhaka.

The graft watchdog also summoned Judge Md Motahar Hossain's personal security Badal Dewan and driver Sohrab Hossain, but no irregularities were found.

However, this attitude of the government towards the judge set an example for all other judges of the country, and thereby gave a signal that if any judge goes against the will of the government, he or she has to face the same consequences as Mr Md. Motahar Hossain.

7.2 Justice Joynul faces wrath

Justice Joynul Abedin who headed the judicial enquiry into the grenade attack on an Awami League rally at Dhaka's Bangabandhu Avenue on August 21, 2004, was summoned by ACC to submit his wealth statement in 2010.²¹

The ACC initiated a probe into the wealth of Justice Joynul Abedin and a complaint about money laundering against him.

The ACC in July 2010 sent him a notice asking for an account of his wealth on suspicion that he had achieved assets beyond known sources.

Justice Joynul Abedin in his petition said that he had submitted his wealth statements twice to the commission on August 8, 2010, and November 3, 2010, as the commission asked for.

²⁰ Former judge Motahar flees to Malaysia, thedailynewnation.com/news/1096/former-judge-motahar-flees-to-malaysia.html

²¹ ACC notice on bank statement: SC upholds bail of former justice, www.thedailystar.net/city/anti-corruption-commission-acc-notice-on-bank-statement-supreme-court-upholds-bail-former-justice-1437949

On March 2 of the 2017 year, the ACC said in a letter to the Supreme Court that there is an allegation against Justice Abedin of sending money abroad illegally. The anti-graft agency asked the apex court to provide necessary documents on the matter, saying the matter needed to be investigated.

Even in parliament, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury raised the issue of Justice Abedin when the MPs were expressing their anger over the Supreme Court, a measure to subdue the court and judges.²²

The allegations brought against justice Joynul is politically motivated for his role as the head of judicial enquiry to the August 21 attack for not naming BNP with the attack as they required.

7.3 Chief Justice comes in the line of fire

“He was appointed by the president who is elected by lawmakers. He should have resigned from his post before making any comment on the election process of the women MPs or after delivering the verdict.”²³

- Sheikh Hasina, Awami League chief and Prime Minister

“The chief justice threatened Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina by citing the reference of a Pakistan court order that disqualified their Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. By doing this, the chief justice has violated his oath. Therefore, he has to resign from office.”²⁴

- Barrister Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, member secretary of Bangabandhu Awami Ainjibi Parishad

²² Ex-SC judge Justice Abedin gets bail after discussion in parliament, <https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2017/07/10/ex-sc-judge-justice-abedin-gets-bail-after-discussion-in-parliament>

²³ PM critical of CJ's remarks, www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/pm-critical-cjs-remarks-1452160

²⁴ AL leaders now calling for CJ to step down, www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/al-leaders-now-calling-cj-step-down-1452682

“The remarks you [chief justice] have made in the 16th constitutional amendment verdict against the country must be expunged, otherwise people will come forward.”²⁵

- Amir Hossain Amu, Industrialization Minister

“You don't like anything of Bangladesh; then you can either leave the country or get treatment in Hemayetpur.”²⁶

- Matia Chowdhury, Agriculture Minister

All these comments targeting the Chief Justice of Bangladesh of Bangladesh, Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha came after he along with six other justices, gave a verdict claiming the Sixteenth Amendment passed in the parliament is *illegal* and the parliament which is running Bangladesh, came through a non-participatory election, which devoid of moral rights to pass such an amendment. The judgment also levelled the Parliament as dysfunctional.

The sixteenth amendment of the parliament was passed to control the court by the parliament where the right to impeach any Justice was reserved to the parliament. Any judge could have been impeached if the parliament wanted him to be impeached.

In other words, the entire judiciary was literally taken to hostage where if a verdict goes against the ruling party, the ruling party had the power to impeach the justice who delivered the verdict.

