

An Overview of Political Criminality and Violence in Bangladesh

Iftekhhar Uddin Chowdhury⁽¹⁾

Introduction

The most alarming and contemporary issue among others in Bangladesh society is violence. There is no daily newspaper without highlighting the crime reports about killing, gun battle of police with terrorists and political activists; attack, assault and abduction of political leaders and followers by the opponents, factional clash between the groups or cadres of the same political parties, riotous flare up between the prisoners and wardens and also between trade union activists affiliated with different political parties and groups, mugging, smuggling, robbery, dacoity, burglary, abnormal demonstration of unruly examinees in the examination centres, occupation or damage of properties and building by force, kidnapping, illegal toll collection, piracy in the sea and many other organized crimes and so on. Though all crimes are neither reported nor recorded by police for

(1) Iftekhhar Uddin Chowdhury is a Professor of Sociology, University of Chittagong, Bangladesh. At present, he is holding a position of Visiting Professor in the Faculty of Law, Kobe Gakuin University, Japan.

various untold or unseen reasons, recent reports from different reliable agencies ensure that incidents of crime are on the tremendous rise to the worries of the people. It is evident from the everyday news items that like many other developing countries in the world, the crime problems particularly the political criminality and violence is rapidly increasing in Bangladesh. The experiences of many developed nations depict that in the process of societal transformation in terms of industrialization and urbanization, crime rates increase with the developmental status of the country which may be true to some extent in case of Bangladesh. But the fact is that most crimes in Bangladesh society are political in nature which generally occur whenever the government likes to use state laws, political power and authority to protect self interest and punish or detain opponents on one hand and the opposition gets crazy for gaining or regaining state power by any means on the other. Since independence, Bangladesh has been experiencing the scenario of political instability, represented by power struggles between the party in office and various political groups and unruly military in coups and countercoups. The great aspirations to achieve high status and wealth easily and quickly among the politicians, army and civil bureaucracy and their families as well made the crime situation of Bangladesh a heinous and disastrous one. The present paper attempts to delineate the nature and causes of the concurrent criminality and violence related to Bangladeshi politics and politicians.

Crime Scenario in Present Day Bangladesh

The data in relation to the crimes registered with the police as produced by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics is shown in Table 1,

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Table 1: Number of Criminal Cases Registered with Police

Type	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Dacoity	993	869	834	907	924
Robbery	1065	1114	1118	1399	1660
Burglary	5459	5105	4938	5110	5177
Theft	7186	6981	8652	8367	8924
Murder	2470	2291	2222	2588	2708
Rioting	6309	5240	5044	4827	5986
Others	48120	50361	52501	59733	67931
Total:	71602	71961	75309	82931	93310

Source: Statistical Pocketbook of Bangladesh 1997, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Statistics Division, Ministry of Planning, Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh, January 1998.

which highlights the types of crimes without any detailed mention. From the data, it is clear that the rate in crimes though shows little decrease in the cases of dacoity from 1.4% to 1.0%, burglary from 7.6% to 5.5%, and rioting from 8.8% to 6.4%, there is enormous increase in the crime rates which are 55.8% for robbery, 24% for theft, 9.6% and 41% for murder and others respectively during the period from 1992 to 1996.

According to a survey, conducted by Bureau of Human Rights Bangladesh (BHRB) ⁽²⁾ on the basis of reports published in different national dailies, more than eight people including a women were murdered a day in the country during the first 30 days in October, 2000. In terms of this survey report, a total of 245 people, 50 of them women were killed during the said period. Of them eleven were victims of mass beating, four killed in bomb blast, three killed after

(2) Bureau of Human Rights Bangladesh (BHRB) Survey Report published in Daily Independent, Dhaka, Bangladesh, October 31, 2000.

