

# Special drives fail to tame crimes in Jhenidah

76 killed, 29 abducted in 10 months: 1000 armed outlaws active

AMANUR AMAN, *Kushtia*

Law and order deteriorated in Jhenidah in the last four years despite several special anti-crime drives.

Crimes including murder, rape and abduction increased, much to the concern of 18 lakh people in six upazilas of the district.

But the incidents of extortion, robbery and tender manipulation have marked fall, police claimed.

According to police records, newspaper reports and other sources, at least 271 murders took place in the district in last four years since takeover by the coalition government.

Of these, 71 were in 2002, 75 in 2003, 101 in 2004 and 76 in the last ten months (January 1 to October 10).

Of the murders, 68 were committed in Sadar upazila, 56 Harinakundu, 45 in Saikupa, 32 in Mohespur, 32 in Korchadpur and 38 were in Kaliganj upazila. The Sadar upazila topped the list.

The victims included two journalists, 18 political leaders and about 80 activists of political parties and outlaws. Most of the outlaws were killed by their rivals.

At least 152 incidents of abduction for ransom took place in the district in last four years-- 36 in 2002, 40 in 2003, 47 in 2004 and 29 in last ten months.

At least 57 women were raped during the period. Of the victims, 17 were in the Sadar upazila, 15 Kaliganj, 7 in Mohespur, 12 in Korchadpur and 6 in Saikupa upazila.

Hardened criminals and outlawed party cadres were mainly responsible for the downside in law and order, high officials in police said.

According to police sources, at least 10 outlawed parties with 1000 armed cadres grouped in 20 gangs are active in the district. They possess about 500 illegal firearms, which they use to carry various criminal activities, sources in intelligence agencies said.

The parties active in the district are

Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-ML), PBCP-Janajuddho, Biplobi Communist Party (BCP), New Biplobi Communist Party (NBCP), Banglar Communist Party (BCP-Laltu), Gono Mukti Fouz (GMF), Jashod Gono Bahini (JGB), Socialist Party (SP), Biplobi Anuragi (BA) and Chinnomul Communist Party (CCP).

The most active among them are PBCP-ML, PBCP-Janajuddho, NBCP and GMF. Their members committed at least 200 murders in the district, police said.

The law enforcing agencies launched at least three special anti-crime drives in the southwestern districts in the last three years. But the downside in law and order could not be checked.

Even deaths in 'crossfire' with Rab (Rapid Action Battalion) and police failed to improve the situation.

Police said 37 alleged criminals including 32 outlaws were killed in 'crossfire' in the district since last year.

"The situation will not change overnight in the district where at least 10 underground parties unleashed a reign of terror for the last 30 years", Jhenidah Police Superintendent Akram Hossain told this correspondent recently.

He however, claimed that crimes like extortion, robbery and tender manipulation have fallen.

Several drives like Operation Clean Heart and Operation Spider Web were launched in the area. But criminals escaped arrest mainly due to information leak, allegedly by a section of policemen and pressure from some leaders of major political parties.

A police official seeking anonymity said a section of policemen have links with criminals and they leak information before any drive is launched. Besides, some political leaders in the district are involved with various criminals' gangs including outlawed parties.



PHOTO: STAR

Erosion by the Ghagot continued unabated at Goderhat under Gaibandha Sadar upazila displacing hundreds of families.

## 2 die after operations at unregistered clinics

Illegal clinics in Satkhira continue to defy order to shut business

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

Two housewives died at two unregistered clinics at Shyamnagar on Saturday allegedly due to faulty operations.

The incidents created an outrage in the upazila.

The two unregistered clinics are still operating defying an order from Satkhira Civil Surgeon to shut their business.

Earlier, in April this year, Satkhira Civil Surgeon (CS) had ordered closure of the two clinics as they had no licence, qualified doctors, necessary equipment and operation theatre.

One of the victims--Romesa Khatun, 35, wife of Akbar Hossain of Islampur village in Shyamnagar upazila--was admitted to Janaseba clinic for treatment of uterus complications on September 23. She was mother of three children.

She was operated upon on September 25 but died on Saturday allegedly due to faulty operation.