The annulment of the amendment made the parliament furious and the leaders of Awami League started hurling abuse to the Chief Justice, only to prove that the assessment of the Supreme Court regarding the sixteenth amendment was absolutely correct!

²⁵ Expunge comments against country or face public wrath, Amu asks CJ, www.thedailystar.net/politics/16th-constitutional-amendment-verdict-expunge-comments-against-country-or-face-public-wrath-awami-league-industries-minister-amir-hossain-amu-asks-chief-justice-surendra-kumar-sinha-1453528

²⁶ Leave Bangladesh or get treated for mental problem: Minister Matia to chief justice, <https://bdnews24.com/politics/2017/08/27/leave-bangladesh-or-get-treated-for-mental-problem-minister-matia-to-chief-justice>

7.4 AL against independent judiciary

According to the famous Masdar Hossain Case verdict, the Judiciary must be separated from the executive branch of the government. This required the formation of Bangladesh Judicial Service Commission to recruit judges and independent disciplinary rules for lower-court judges.

On December 2, 1999, the Supreme Court, in the Mazdar Hossain case, had issued a seven-point directive, including formulating separate disciplinary rules, for the lower-court judges as per the constitutional provisions.

Though the Bangladesh Judicial Service Commission was established in 2007 after the army-backed caretaker government gave the Masdar Hossain Case verdict, the Awami League that arrived power after the government is yet to formulate disciplinary rules for lower-court judges as it would take away the authority to exert power over the lower-court judges from the government.

On May 7, 2015, the law ministry sent a draft of the rules, similar to the Government Servants (Discipline and Appeal) Rules 1985, to the Supreme Court.

On November 24, 2016, it gave the government one week to publish the gazette notification.

Later on, February 5, the court ordered the authorities concerned to issue the gazette notification by February 12.

On February 27, the court had given the government two weeks to publish the gazette notification, as it had failed to publish it in time.

On March 14, it extended the time by two weeks.

On April 4, the Supreme Court extended the deadline until May 8.

Later, on May 8, it gave one more week.

On May 15, the Supreme Court gave the government two more weeks to issue the gazette notification.²⁷

²⁷ Law ministry should not irritate court: SK Sinha,
www.theindependentbd.com/printversion/details/96940

However subsequently on December 11, 2017, the government finally issued the gazette notification, keeping the president's authority over the conduct of lower court judges.

In response to the gazette notification, the leading jurists and members of the civil society and political parties of Bangladesh stated, *the independence of the judiciary has been undermined and the separation of power has been violated the rules. They further stated, the lower courts have been made subordinate to the executive.*

7.5 Chief Justice forced to leave for his verdict

Mr. Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha, The Chief Justice of Bangladesh, for his verdict on Sixteenth Amendment case was forced to seek for a month of leave by the government on October 2, 2017.

After a long vacation of the court, on the very day, the court was set to start, but Surendra Kumar Sinha's letter with fake signature arrived at the office of President and Prime Minister at Dhaka.

Reports from Dhaka confirmed that the DGFI officials brandishing with guns went to the official residence of Chief Justice and gave him with three options, which included one-month sick leave and was asked to comply with their order.

A letter shown by the law minister suggest that the leave application itself was forged as the signature of Chief Justice did not match with the other signatures given by Mr Sinha in different verdicts the copy of those are also available on public domain.

However the day he left Bangladesh he told the journalist that he was not sick as the government claimed. He will be returning back to Bangladesh very soon. But still he is in abroad and the government claimed he has resigned, but no documents yet to be produced to prove that he accentually has resigned.

8 Questions those should not go unanswered

The August 21 grenade attack in no doubt is a heinous crime. But so far, the investigation of this mysterious attack has always been under political pressure.

8.1 Joj Miah also gave his statement under section 164

During the BNP led alliance, the CID was under pressure by Awami League and the international community to complete the investigation that led them to Joj Miah. One should not forget that Joj Miah also provided a confessional statement under section 164 as Mufti Hannan did. Even the intelligence agency like FBI was convinced with the story of Joj Miah and cleared it to be recorded in front of a magistrate.²⁸

If Joj Miah's statement under section-164 could come under scrutiny, why Mufti Hannan's statement would be considered as Biblical fact and cannot be questioned?