abduction and eighty one in other incidents. Among the fifty women, six were murdered for dowry, seven after rape, and thirteen after repression. Twenty four women died mysteriously during the period. Moreover, three people died in jail custody, two were killed by the law enforcing agencies and five died due to the negligence of physicians. Besides a total of 229 people were killed in road, rail and riverine accidents and some 3169 people received injuries throughout the country during the period under survey. The survey being conducted by the Institute of Democratic Rights, a human rights organization reports that at least 280 people were murdered across the country in October, 2000 as against 231 during the previous month.⁽³⁾ The survey report shows that eight people died in custody including 5 in jail and 3 in police custody during the month. In terms of survey report as conducted by Odhikar, a coalition for human rights, a total of 28 people became victims of political killings throughout the country during the month of October, 2000. They show that 716 people were injured in relation to clashes of different political parties and police arrested 225 political activists in the last month.⁽⁴⁾

Daily Star, a popular national daily in English version reports that at least 2294 people have been murdered in the first nine months in the year 2000, and according to police records, there have also been seven political killings and 259 death in riots in the same period.⁽⁵⁾

(3) Institute of Democratic Rights Survey Report published in Daily Independent, Dhaka, November 2, 2000.

(4) Odhikar, (a Coalition of Human Rights) Survey Report published in Daily Independent, November 1, 2000.

(5) Daily Star, November 3, 2000.

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Table 2: Number of Killings During January to September in 1999 and 2000.

Months	1999				2000			
	Total	Political	Non-political	Riot	Total	Political	Non-political	Riot
January	308	—	276	32	247	2	219	26
February	260	6	231	23	243	—	216	27
March	322	1	289	32	285	—	255	30
April	342	2	291	49	298	1	252	45
May	339	1	301	37	288	—	261	27
June	306	—	278	28	310	2	275	33
July	279	2	252	25	315	2	285	28
August	309	2	274	29	299	—	274	25
September	331	—	303	28	275	—	257	18

Source: Daily Star, National Daily, Dhaka, Bangladesh. November 3, 2000.

Last year, during the first nine months, the number of killings was 2814. In Dhaka Metropolitan City, 240 people were murdered from January to September, 2000 out of which 237 were non-political killings, one political while two became victims of rioting. A total of 220 people were killed during the first nine months of the previous year and of them 206 were non-political and two were political killings while 12 were killed in rioting. The highest number of 32 murders was recorded in the Dhaka Metropolitan City in August, 2000.

The monthly statistics of crimes as shown in Table 2 depict that the highest number of 315 murders took place in the month of July, 2000 against the highest number of 339 in May in the previous year. Of them 285 were killed for non-political reasons, two for political reasons and 28 in rioting this year against 301 for non-political, one for political rivalry and 37 in rioting in the year 1999. Another report

(6)

of Ain-O-Salish Kendra, a human rights organization shows a differ-

ent type of crime particularly in relation to women violence i. e., throwing acid to the women has become a vital issue in the context of crime in Bangladesh. According to their findings, as many as 590 women belonging to different age groups have become victims of acid attacks in last five years across the country while only 31 accused have so far been convicted in the cases filed under Women and Children (Prevention) Act, 2000. Out of the victims, nine have died. Women aged between 13 and 24 years are particularly vulnerable to acid attacks because of family dispute, refusal to get into a relationship or marriage, dowry, attempted rape, kidnapping and trafficking etc.

Social History of Bangladeshi Politics :

The political process, generally the objective of which is the creation and distribution of power and to underpin the manner in which governments are formed and run, and guides the relationship between the government, state institutions and the rest of the society is still in a jeopardised fashion in Bangladesh. Like many other countries of South Asia, the faith in the political system in Bangladesh is quite low with only 45% against two-thirds in Nepal and India. It is only 37% and 25% in Pakistan and Sri Lanka respectively. In Pakistan and Bangladesh, which have suffered bouts of military rule, where democratic traditions are yet to be fully established, and where there are serious problems of political governance, a large majority of people appear to have low confidence in the system. Political leaders are viewed with suspicion and a mere 3% people feel that political

(6) Ain-O-Salish Kendra (a Human Rights Organization) Report published in Daily Star, Dhaka, November 1, 2000.

