

‘Khaleda, Tarique completely involved in August 21 attack’- PM Sheikh Hasina

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Online Desk: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Monday stressed the need for expediting the implementation of the trial court’s verdict of the August 21 grenade attack case. “Our leaders and activists including Ivy Rahman were brutally killed in broad daylight on this August 21. The trial has been held. Its (trial court) judgment has been handed out. This verdict should be implemented soon,” she said, reports UNB.

The premier was addressing a discussion arranged by Bangladesh Awami League (AL) in the city’s Bangabandhu Avenue, marking the 19th anniversary of the August 21 grenade attack. Hasina, while presiding over today’s discussion, said some convicted people of the grenade attack case are now in jail but the main mastermind stays outside the country.

Not mentioning the name of Tarique Rahman, she said he went abroad signing a bond. “Why doesn’t he come back if he has courage? We’ve transformed the country into Digital Bangladesh. He is now talking big taking its advantages. He should come back if he has courage. The people of Bangladesh will not spare that killer,” she said.

Recalling the memories of the grisly grenade attack, the premier said Khaleda Zia was the then prime minister and the question is what role she did she play at that time. She questioned why Khaleda obstructed police (to play the proper role) and didn’t take any initiative to protect evidence of the attack. “What does it prove? There is no doubt that Khaleda, Tarique and their men were completely involved in this grenade attack. It was also revealed in the investigation,” said the AL President.

The August 21 grenade attack was carried out on an anti-terrorism rally organised by then opposition AL in 2004 in front of its central office in the Bangabandhu Avenue. The horrendous attack left 24 people killed and nearly 1000 injured. AL President and also then opposition leader Sheikh Hasina luckily escaped death, but her hearing was impaired by the repeated grenade blasts. Among the dead was Awami League’s women affairs secretary and late President Zillur Rahman’s wife Ivy Rahman.

A Dhaka court had already convicted and sentenced 49 people – 19 of them to death and 19 to life imprisonment. Eleven others were sentenced to jail on different terms. Eighteen convicted people, including BNP leader Tarique Rahman, have remained fugitives. Appeals against the judgment are now being heard in the high court.

One-minute silence was observed in memory of the victims of the August 15, 1975 carnage, The November 3, 1975 jail-killing and the August 21, 2004 grenade attacks before offering prayers for the salvation of the departed souls. The PM placed a wreath at the monument there to pay tributes to the victims of the August 21 grenade attack. Flanked by senior AL leaders, Sheikh Hasina then placed another wreath at the monument on behalf of her party. Awami League general secretary Obaidul Quader delivered the opening speech.

On this day in 2004, a grisly attack was carried out on an anti-terrorism rally of Awami League on Bangabandhu Avenue when the BNP-Jamaat alliance was in power. The then opposition leader and current PM Sheikh Hasina was the main target. Among the dead was Awami League’s women affairs secretary and late President Zillur Rahman’s wife Ivy Rahman.