8.2 There was no inquiry into Mufti Hannan's torture allegations

Mufti Hannan through his counsel submitted a petition alleging serious torture that included stripping naked and giving electric shock on genital, ears, nose and tongue, beating endlessly with sticks and rods. Pulling out nine of his toenails, exposing face and other parts of my body to 1000 watts electric bulb.

He claimed that the scars of those were still visible on his body.

After reading all these, how can a court of a civilised society do not order at least an inquiry into the torture on Mufti Hannan only because the defence lawyer did not follow proper legal proceedings?

Can an independent judiciary system of a civilised nation allow four hundred and ten days of remand after the suspect alleges severe torture in remand?

8.3 Mufti Hannan planned for Bangabandhu Avenue, while the primary venue was at Muktangon

Mufti Hannan in the second confessional statement claimed that they knew the rally was scheduled to take place at the Muktangon of the capital. But his description both in first and second confessional statement regarding the August 21 attack depicts that

²⁸ Probe-influencing govt high-ups under scanner, www.thedailystar.net/news-detail-82232

they were planning for the attack and Bangabandhu Avenue and from their Badda home they started for Bangabandhu Avenue, where the venue was shifted at the very last moment.

Why Mufti Hannan, amid knowing that the rally would take place at Muktangon, planned the attack at Bangabandhu Avenue from the very beginning?

8.4 Mufti Hannan knew the venue had been changed

Only the Awami League high-up and their leaders knew that the venue would be shifted at Bangabandhu Avenue on August 20. And there is no mention of anyone saying Mufti Hannan, that the venue has been shifted in both confessions.

Who passed this crucial information to Mufti Hannan?

8.5 No mention of guns in the statements

In the entire statement of Mufti Hannan, the mention of grenades can be found and he claimed that they threw grenades only, but there is no mention of using any gun or bullet. But according to Nazib Ahmed, the cousin and security staff of Sheikh Hasina, a good number of bullets were shot at her SUV after the attack.

If both Nazib Ahmed's and Mufti Hannan's statements are true, who shot those bullets at Sheikh Hasina's SUV?

8.6 Mufti Hannan forgot his meeting with the son of Prime Minister!

In the first confessional statement of Mufti Hannan it did not include the name of Tarique Rahman, the son of Prime Minister then, even though an extremely hostile government extracted it to BNP and Tarique Rahman himself was in jail then. The army-backed caretaker government that was ruling the nation was on a witch-hunt to collect evidences against Tarique Rahman and his friends in the Hawa Bhaban and raided the building for several times.

Interestingly, it took him three long years to recall the incident of meeting the son of the Prime Minister at his office, and he could not remember the date. Because if he

says any specific date, it will be easy to track the schedule of Mr Tarique Rahman on that day, and proving him guilty will become impossible.

How Mufti Hannan and all his cohorts forgot such an incident of holding meetings with Tarique Rahman and other important ministers of the government?

8.7 Second statement technically disapproves the first one

In the first statement, Mufti Hannan claimed that it was Abdus Salam Pintu who approved the attack because of his personal grudge against Sheikh Hasina. Abdus Salam Pintu was a minister in charge of Gopalganj District, but he could not manage to go there because of Sheikh Hasina, the statement read.

According to the first statement, Abdus Salam Pintu's personal grudge and Mufti Hannan's longstanding wish to avenge the repression over Islamic scholars by Sheikh Hasina, that led them to plan the attack.

But the second statement contradicts the motive of the first statement, because, on that statement, that paved the way of accusing Tarique Rahman with the case, it is claimed that the government high-ups planned the attack to remove Sheikh Hasina from the politics.

Why the motive of August 21 attacks differs in the two separate statements by one person on the same attack?