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leaders are honest in Pakistan compared to 17% in Nepal and India, and 24% in Bangladesh. In a recent program organized by Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) on 28th Constitution Day in Bangladesh, the president of the country Shahabuddin Ahmed blamed the political leaders and parties in his speech for evading the issues after going to power what they speak very loudly before election. He mentioned that the salient feature of the Constitution laid in the fundamental aim of the state which was to realize an exploitation free society through democratic process. According to the president, within three years of its adoption the Constitution was drastically amended curtailing much of the democratic rights, while subsequent amendment altered some of the basic characteristics of the Constitution. The president of the country indeed indicated the violation of Constitution and the nature of political system that developed throughout the period since independence of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh, a country of about 140 million people in a area of 144,000 sq km, emerged as a nation state in 1971 after a long historic struggle of national liberation from 1947 and a bloody war of independence against Pakistani military rulers for a period from March to December 1971 with a number of killings of more than one million people in Bangladesh by Pakistani army during the entire nine

(7) Human Development in South Asia 1999 - The Crisis of Governance, The Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre, The University Press Limited: Dhaka. p.56.

(8) Speech by Shahabuddin Ahmed, President of People's Republic of Bangladesh on 28th Constitution Day, organized by Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), Dhaka. November 4, 2000.

(9) months. As an eastern wing of Pakistan, Bangladesh suffered severe domination under internal colonialism in almost all the sectors of socio-political and economic development. The independent and sovereign republic of Bangladesh, on behalf of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the leader of the liberation struggle and the president of Awami league, the political party that achieved absolute majority in the parliamentary election of Pakistan in 1970, was first proclaimed in a radio message on March 25, 1971 from a captured station in Chittagong. It followed the establishment of a provisional government by Awami League leaders in Mujibnagar, a bordering place of India on 17th April as Sheikh Mujib as its president while he was taken under military custody in Pakistan. On December 16, 1971 the Pakistani army surrendered to joint liberation forces including Indian army and Mukti Bahini (Freedom Fighters) of Bangladesh. After return of Mujib from Pakistan jail on January 10, 1972, he assumed the title of president and then prime minister just two days later. The Constitution of the country was adopted on November 4, 1972 with four basic principles such as: nationalism, socialism, secularism and democracy. The first national election was held in 1973 in which Awami League won 282 seats out of 289 directly contested seats against the political parties like Jatiya Samajtantric Dal (JSD), Bangladesh National Awami Party (NAP) under the leadership of Professor Muzaffar Ahmed, Bangladesh National Awami Party (NAP) under the leadership of Moulana Bhashani and so on.

The Constitution of Bangladesh was amended in January 1975 to

(9) Anthony Mascarenhas, Bangladesh: A Legacy of Blood.

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make Mujib president for five years and to give him full executive powers which followed the axing of democracy through abolishing the opposition political parties and parliamentary system in the next month. Mujib along with his most family members was murdered on August 15, 1975 by a few unruly army officers who made Khondakar Mustaque Ahmed the president of the country. He has been a long time colleague and close associate of Mujib. The assassination of Mujib was followed by absolutely abnormal political situation through coups and counter coups by the ambitious and unruly army officers by which Ziaur Rahman came to the power and formed Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). Again after the assassination of Zia, the then army chief General Ershad captured state power and ruled the country under the banner of a political party named Jatiya party formed by him for more than eight years. The rise of fundamentalist politics in the name of Islam was generated by both the army backed political parties as originally initiated by former president and army chief Zia. The politics of Islamic fundamentalists was banned after independence by the government for their misdeeds and brutal activities against the Bengali people during the liberation war.⁽¹⁰⁾

Criminalization of Politics in Bangladesh

The criminalization process starts in politics with the mobilization of resources to control of the state institutions, laws, decision making process, means of direct physical violence i. e., police, army, or

