

Crime on rise ahead of Eid

SHAHIDUL ISLAM

Crimes, including extortion and robbery, are on the rise in the port city ahead of the Eid.

And right from the beginning of Ramadan, the criminals come out of their hideouts.

Not a single day has passed from the first Ramadan without any incident of extortion, robbery and mugging in Chittagong city and elsewhere in the district. Mobile phone shop owners are the main targets of the criminals.

The most gruesome of all criminal activities was the murder of housewife Noor Nahar alias Milon on the night of November 3 at Al Falah Lane in the city's Nasirabad area. Noor Nahar, wife of an American expatriate, was killed by the criminals as she refused to pay toll. Police is looking for the prime accused Salahuddin alias Chhagol Babu.

Robbers on the night of November 5, stormed the Integra Communications Limited, a mobile dealer at Agrabad Commercial Area, by breaking open the door and looted Tk 1.5 lakh in cash, mobile sets and prepaid cards worth over Tk 12 lakh. Doublimooring police is yet to recover the looted goods or trace the criminals.

Criminals even didn't spare a disabled beggar. All the money of 55-year old Abdur Rashid was stolen when he was offering Juma prayers at Nasirabad Housing Society mosque on November 5 keeping his earnings of the day beside a wall.

A gang of miscreants stormed into Mozammel Electronics, a cell phone shop, at Agrabad Sheikh Mujib Road at 8.15pm on November 4. The masked criminals confined the shop owner Motahar Hossain and other staffs

at gunpoint and looted 52 CityCell sets, 16 GSM sets and Tk 36,000 in cash. They also assaulted Motahar and another employee before leaving the shop with the booty.

Meanwhile, a gang of four muggers, however, couldn't escape following the prompt act of an intelligent police officer and timely assistance of passers-by in front of Biman Office at Sholoshar Gate No-2 area the same day in the morning. The gang tried to snatch Tk 1.5 lakh from Mohammad Shahjahan, manager of a business firm, when he was returning to his shop in a rickshaw after withdrawing the money from Islami Bank Bangladesh.

Assistant Commissioner of Doublimooring Zone Mohammad Ilias caught red handed two muggers as the gang was scuffling with Motahar to take him into an auto-rickshaw after a brief chase. Local people caught

two other muggers from the auto-rickshaw along with a loaded revolver.

The criminals looted Tk 2.5 lakh in cash, four mobile sets worth Tk 30,000 and a walkie-talkie from the counter of Saudia Paribahan at around 5.00am on November 1. They confined the staffs to the toilet during the robbery.

Another gang looted a steel gate and other construction materials from the under-construction building of Professor Mohiuddin, a teacher of mathematics of Chittagong University, at city's Hill-View Residential Area the same morning. The gang committed the crime as the CU teacher refused to meet their demand for extortion. Police, however, arrested the main culprit in the incident.

The miscreants attacked Priyatosh Chowdhury, a jeweller, and take away his motorbike, gold

chain and mobile set at Nandipara in Raosan the same night. The incident occurred when the businessman was returning home from his shop at Sitakunda upazila.

A gang of muggers dragged one Mohammad Shahid out of Hathazari Bus Station and snatched Tk 1.5 lakh and a mobile set from him when he was taking liftar on October 3. He was going to his village home at Dharmapur in Fatikchhari from Chittagong city.

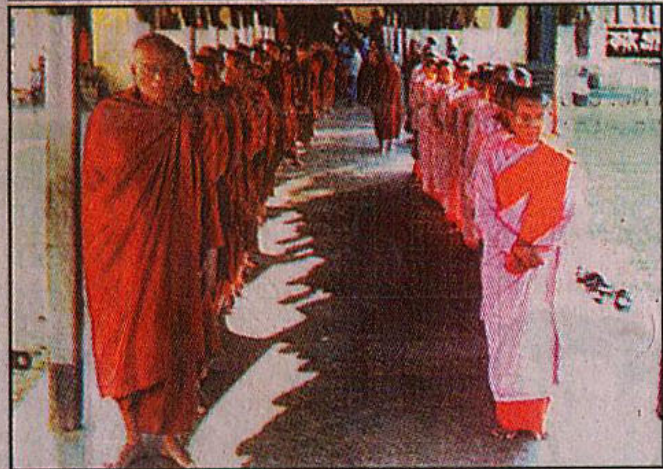
"We have taken special measures to curb crime during the Ramadan, deployed additional forces in different shopping malls and markets and arranged patrol at various points in the city to frustrate the criminals," Gazi Jasim Uddin, Senior Assistant Commissioner (Detective Branch) of Chittagong Metropolitan Police, told this correspondent.