8.8 Sheikh Hasina personally influencing the verdict

Sheikh Hasina, the self-styled Prime Minister of Bangladesh on August 21 of 2015 in a public rally said, "Khaleda Zia and her son were involved in the August- 21 grenade attack. There's no doubt about it."²⁹

Similarly, on August 23 of 2014, the Law Minister, who is the guardian of the courts in Bangladesh said, "The BNP government played an inactive role when 22 people

²⁹ Khaleda, Tarique involved: Hasina, www.theindependentbd.com/post/12651

were killed in the attack and this is ambiguous indeed. The incident, however, was not any regular event; it was surely a conspiracy.”³⁰

Such remarks on a subjudice matter, when the case involves a good number of political figures who are arch-rival to the government, undoubtedly creates pressure on the court and can be amounted to influencing the court orders.

As it has been discussed above, under this judiciary system judges cannot work independently. There are examples that the judges, including a former Justice had to face ACC when the verdict did not go in favour of Awami League.

Under this judiciary system where the Chief Justice can be forced to seek leave if his verdict does not serve the cause of the government.

How under this system Tarique Rahman will be able to get justice in the August 21 attack?

8.9 Mufti Hannan was arrested during BNP regime

Most interesting part of this entire thing is that, the prime accused of the case, Mufti Hannan was arrested on September 30 of 2005, which is during the BNP government period by an anti-terror force established by BNP and most surprisingly while the people, who are now being accused of evidence tampering, were in charge of the law enforcement agencies.

If Tarique Rahman and the other accused were in liaison with Mufti Hannan regarding this attack, why BNP government arrested him?

8.10 Defense could not avail the opportunity to cross-examine Sheikh Hasina's claims

Sheikh Hasina has been the centre of the entire case as the ‘so-called’ supplementary charge-sheet that was made-up by Abdul Kahar Akhand refers that the August 21 attack was to kill Sheikh Hasina. But unfortunately, the defence counsel was not provided with the opportunity to ask their queries to Sheikh Hasina regarding her

³⁰ PM's remark won't influence Aug 21 trial: Law minister, www.thedailystar.net/pm-s-remark-won-t-influence-aug-21-trial-law-minister-38343

continuous claim that it was Tarique Rahman who conspired the attack. The defence could not avail the procedure to cross-examine the hypothesis of Sheikh Hasina in this case. Most importantly, the defence could not get the chance to ask her the question, **why did she decide to change the venue of the rally on August 21, 2004, from Muktangon to Bongobondu Avenue**, without notifying the Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

What is the fear that kept Sheikh Hasina away from being cross-examined?

8.11 Awami League was after Tarique Rahman from the very beginning when there was no evidence.

From the very day of the attack, Awami League leaders, rank and file started claiming that it was Tarique Rahman and BNP leadership who carried out the attack on Sheikh Hasina on August 21 and presented conflicting conspiracy theories, as if it was planned that if anything happens bad the person to blame will always be Tarique Rahman. Awami League from the very beginning was blaming Tarique Rahman, even though there was no evidence found at that moment to implicate Mr Rahman.

Is it only to keep Tarique Rahman away of BNP's politics and end his career as a politician for only political gains?

9 The fault is not in the stars

The August 21 grenade attack on the top leadership of Awami League is condemnable from every point of view and BNP condemns it accordingly. The failure of Police and intelligence agencies to prevent and reach the bottom of the conspiracy hatched prior to this attack is cognizable.

Now coming to the point, let us take some time and analyse what happened after the attack.