(10) Iftekhhar Uddin Chowdhury, Islamization and Fundamentalism: The Crisis of Women Development in Bangladesh, Journal of Dowra Mondai, Osaka City University, Japan. No. 19, March 1997. pp. 83-101.

any other legal forces; economic and ideological power and so on. In fact the structuring of power largely depends on the basic differentiation in terms of unequal power between authorities and subjects viz. who make and try to implement decisions affecting the polity as a whole and who are affected but do not do such strategic decisions.⁽¹¹⁾ The criminality should be addressed as Austin T. Turk says as the complex product of more or less deliberate stereotyping (favorable as well as unfavorable) in conjunction with combination of resister characteristics and modes of resistance, interacting with variations in control measures used by authorities. However, in order to analyze the process of criminality in politics in Bangladesh we have to point out the background that traced back in the first national election after the independence in 1973.⁽¹²⁾

Following the vigorous devastation and destruction all over the country made by Pakistani army in 1971, the then ruling party as well as the government indeed faced insurmountable problems for the reconstruction of everything. Moreover, the conflict between the military officers who joined the liberation war and thus favored by government on one hand and the repatriates from Pakistan who were denied promotion or choice positions on the other made the situation crucial in the army bureaucracy. Same thing happened in the civil bureaucracy too. Due to the nepotism to the party men or relatives by the leaders, rampant corruption among civil and army

(11) Ralf Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society*, Stanford, Ca: Standford University Press, 1959. pp.290-295.

(12) Austin T. Turk, *Political Criminality - The Defiance and Defense of Authority*, London: SAGE Publications, 1982, p.111.

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bureaucracy, hoarding, black marketing, smuggling etc. and deterioration of law and order put the country in serious socio-economic and political crisis. Taking the opportunity, the division of student and youth front of the ruling party led the formation of radical political party named Jatiya Samajtantric Dal (JSD) with the hot slogan of scientific socialism which created a lot of political unrest and tension throughout the country. This JSD was very much successful at that time to attract the young people who were frustrated with the socio-political and economic situation of the country and could not find suitable employment or compensation or reward for joining the liberation war and their sacrifice as well for direct fighting with Pakistani army. They were able to attract many of the growing young with their chanted slogans and ideology of the party. As such 1973 election was very important for both the ruling party and newly organized party namely JSD to demonstrate their popularity among the citizens of the country. Though the ruling party won as mentioned earlier 282 out of 289 directly contested seats, there were serious complaints from the opponents regarding rigging, poll occupying, oppression of oppositions, using police and para military like Rakkhi Bahini for arresting and harassing the opposition activists etc.

In order to perpetuate the authority, the amendment of Constitution in January 1975 to proclaim Bangladesh a one party state which required all civilian government personnel to join the party was a big jolt to the political arena in the country. It not only ceased the fundamental rights of the citizens by axing democracy as enumerated in the Constitution, but also transformed the state power to personal dictatorship. This blunder made by the ruling party along with the

problems concerned with national and international conspiracy particularly of Pakistan, unruly demonstration of the opposition and also so called leftist party's terrorism and killings of the leaders of ruling party specially in the northern zone triggered the process of criminalization in politics in the country. The process was institutionalized by the army bureaucracy after the assassination of Sheikh Mujib, the Father of the Nation on August 15, 1975. The most interesting thing is that just after a day of the assassination, President Bhutto of Pakistan announced that his country would immediately recognize the new regime and offered a gift of 50,000 tons of rice in addition to a generous gift of clothing.