Police guard almost all shopping arcades and malls in the port city to ensure security of Eid shoppers and the shop owners.



JADI PAGODA BEAUTY OF CHT



Jadi Pagoda (Kiang, a religious structure of Buddhists) with its marvellous architectural beauty adds to the scenic view of the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bandarban. Besides the bounteous bestowal of the nature, such magnificent architectural heritages, mostly Buddhist religious structures, are another unique attraction for the tourists.

Eid passengers hostage to ticket brokers

Sufferings of thousands of commuters mount

SHAHADAT HOSSAIN RIAD

Sufferings of thousands of commuters eager to meet their near and dear ones away from the port city of Chittagong at Eid mounted due to unavailability of the tickets of inter-district buses and trains.

Black marketeers are holding a large chunk of tickets of the buses and trains prior to Eid.

Many people were found disgruntled and angry at the Battali railway station on November 8 after failing to get ticket. On the other hand, those who could procure tickets had to pay much higher than the actual fare.

Besides, the situation aggravated as the bus services enhanced the fare from Tk 30 to Tk 200 per seat ahead of the Eid. The fare will go up everyday till Eid Day, a staff of S Alam bus service said.

Bangladesh Railway started selling advance tickets on November 5 for five days on the occasion Eid. The tickets are sold between 8.00am and 4.00pm. But hundreds of passengers could not collect their tickets even standing on the long queue at the railway station just after having their

Sehri.

Md. Russel Bhuiyan, a staff of Bangladesh Betar, Chittagong Centre, on the queue for tickets on November 6 said that if a ticket is issued to the commuter, two others are being printed out from the computer to keep inside the counter desk of the railway official.

"I came at the station after having my Sehri and the authorities started selling of tickets at 8.00am. But all the tickets were 'sold' within two hours and I could not procure a single ticket of

Subarna Express for November 11 to go home in Dhaka", Russel said.

Sources said, the black marketeers in connivance with a section of dishonest railway employees have booked most of the seats of the seven inter-city trains of different routes till the Eid day. As a result, hundreds of people intended to go home on Eid could not collect their advance tickets.

The railway authorities, however, denied the allegation of selling out tickets in black markets. Seven inter-city trains ply

three routes from Chittagong, including Chittagong-Dhaka, Chittagong-Sylhet and Chittagong-Chandpur, with capacity of 4,849 passengers daily.

Railway sources said, 3,847 tickets for November 10, 4,849 for November 11, 4,791 for November 12 and 3,500 tickets for November 13 have so far been sold out.

But the real scenario is different. While visiting the city's railway station the correspondent found that there was no unsold tickets for November 5 and 6 in

Chittagong-Dhaka and Chittagong-Chandpur routes and hundreds of people went back without any ticket.

It was also found that blacker was selling tickets at the station on the nose of the railway authorities and the members of team responsible for checking black marketing officials.

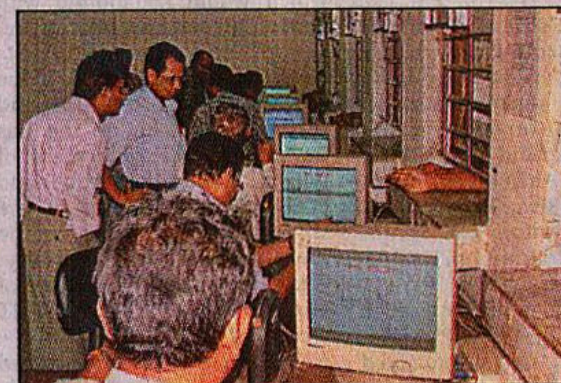
One of the black marketeers said that they would earn Tk100 against each seat from November 10. But he refused to reveal the source from where they collected

these tickets.