9.1 Notable events:

- Begum Khaleda Zia wrote a letter to Sheikh Hasina to condole her and requested to go to her home for a visit. Sheikh Hasina rejected Begum Khaleda Zia's request

saying: “*anything could have happened when relatives of the killed were sitting all the time at my house.*”³¹

- CID was given the charge to investigate into the attack. They requested Awami League leaders for their statement. Awami League leaders, the witness of the incident, had refused to provide any statement. CID was left with no option but to rely on the scattered statements of others and some video footages they had managed to collect. Awami League’s refusal to cooperate led to some uncomfortable consequences.
- Sheikh Hasina herself provided a narrative claiming the involvement of Begum Khaleda Zia and Tarique Rahman with the attack.
- The first statement of Mufti Hannan and other confessions by HUI-B leaders during the army-backed government which was extremely hostile to BNP suggest that there was no involvement of BNP as a party.
- Awami League, after arriving in power, appoints a loyal CID official who has been mentioned as incompetent by the court for her ineligibility in investigating cases. After months of torture on Mufti Hannan, he managed to get some big names out of Mufti Hannan’s tongue including Tarique Rahman by 2011, four years after the first statement.
- Awami League chief and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina vows to punish Tarique Rahman, alleging that he was somehow involved with the attack in 2004.

9.2 Analyzing a murder case:

Please note that we are talking about a murder case, not a civil case or some political issues.

For any murder case, the most important points to reach any understanding regarding the matter are- the motive, the murder weapons, and the place of the murder. The most important thing is, all evidence needs to be proved ‘*beyond reasonable doubt*’.

9.2.1 Motive

The motive of the murder attempt of Sheikh Hasina was according to the first confessional statement of Mufti Hannan in 2008, the personal vendetta of Abdus

³¹ Kuldip Nayar: The blame game over plot to kill former PM goes on, gulfnews.com/news/uae/general/kuldip-nayar-the-blame-game-over-plot-to-kill-former-pm-goes-on-1.332149

Salam Pintu, the minister in charge of Gopalganj who was insulted by the local Awami League men due to a directive of Sheikh Hasina and was not allowed to enter into his own area because he supported BNP instead of Awami League.

Mufti Hannan, on the other hand, was annoyed by the repression of Islamic scholars by the Sheikh Hasina government.

According to the first statement, the common interest of Mufti Hannan and his men matched with the one of Abdus Salam Pintu that led them to attack.

While the motive of the attack according to the second confessional statement of Mufti Hannan in 2011 simply disapproves the one of the first statement. In the second statement, extracted from Mufti Hannan through coercion suggests that the attack was planned to remove Sheikh Hasina from the political scenario.

Right now, interestingly the trial is being processed on the basis of the two confessional statements that hold two different motives for the attack!

9.2.2 Murder weapon

According to both confessional statements, the attackers used 13 grenades during the attack. And there is no mention of providing any gun or bullets to the attackers. They did not even confess that they had used any gun during the attack.

Interestingly, the personal security staff and cousin of Sheikh Hasina insisted that the car that was carrying Sheikh Hasina came under gun attack right after the incident and created holes on the vehicle.

So far in the case and the confessions, there is no mention of from where these gunshots came. It is unclear till date, which weapons were used in the murder and the murder attempt of Sheikh Hasina.

9.2.3 Place of the murder

The investigation on the case left a significant loophole from the very beginning. It is still unclear who decided the venue to be changed only a few hours ago of the rally. There is no proper explanation from Awami League on why the venue was changed.

More to add, the most important part is that, according to Mufti Hannan's second statement, they knew that the venue for the attack in Muktangan. But interestingly

they planned the attack for Bangabandhu Avenue from the very beginning; they started for Bangabandhu Avenue instead of Muktangon on that day as well.

In the entire infestation and trial, no answer has been found to the question, who informed the alleged attackers regarding the sudden shift of the venue.

9.3 Analysis of points of law

As regards validity of inclusion of Tarique Rahman in the charge-sheet following confession of a co-accused, which has been subsequently retracted. Mufti Abdul Hannan has given two (2) back-to-back confessional statements dated November 01, 2007 and April 07, 2011 under Section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898. Nowhere in his 1st confessional statement has he ever implicated Mr Rahman to be involved in the grenade attacks. In fact, it is evident from the script of Form No.(M) 84 corresponding to the 1st confessional statement that Mufti Abdul Hannan has been induced to confess.