The Assassination of the Father of the Nation

The first and foremost important incident that institutionalized the process of criminalization in Bangladesh is the assassination of Mujib, the Father of the Nation and capture state power by force by a few unruly army officers. It was not revolution or any lawful means to change government but a mere misadventure by some disgruntled army men which ultimately liked to change the history of Bangladesh. The incident not only made the Constitution ineffective and snatched voting rights of the people, but also initiated killing of many innocent armed forces, arresting politicians, banning politics, depriving and exploiting the nation in many ways. The killers were rehabilitated properly by the army leaders and their trial was stopped by incorporating Indemnity Bill in the Constitution. However, the victory in the election in 1996 and formation of democratic government by Awami League, the party as was organized by the Father of the Nation and led the whole liberation struggle including independ-

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ence war could arrange the trial of the killers. The killers were convicted and fifteen of them sentenced to death out of whom eleven are absconding in abroad. The hearing of the death reference of this murder trial case is going on and the implementation of the conviction is awaiting for the endorsement by High Court.

Killing of Four National Leaders in the Jail

Another heinous criminality in the political history of Bangladesh is the killing of four national leaders inside the jail while they were under arrest by the then self-proclaimed President Khondaker Mustaque Ahmed on November 4, 1975. Following an counter coup by another army General on November 3, 1975, the killers of the Father of the Nation killed those leaders namely, Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, AHM Quamruzzaman and Captain Munsur Ali, who led the country's independence war when Mujib was detained by the Pakistani rulers. They were sent to jail after the gruesome killing of the Father of the Nation along with most of his family members on August 15, 1975. A case was filed with the Lalbagh Police Station a day after the killing, but the post 1975 governments did not take any initiative to try the killers till 1996. According to Sheikh Hasina, daughter of the Father of the Nation and president of Awami League and also present prime minister of People's Republic of Bangladesh said in a recent public meeting organized to mark the jail killing day that the killers killed them with the aim of undoing the spirit of the war of liberation and destroy the sacrifices of millions who had made the independence a reality.⁽¹⁴⁾

(13) Daily Independent, a national daily of Bangladesh, Dhaka, November 3, 2000.

The Emergence of Fundamentalism in Bangladesh

The emergence of fundamentalism in Bangladesh has to be considered in the process of criminalization in politics. It has also a deep historical roots which started with the formation of Jamaat-I-Islami party under the leadership of Mawlana Moududi of Punjab in 1941. Standing on the opposite to the modernist approach of muslim community, Moududi tried to build his vision of a ideal society and the place of true muslim within it. In looking at him, Charles J. Adams says, we shall be considering of the typical religious stances to be seen among our muslim contemporaries, and that not in India and Pakistan alone, but in the Muslim World as well. Mawlana gained real popularity in 1953 when he led the violent movement and riots of Ulamas of Pakistan against Ahmadiyah movement. During the liberation war of Bangladesh, the followers of this fundamentalist party under the leadership of Golam Azam collaborated with the forces of Pakistan and killed the people, violated the mothers and sisters and did their best against humanity. As a result, the government seized his citizenship and banned his political party. But, later after 1975, to fulfil his political ambition, army general Zia had to depend on so called Islamic and other fundamentalist groups in order to mobilise his civilian base. Being sponsored and supported by General Zia, the fundamentalist started working in the name of Islamic Democratic

(14) Prothom Alo, a national daily of Bangladesh, Dhaka, November 5, 2000.

(15) Charles J. Adams, "The Ideology of Mawlana Moududi", ed. D. E. Smith, South Asian Politics and Religion, Princeton: University Press, 1966. p. 371.

League from September 1976 and later in their own banner Jamaat-I-Islami of Bangladesh from 1979. Their student front changed the banner to Islami Chatra Shibir instead of their previous identity as Islami Chatra Sangha in February 6, 1977. For opening up this political route for them in Bangladesh, Zia was awarded by them with their active support in his Referendum in 1977 and also the presidential election in 1978.