There are allegations that Director of the unregistered clinic himself had been cheating patients by impersonat-

ing a qualified doctor. He used degrees like MBBS and MD on his letter pad though he had no such academic qualification.

Romesa's relatives claimed that the director of the clinic after several tests advised her to undergo operation.

The operation was done at the so-called operation theatre at Janaseba clinic on September 25 by an assistant surgeon of Satkhira Sadar Hospital. Days after the operation and her release from the clinic, she felt pain in the operated area.

As her condition deteriorated, she was admitted at another clinic on October 14 with pain in the abdomen. A doctor there conducted another operation on the same day (October 14) and found blood-mixed gauge and bandage inside her abdomen.

He removed the gauge and bandage from her abdomen but the patient died later.

When contacted, the doctor said he had operated upon Romesa under light of a lantern because of load shedding. "I would not tell you anything more regarding this", he said.

The other victim--Khaleda Khatun,

24, wife of Zahurul Islam of Paukhali village in Kaliganj upazila--was admitted to Janani Nursing Home at Shyamnagar upazila headquarters with serious abdominal pain on the morning of October 14.

After several tests, she was operated upon by a doctor of Tala Upazila Health Complex. The patient died soon after the operation due to faulty operation, her husband Zahurul Islam alleged.

The doctor could not be contacted despite repeated attempts over cell phone.

Talking to this correspondent, some local people alleged that government rules are being ignored by some clinics which are deceiving patients, often leading to serious complications and death.

This correspondent tried in vain to contact the Satkhira Civil Surgeon over phone regarding the deaths. Responding to the first call, his private assistant Shahnewaj said 'Sir is now in toilet, please phone 10 minutes later'. Phoned twice after 10 minutes, he replied, "Sir is now out of his office".

## 15 AL activists hurt in attack by outlaws

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Jessore*

At least 15 Awami League (AL) leaders and workers were injured and 10 houses were damaged in two attacks allegedly by outlaws at Shyamnagar village of Kashimpur union in the Sadar upazila Saturday night and Monday morning.

A gang of 25 men led by notorious outlaws Idris of Shyamnagar village and Nazrul of Naudagram raided and damaged the houses of AL and Jubo League leaders and workers including those of Yunus Ali, Nazrul Islam, Moktar Hossain and Saiful Alam, witnesses said.

They also identified the attackers as Sirajul, Israel, Mohsin, Tajjul, Owar, Jalil, Babul, Jalkad, Bulbul and Kajal.

They beat up the inmates of the houses including women and children named Rahima, Eti and Afroza and looted valuables like money, gold ornament, TV and VCD.

On Monday morning, Idris, Tajjul and Nazrul again swooped on the AL men injuring Yunus, Moktar and Asia Begum, wife of Amjad of Shyamnagar were injured.

Asia was returning from Churamonkatic BRAC office after taking loan of Tk 5,000. The attackers looted the entire amount from her, alleged AL leaders.

## Jhenidah AL will now hold council Oct 25

Date shifted twice due to intra-party feud

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Magura*

Jhenidah district Awami League (AL) council, deferred twice earlier due to internal feud, has been rescheduled for October 25, party sources said.

The new date has been fixed following a directive from the party high command, they said.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil, Presidium member Abdur Razzak and some other central leaders are likely to attend the council to be held at Wazir Ali High School premises.

Earlier, the council was scheduled to be held on October 1 but postponed due to intra-party conflict. Later, October 10 was announced as the new date for the council. But it was also postponed hours before the meet, as the list of councilors could not be prepared due to internal feud, party sources said. The last council was held in 1997.

In the 1997 council, a committee was formed with advocate Ayub Hossain and Abdul Hai as president and general secretary.

As this committee failed to hold the overdue council, a convening committee was formed in December 2002 with Abdul

Hai as convener to hold the council within three months. But it could not be held even after 33 months of formation of the convening committee due to internal feud.

Party insiders said, leaders and activists are divided into two groups, one backed by Abdul Hai and the other by former organising secretary Tayeb Ali Joarder. Both want their men in the new district committee to be formed.