In his 2nd confessional statement given on April 07, 2011, Mufti Abdul Hannan stated that Tarique Rahman has given him hope to assist of his activities in relation to the grenade attacks, which is subsequently, followed by an application for retraction detailing how it was being obtained from him. That being said, the application for retraction has only been kept with the records. As a result, it can be argued that since the learned Tribunal has not disposed of the application for retraction, hence it can still be used as evidence with further corroboration.

As regards legality of obtaining the confessions and their probative value against Tarique Rahman, the confessional statements of Mufti Abdul Hannan are patently illegal due to reasons stated hereunder.

In the 1st confessional statement dated November 01, 2007, Mufti Abdul Hannan never implicated Tarique Rahman to be involved with grenade attacks. In fact, it is evident from the script of Form No.(M) 84 corresponding to the 1st confessional statement that Mufti Abdul Hannan has been induced to confess.

The law in relation to confession is clear and simple. It is a settled principle of law that all confessions should be free and voluntary. Only if it proceeds from remorse and a desire to make reparation for the crime, then it is admissible. However, if it flows from hope or fear, then it is inadmissible.

On the other hand, in his 2nd confessional statement, Mufti Abdul Hannan implicated Tarique Rahman to be involved with the grenade attacks, which was followed by an application for retraction detailing how it was being obtained from him. That being said, the said application for retraction has only been kept with the records. It is worthwhile to mention that almost all the applications for retraction never reach their finality before the conclusion of the trials. As such, it can be deemed that the application for retraction has been retracted.

Now, even if the application for retraction is deemed not to be retracted, it is still outright illegal in the eye of law as per judgment and order dated August 22, 2010, August 23, 2010, and August 24, 2010, passed by the Honorable High Court Division in Death Reference No.97 of 2007 heard analogously with Criminal Appeal Nos.6222 of 2007, 6296 of 2007, 6323 of 2007, Jail Appeal Nos.1244 of 2007, and 1245 of 2007. In the said judgment and order dated August 22, 2010, August 23, 2010, and August 24, 2010, the Honorable High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh on similar circumstance held that the 2nd confessional cannot be relied on due to the same being an afterthought statement. As a result, the 2nd confessional statement is inadmissible and all other proceedings initiated in light of the 2nd confessional statement are illegal and have no legal basis in the eye of law.

The sole basis of implicating Mr Tarique Rahman was the confessional statement of Mufti Abdul Hannan. Since Mufti Abdul Hannan already hanged to death subsequently by this present Government, therefore he cannot be testified anymore by the defence counsel as to whether he actually stated anything against Mr Tarique Rahman. In effect, no case lies against Mr Rahman and therefore allegations against Mr Rahman cannot be proved beyond reasonable doubt as Mufti Abdul Hannan cannot be testified as he is not alive anymore.

As regards the credibility of the investigation, the appointment of a retired officer to investigate the case is dubious. In addition, the statement of the then State Minister for the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Ministry given in a public speech on June 13, 2011, stating that Tarique Rahman will be implicated in the case and charges will be brought against him. During the pendency of the investigation makes it apparent that the investigation was not conducted in a neutral manner, which violated Regulation 54 of the Police Regulations Bengal, 1943. For convenience, Regulation 54 of the Police Regulations Bengal, 1943 is quoted below verbatim:

(a) An officer supervising the investigation of a criminal case should satisfy himself that—

- (i) the investigation is being pushed through without delay;
- (ii) the investigation is thorough, i.e., that clues are not overlooked or important lines of enquiry neglected;
- (iii) Investigating officers do not work mainly for confessions or rely too much on any that are made, and that they use no sort of pressure and offer no sort of inducement to obtain confessions;
- (iv) the subordinate police are working honestly;
- (v) the public are properly treated; and
- (vi) the prescribed procedure is followed.

(b) He shall on no account put pressure on investigating officers by injunctions to detect particular case or cases generally.