Again Zia's assassination by a group of army officers made the way for a new General named Ershad to come to power. In January 1983, he declared in a meeting of Islamic Scholars that the place of Islam as a religion will be maintained above all in the Constitution of the country and our struggle is to fight with the enemies of Islam and turn Bangladesh into an Islamic state. Justifying the amendment, Ershad declared that the distinct identity of the people of Bangladesh in their culture, language, geographical entity, independent sovereignty and other spheres of nationalism could only be defined through Islam.⁽¹⁶⁾ Indeed the restoration of fundamentalist politics in Bangladesh was made complete during the government of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the party which was formed by General Zia after coming to the power again in the election held under the Caretaker Government with Begum Khaleda Zia, wife of late Ziaur Raham as the party chief and the prime minister of the government. In terms of the conditions of the underhand agreement of BNP with the Jamaat-I-Islami before election, the fundamentalist got momentum in their politics. During the period, Golam Azam regained his citizen-

(16) Daily Ittefaq, a national daily in Bangla, Dhaka, June 21, 1988.

ship of Bangladesh. From then, he was made Amir (chief) of the party and now leading the party as 4th largest party in the country.

Criminalization of Contemporary Politics

To depict the contemporary nature of political criminalization, a few cases are cited below mostly with reference to Daily Independent and Daily Star on different dates in recent times:

Case 1: Rivals chop BCL leader on DU Campus (Daily Independent : November 4, 2000) - A Chatra League (student front of ruling party Awami League) leader was injured when rivals chopped him at a place adjacent to the Rokeya Hall on the Dhaka University campus last night. Sources said the rivals allegedly leader Dollar, former BCL general secretary of SM Hall, swooped on Khairul Bashar, law secretary of BCL of the same hall at about 8pm and seriously injured him with sharp weapons. During the attack, the hoodlums fired a number of gunshots creating panic among the students and pedestrians. Another case reports (Daily Star October 21, 2000) that BCL activist was gunned down during a clash with some activists of Jatiyatabadi Chatra Dal (JCD), student front of BNP (Bangladesh Nationalist Party) the largest party in opposition in the country, near BNP office in Chittagong. A case on the same day reports that a BNP activist was shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Feni. According to police, a group of people numbering about six went to the victim's house at midnight and called him by name. When he opened a window to see who are the visitors, they shot and killed him.

Case 2: Armed men led by BCL leaders occupy house (Daily Star :

October 20, 2000) - A group of armed men led by local BCL leaders and activists occupied a one-storey house on Sir Salimullah Road in city's Mohammadpur area yesterday. Witness said a gang of about 40 hoodlums led by one Shahabuddin and equipped with iron rods and sticks ransacked the house and looted valuables at about 11am, adding that the inmates of the house were driven out. One Amanullah and his son Asad and Azmal are now in possession of the house, the sources said.

Case 3: 10 BCL activists hurt in factional clash in Barisal (Daily Star: October 17, 2000) - At least ten BCL activists were injured, two of them seriously, in a factional clash at Badamtala under Gournadi Upazila of the district last night. Police and witnesses said, two factions - one led by Anish Sharif and the other by Kabir Talukder - clashed over establishing supremacy in the area. Both the groups exploded crackers and traded gunshots during an hour long clash. A case in relation to factional clash as reported by Daily Independent on November 6, 2000 says that an hour long clash between two factions of BCL in old city of Dhaka left at least 20 people, including two policemen, injured yesterday. Sources said, the clash ensued when one group attacked several armed cadres belonging to other group. Both the factions chased each other, fired shots, and blasted crude bombs creating panic around the areas. Another case says that a series of clashes between the Ruling party Awami League and Juba League (youth front of the ruling party Awami League) activists left at least 20 people injured in Manikgang on October 25, 2000 as reported by Daily Star of October 27, 2000. Witnesses said the trouble ensued when general secretary of the district unit of Juba League

was hit by men backed by Awami League leader.