On the other hand, bus fare also went up unreasonably ahead of the Eid.

Mahmud Major, a student of Chittagong University told The Daily Star that he paid an additional price of Tk150 than the normal price for a ticket of a bus run by Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) to go home in Rangpur. "Normally state-owned BRTC sells each ticket at Tk 250 and the private buses at Tk 350. But I had to pay Tk 400 for a BRTC bus ticket while the price of private buses were charging Tk 200 more than the actual price against each ticket," he added.

Meanwhile, some 550 buses will ply under the supervision of Inter-district Bus Owners Association. The buses will ply 31 routes regularly and the fare would not be enhanced, association sources said. An official of the association preferring anonymity said that we are not responsible at all to check the fare hike. "Bangladesh Road and Transport Authority (BRTA) and traffic department of police are responsible," he added.



With the Eid-ul-Fitr nearing fast, several thousand people wait in long queues at the counters of Chittagong Railway Station for hours everyday for advance tickets. The photo was taken on Saturday.



the week that was

Equipment for the disabled

Social Advancement Society (SAS), a CHT-based development organisation, distributed equipment among the physically and visually impaired in Rangamati on Wednesday.

SAS in collaboration with National Foundation for Disabled Development under the ministry for social welfare distributed the materials at a ceremony at Kaokhali Upazila Parishad auditorium.

Upazila Executive Engineer Dewan Md. Ashrafur Islam gave away the materials including wheelchairs, bucket chairs, corner chairs, elbow crutches and white sticks among the disabled as the chief guest with Babu Laxmi Kumar Chakma in the chair.

A cheque for Tk 5,000 was also given to the Rangamati Disabled School.

SAS Executive Director Babu Lalit Chandra Chakma said that they would continue efforts to provide the disabled with such materials and donation every year.

Salim Ullah, Mostafur Rahman Kamran and Md. Omar Faruq Iqbal also spoke.

Chakma Raja for tolerance

Chakma Raja Barrister Debashish Roy on Friday termed Buddhism as a religion of reality, democracy and sacrifice and called for building up greater mutual tolerance and world fraternity.

Debashish was addressing as the chief guest the Kathin Chibor Dan Festival at BaroGang Buddha Bihar at Shahmipur village in Patiya.

He said that the Kathin Chibor Dan creates a scope for forging greater social ties and relation.

Monoranjan Chakma, Prakit Ranjan Chakma, Amal Barua, Srimat Uuh Tejbanda Mohathero, Srimat Jin Bangsha Bhikmu, Srimat Tejbangsha Sthabir, Srimat Rahul Nanda Sthabir also spoke with BaroGang Buddha Bihar chief Kalyan Mitra Chakma in the chair.

Body to promote paediatric surgery in Saarc states

Professor Tahmina Banu of Chittagong Medical College Hospital was elected a member of the executive committee of Federation of Associations of Paediatric Surgeons of Saarc (FAPSS).

FAPSS was formed to promote paediatric surgery in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) countries.

Associations of Paediatric Surgeons of Saarc countries at a three-day conference of Indian Association of Paediatric Surgeons that ended at Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh in India on October 31 formed the six-member executive committee of FAPSS.

Professor DK Gupta of India and Professor M Shaikat of Pakistan were made chairperson and secretary of FAPSS that also aims at improving quality service for surgical children in Saarc countries.

Other members are Dr. Ranjan Das

of Sri Lanka, Dr. Chowdhury Ramanandan of Nepal and Professor BR Parekh of India.

Hathazari newsmen protest death threats

Journalists of Hathazari exchanged views with the leaders of Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ) and Chittagong Press Club in the city here on Monday as part of its seven-day programme protesting death threats to them reportedly by a local BNP leader and his party colleagues.