(c) The methods to be adopted by supervising officers are—

- (i) visits to the place of occurrence at various stages of the investigation and personal examination, if necessary, of witnesses;
- (ii) Careful scrutiny of case diaries and other papers connected with the investigation; and
- (iii) Examination of crime registers and other records at the police stations.

(d) When a supervising officer discovers mistakes or omissions on the part of an investigating officer, he should point them out to him and should not call for a written explanation unless it appears likely to be necessary to inflict punishment.

(e) A Superintendent, an Assistant or a Deputy Superintendent, and (for his own circle only) a Circle Inspector have power to order an officer attached to any police-station to investigate a case that, under section 156 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, should be investigated by the officer-in-charge of another police-station; but the power should be exercised sparingly and its exercise by

an officer subordinate to a Superintendent should at once be reported to the Superintendent.

Although Regulation 54(a)(iii) clearly states that the investigating officers do not work mainly for confessions or rely too much on any that are made, and that they use no sort of pressure and offer no sort of inducement to obtain confessions, but, in the case against Tarique Rahman the special investigation officer Abdul Kahar Akand (i.e. the 6th investigation officer) heavily relied on the confessional statement made by co-accused Mufti Abdul Hannan on April 07, 2011 (2nd confessional statement) in implicating Tarique Rahman in the case, which was nevertheless obtained by imposing inhumane degrading treatment as evidenced in the application for retraction dated September 27, 2011 filed by Mufti Abdul Hannan setting out the particulars in details on how he was being tortured to provide statement against Tarique Rahman. As a result, under no circumstances can it be said that the investigation was neutral or complied with the provision of Regulation 54(a)(iii) at all (as stated above).

As regards the probative value of the all the evidence, there is no direct evidence to implicate the Tarique Rahman in the grenade attacks case. It is not enough for the prosecution to simply rely on the 2nd confessional statement, which has been already retracted, in proving their case beyond reasonable doubt against Tarique Rahman. The case against Tarique Rahman severely lacks corroborative evidence and seems to be non-existent.

As regards the overall strengths and weakness of this case, the proceedings initiated against Tarique Rahman based on the 2nd confessional statement of Mufti Abdul Hannan is outright illegal and has no basis in the eye of law. Considering the entire evidence on record and the situation prevailing, the implication of Tarique Rahman in the grenade attacks case is politically motivated in order to victimise Tarique Rahman and Bangladesh Nationalist Party in politics.

It is pertinent to mention that, the present Government issued a red alert notice through Interpol against Mr Tarique Rahman. However, his lawyer had submitted an application before the Secretariat to the Commission for the control of Interpol in France. Subsequently, the authority of the Interpol withdrawn the red alert notice against Mr Tarique Rahman vide letter dated March 14, 2016 (*Ref. CCF/96/R272.15/c870.16*) as no evidence found against him as alleged by the Government of Bangladesh.

10 BNP in no way was involved

BNP as a party was totally unaware of the murder attempt of Sheikh Hasina on August 21 and had no stake in the attack. Amid allegations from Awami League, BNP shall always stand on this fact.

Awami League often say that, had Sheikh Hasina died on that day, BNP would have been the beneficiary of that. Begum Khaleda Zia appropriately binned this allegation in an interview with journalist Kuldip Nayar, where she said:

“Tell me what will I gain by killing her? I am doing well and in control of things. The country is peaceful. We have done a tremendous job in rehabilitating 40 million people who were affected by floods. Why should I do something that could upset everything?”³²

It is quite obvious that the death of Sheikh Hasina in such an attack with Begum Khaleda Zia administration in power, must have surely put things upside down for her, and would have cost her the power. So, there is no point of believing on such allegations from Awami League.

³² Kuldip Nayar: The blame game over plot to kill former PM goes on, gulfnews.com/news/uae/general/kuldip-nayar-the-blame-game-over-plot-to-kill-former-pm-goes-on-1.332149