Case 4: Chittagong central jail turns into battle field: over 100 including prison guards injured in clash between BCL and Shibir cadres (Daily Independent)- Over 70 prisoners and 30 jail guards were injured in a clash between two rivals groups of political prisoners in the jail this. According to police and witnesses, Abdul Kader, a leader of a cadre group of BCL who is now serving prison term for 12 years in the jail was attacked by his opponent Shibir (student front of Jaamat-I-Islami, a fundamentalist party) activists when he was on his way to his lock -up after having talks with visitors at jail gate. The clash spread outside the prison and about 25 shops were damaged in front of the jail while the supporters of the two rival groups were locked in clash. About 800 supporters of Shibir cadre Nasir-Iqbal group and 150 supporters of Kader are under imprisonment in the Chittagong central jail. The police reports, about eight cadres of Shibir stabbed Kader and beat him up mercilessly and thus the supporters of Kader got locked up in a fierce battle with their rivals.

Case 5: SMMC students decry BCL 'reign of terror' (Daily Star: October 23, 2000) - About 500 students of Sir Salimullah Medical College in Dhaka boycotted classes and demonstrated outside the principal's office yesterday protesting a 'reign of terror' in their hostels, unleashed allegedly by several leaders of BCL. The students walked out of classes wearing black badges and shouted slogans demanding immediate removal of the terrorists from the college.

Case 6: 173 held in Chittagong (Daily Star: October 27, 2000) - As

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part of countrywide drive against the criminals, police arrested 173 people, including four alleged terrorists, from different parts of the district on various charges during the 24 hours. Of the four terrorists, two were JCD cadres while one was BCL cadre. Another report on the same day in the same newspaper says that twenty five people, including four policemen were injured in a clash between police and the activists of Islami Shasantantra Andolon (ISA), a very small fundamentalist party in Dhaka. The clash erupted when police intercepted an ISA procession.

Case 7: BNP's condition for shifting rally venue (Daily Star: October 27, 2000) - Recently organized for oust government movement, the allies of four party namely: BNP, Jatiya Party, Jaamat-I-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote while planning to organize a grand rally on 7th November, the day when General Zia practically came to the power in 1975. According to the allies, it is National Revolution and Solidarity Day which they observed for last twenty years in a befitting manner; has been refused to be observed by the ruling party after they came to power in 1996. Against this backdrop, the allies as per report of the newspaper, have decided to go ahead with the grand public meeting at Paltan Maidan on 7th November although the government declined to allow it to use the ground on the issue that there would be an international cricket test between India and Bangladesh scheduled to be held from 10th November in the Stadium adjacent to the ground. Sources said the Bangladesh Cricket Board had asked the National Sports Council not to allot the ground for public meeting between November 1-14 for installation and security of expensive communications equipment in and outside the stadium.

But, to the allies, “we are taking preparation to hold our scheduled rally at Paltan Maidan on November 7. The government will have to bear the consequences if it tries to obstruct us from holding the program”. However, they did not hold the meeting rather demonstrated through huge procession on the same day where they had a severe clash with police at some point in the city.

Case 8: As Gunnar Myrdal has observed, two aspects of business-government relations in Third World countries generate corruption. One is the discretionary power over private business activities vested in officials. The other is the low compensation paid to civil servants. The Indian subcontinent offers a classic illustration of these two root causes of corruption. If we consider the situation in Bangladesh we see that the statements made by the scholars are true in the case of Bangladesh. As per reports of Daily Independent of November 2, 2000, a High Court Division of the Supreme Court in its judgement in August in the Janata Tower case found former President HM Ershad guilty and awarded him five years’ simple imprisonment and fined Taka. 5,48,70,800 (1 US\$ = Taka. 54). The High Court Division Bench also asked him to surrender before the trial court immediately. Another among others is the corruption case that was filed against Khaleda Zia, former prime minister and presently the leader of opposition in the parliament. In the case, Khaleda Zia and nine others have

(17) Gunnar Myrdal, *Asian Drama: An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations*, New York: Random House, 1968, Vol. 3, chap 20, p. 937.

(18) Neil H. Jacoby, Peter Nehemkis and Richard Eells, *Bribery and Extortion in World Business - A Study of Corporate Political Payments Abroad*, London: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc, 1977. p. 14.

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been charged with embezzlement of Taka 175,00,00,000 in the purchase of two aircraft for Bangladesh Biman Corporation.