Talking to this correspondent, Jhenidah AL convener Abdul Hai MP however denied any intra-party feud. "There is competition over leadership", he said. Hai is also a probable candidate for the post of district AL president.

However, announcement of new council date has created enthusiasm in the party rank and file, though shad-

owed by intra-party feud at different levels.

Party leaders are now engaged in lobbying and keeping close contact with 240 councilors for posts in the committee.

Party insiders said, Abdul Hai MP, former president of the district committee advocate Ayub Hossain and former vice-president Abdul Wahed Joarder may contest for the post of president.

Central joint-convener of Shechhasebak League Saidul Karim Mintu, former organising secretary of district AL Tayeb Ali Joarder and its joint-convener Shafiqul Islam Opu may be in the race for the post of general secretary, party sources said.

## Patuakhali cops fail to nab any Aug 17 culprits

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

Police failed to nab any of the culprits involved in August 17 bomb blasts here although they took statements of scores of people in last two months.

Patuakhali superintendent of police (SP) Shafiqul Islam told journalists that police could not trace any Islamist militants in the district despite their frantic efforts.

He was exchanging views with journalists at the Deputy Commissioner's (DC) conference room. DC Rafiqul Islam presided over the meeting.

"We have set up checkposts and taken tight security measures to stop recurrence of such incident," the SP told journalists.

Among others, Patuakhali Press Club secretary Abu Zafar Khan, journalists Kazal Baron Das and Jalal Ahmed addressed the meeting.

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## MADHUPUR RESERVE FOREST

# Using ruling party licence to loot!

A CORRESPONDENT, *Tangail*

Plunder of timber and other resources from Madhupur reserve forest allegedly by some ruling party activists has become rampant.

On Friday, they even snatched away timber seized by forest guards.

Sources said forest department officials and guards seized two timber laden buffalo carts in Charaljani bit area Friday morning. But the timber thieves snatched the timbers from them, saying they are BNP men. They also threatened them of retaliation.

The timber trees were stolen from Jhatarbaid area of the reserve forest and loaded on two buffalo carts. A team of forest guards led by Forester of Charaljani bit seized the stolen timber. The miscreants snatched the timbers and brought those to Aurunkhola

Union Parishad office.

A case was filed with Madhupur police in connection with Friday's incident, a senior forest official told some local journalists.

On Saturday last another group of ruling party occupied a land in Berbaid area in the forest and constructed a building there.

Being informed, a team led by some local ruling party activists beat for forest guards and snatched their arms as they tried to protest, the sources said.

Talking to this correspondent, some indigenous people in Charaljani forest bit alleged that the land grabbers and plunderers having strong backing from ruling party men. The timber thieves have been cutting valuable trees from the reserve forest and land plunderers are occupying forestlands, they alleged.

## 10 injured as Hindu families attacked

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Netrakona*

At least 10 people including some women were injured when a gang of criminals attacked houses of five Hindu families at Sindurhatia village in Purbadhala upazila in the district Monday evening.

Seriously injured Rakhil Chandra Das, 30, was sent to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

Nine others were admitted to Purbadhala Upazila Health Complex. They are Lipi Rani Das, 18, daughter of Birandra Chandra Das; Rabindra Chandra Das, 45, son of Nirod Chandra Das; Amulya Rani Das, 50, wife of Rabindra Chandra Das; Mamata Rani Sarkar, 60, wife of

Haridas Sarkar; Lalita Rani Das, 30, wife of Digendra Chandra Das; Kanu Sarkar, 30, son of Harandra Chandra Das; Sree Haridas; Digendra Chandra and Birendra Chandra Das.

Police and witnesses said there was a land dispute between the Hindu families and some Muslim families in the village.

On Sunday, some unruly people entered houses of the Hindu families with lethal weapons and beat the inmates and looted property.

Birendra Chandra Das filed a case with Purbadhala thana accusing ten of the attackers. The accused are Abdul Jalil, Motalab, Manik Mia, Ershad, Fazlu, Kabir Uddin, Al-Amin, Alamgir, Jahur Uddin and Monu Sheik.

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