CUJ and Press Club leaders said that following a report on release of three extortionists from local police station under pressure from local ruling party BNP a BNP leader and his men gave death threats to the journalists on Saturday. The report was published in different dailies.

Protesting the death threats, local journalists held a rally at Hathazari Press Club on Sunday and announced seven-day programme demanding legal action against the culprits, they said.

With Keshab Kumar Barua of the local daily Azadi in the chair, Muhammad Jahangir Alam of the Prothom Alo, Shimul Mohazzan of the Purbokone, Yunus Mia of the Janakantha, Khorshed Alam Shimul of Naya Diganta, Nupur Dev of the Jugantor, Shipak Krishna Devnath of Aker Kagos, Gaji Feroz Shibli of the Sangbad and Mohammad Hossain of Amar Desh spoke at the rally.

Prothom Alo, City Bank accord reception to GPA-5 achievers

Prothom Alo and City Bank accorded a reception to the GPA-5 achievers in the HSC examinations under Chittagong Education Board at local Muslim Institute Hall auditorium on Thursday.

Former Vice Chancellor of Chittagong University Professor Alamgir Mohammad Sirajuddin

was the chief guest at the function.

Prothom Alo Joint Editor Abdul Quaium, Resident Editor Poet Abul Momen, City Bank senior officer Khwaza Masum Billah and Government Chittagong College Principal Mohammad Jasim Uddin were present.

Speakers called upon the awardees to play a role in building up the country and come forward with honesty and sincerity to erase the stigma of Bangladesh's top position in the corruption table.

Later, the chief guest distributed prizes and certificates among around awardees.



The GPA-5 achievers in this year's HSC examinations under Chittagong Education Board pose with the guests at Chittagong Muslim Institute auditorium on Thursday.

Cooperate govt: Noman

Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al Noman urged the mainstream oppositions to cooperate and work side by side with the government as there was such a scope for them in the parliamentary democracy.

Noman was addressing as the chief guest a discussion organised by Doctors Association of Bangladesh (DAB), Chittagong on the occasion of National Revolution and Solidarity Day at a city community centre here on Sunday.

He said that in the parliamentary democracy the mainstream opposition party is expected not only to criticise the government's faults but also to praise the government for its good work.

Former director general of the Directorate of Health, Professor Dr. Nurun Nabi, former DAB, Chittagong General Secretary Dr. Shahadat Hossain, Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), Chittagong leaders Dr. Saifuddin Md. Tareq, Dr. Tamij Uddin Manik, Dr. Fazul Haq and Dr. Jasim Uddin also addressed the meeting. DAB, Chittagong General Secretary Dr. Khurshid Jamil Chowdhury presided.

Judge's courts in hill dists next year

The government has taken initiative to open the judge courts in three hill districts of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban by next year.

Deputy Minister for CHT Affairs Moni Swapan Dewan said this at a meeting exchanging views on the law and order

at the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) at the office of Deputy Commissioner (DC), Bandarban on Friday.

He said that the prime minister was likely to inaugurate the courts that could not function due to legal complexities forcing the CHT people to rush to different session judge's courts in Chittagong to get any legal matters settled.

Bandarban DC Sheikh Md Alauddin presided.

Villagers protest move to collect sand from bay

Several hundred villagers formed a human chain on Dhaka-Chittagong Road at Jora Amtol under Sitakunda upazila here on Friday to protest a reported move to collect sand from the bay raising a risk of land erosion there.

Inhabitants of Jora Amtol and Pakker Matha under Sonai Chhari villages participated in the human chain.

Later, the agitated villagers held a rally at Ghoramara Primary School ground organised under the banner of Bhumi Raxma Sangram Committee with its coordinator Saiful Akhter in the chair.

The speakers at the rally said that a private firm, Nobel Corporation, was preparing to go for massive collection of sand from the Bay of Bengal in that area in connivance with the administration and other authorities concerned.

They said that collection of sand was sure to cause massive land erosion endangering the life and homesteads of several hundred villagers of Jora Amtol and Pakker Matha.