Case 9: BNP protests framing charges against 33 BNP lawyers, students (Daily Independent, November 7, 2000)- Twenty lawyers and 13 students were charge sheeted in connection with the ransacking at the Dhaka Judge Court on August 20 when the lawyers protested the killing of fellow advocate who was a leader of BNP and the lawyers forum and was killed on that day in front of his house on his way to the High Court as said by the BNP leaders. BNP leaders, in another report by Daily Star on October 20, 2000, demanded withdrawal of all cases including the one in which 23 BNP men were sued on charge of killing two people and injuring 30 others during a fierce clash on November 27, 1997 on Chittagong Medical College Hospital campus in presence of BNP chief Khaleda Zia. After investigation police submitted charge sheet against the accused including four BNP members in the parliament.

Case 10: Ctg businessmen incur Taka 253,00,00,000 loss a day due to Hartal (Daily Independent) - The businessmen of the port city have expressed grave concern over frequent hartals (strikes) calls by the opposition causing what they said loss to the tune of about Taka 253,00,00,000 a day. The commercial capital witnessed a day long hartal called by small fundamentalist part named Nejami Islami. The port city has so far experienced a total of 18 full days hartal during the current year since Januaru last. The total loss of the business community of Chittagong would be around Taka 4554,00,00,000 due to the frequent hartals called by the opposition

political parties against government.

Case 11: Foil evil design of anti-liberation forces, Prime Minister Hasina tells grand rally, opposition plan to revert country to Pak province (October 28, 2000 at Dinajpur) and Foil Awami League design to turn country a part of India, Says Khaleda, leader of the opposition in parliament (October 14, 2000 at Dinajpur) - both the ruling party and the opposition allies ask the people for frustrating evil designs against each other. The call from the ruling party Awami League stress to foil evil design of undemocratic, autocratic and anti-liberation elements against independence and democratic process in the country. They accused the BNP led opposition combine of distorting the history of liberation struggle trying to mislead the people and conspiring to revert Bangladesh into a province of Pakistan. On the contrary, opposition leader asserted that Awami League had already turned the country into a vassal state of India by destroying its economy and bringing it under Indian domination.

As a matter of fact, there are many such cases could be cited as already published in the news papers as the initiation and agitation of political enmity and rivalry which create the deterioration of law and order in the country. Demonstration in the form of hartals, strikes, barricades, processions etc in favour of any accused political leaders is a common scenario in the process of criminalization of politics in the country. There are also the cases of planting bombs from both sides nearer to the meeting places of the political parties where the presence of important leaders particularly the prime minister, minister and others are ensured. There are agitation too against daily

An Overview of Political Criminality and Violence in Bangladesh newspaper for publishing the report against wrong doings from both the ruling and opposition politics. Accused or convicted persons for mugging, smuggling and any other organized crimes are normally given shelter as well as legal or state protection by all the political parties.

Conclusion

People in democracy generally experience that both the ruling and the opposition parties stand unitedly and share equal responsibility to mitigate the problems and issues concerned with the state. The basic theme of democracy is reconciliation rather than confrontation. If the minority voice is neglected or over looked by the majority, and if the opposition also does not cooperate with the ruling party or government, it automatically leads to a situation of agitation and conflict which generates criminality in politics. In Bangladesh, as the eleven party alliance, composed of mostly left wing politicians claim that the ruling and the main opposition parties developed the political system of terrorism, corruption, plunder, communalism and misrule instead of establishing the democratic society and state of the people. (see Daily Independent of November 6, 2000) In fact all the past governments of the country have utterly failed to solve the problems of the people for the last 30 years. Politics has been criminalized with murders in broad daylight, nepotism, false propaganda, use of state machinery such as: military, police, para military, media for government publicity and all other means to secure power and authority for which people are really upset and frustrated. In spite of everything, people are still hoping the betterment in politics and looking for an alternative to institutionalize the democracy.