

# Death threats for toll in name of JMB, JMJB

## Professionals, businessmen in Tangail pass days in panic

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Different professionals and businessmen in the district are getting threats over telephone for toll in the name of outlawed PBCP and Islamist outfits JMB (Jama'atul Mujahideen, Bangladesh) and JMJB (Jagrata Muslim Janata, Bangladesh).

The callers introduce themselves as members of these parties and demand hefty amounts of illegal toll. They threaten to murder or kidnap them or their wards for non-compliance, some of those who received such calls told this correspondent.

The phone calls are being made to

businessmen, doctors, lawyers, service holders, NGO officials and even to teachers. Letters are also being sent in the name of these organisations for toll, they said.

This has created panic among people as similar cases are being reported even from upazilas. Recipients of such call or letter are well-to-do people.

Some of the victims have filed General Dairy (GD) with local police stations.

When contacted, S Alam, Office-in-Charge (OC) of Tangail Sadar police station, said "We have received a good number of complaints about

threats on telephone for toll".

It was gathered that some of the victims have stopped sending their children to school.

Talking to this correspondent, a senior lawyer of Tangail Bar Association said he received a letter sent by post demanding toll in the name of JMB. He said he feels insecure as the letter threatened him with death for non-compliance.

A rich Hindu businessman in Tangail town got an abduction threat from a caller who identified himself as a member of PBCP (Purba Banglar Communist Party). Seeking anonymity, he said he is very much worried for

his two school going children.

But PBCP (Purba Banglar Communist Party) which is often blamed for demanding illegal toll denied that any of its members made such calls or sent letters to anyone.

A senior leader of the outlawed party made a telephone call to Tangail Press Club on October 15 and said miscreants and toll collectors are using the name of his party.

Tangail Police Superintendent Mirza Abdullah-hel-Baki told this correspondent that he ordered police to trace such incidents and nab the culprits. He said miscreants might be using the name of PBCP, JMB or JMJB.

## 100 shops bulldozed in Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The district administration with the assistance of Roads and Highways department demolished at least 101 shops built illegally on government lands along bank of Surma river in the city Sunday night.

The demolition continued till yesterday morning.

The drive was conducted by a Magistrate in presence of Roads and Highways officials.

More 100 shops would be demolished, the officials said. Over 200 shops were built along the riverbanks in the last 30 years, allegedly in connivance with some powerful quarters, sources said.

The demolition began after a court order on Sunday turned down a prayer from the shop owners for a stay order on the move, the officials said.

Sources in the Sylhet City Corporation said a plan has been taken up for beautification of the bank of Surma which flows through the city. A park will be built along the bank, they said.



PHOTO: STAR

Shops built illegally on government lands on Surma riverbank being demolished Sunday night.

# Brokers rule Patuakhali hospital

## Patients being lured out to clinics for 'commission'

MD. SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

The Patuakhali General Hospital has virtually been taken over by a powerful syndicate of brokers, who in collusion with a section of employees, lure patients to private clinics.

The syndicate works with alleged tacit approval of some hospital officials, who allow this for reasons now well understood.

Though the 100-bed hospital was upgraded to a 250-bed one in February,

this made little difference so far as service to patients is concerned, sources said.

"Many staff members who do not like activities of brokers have become hostage. They are mute spectators to the anomalies and corruption", said an employee seeking anonymity.

The brokers have free access to all departments, doctors' rooms and offices. They move in the guise of hospital staff. Patients and their relatives and attendants can hardly distinguish them from hospital staff. Taking this advan-

tage, the brokers volunteer to help patients and then lure them to private clinics promising better treatment.

They are even seen consulting with doctors, providing medicine and even pushing injection to patients to earn their trust.

Their main goal however is to woo the patients to the private clinics for which they get commission.

"We always pray to Allah not to send any patient here for treatment. I have been working here for the last 20 years and I can tell you that your patients will

not get proper treatment here", a broker was telling a patient's attendant during this correspondent's visit recently. The patient came for tumor operation.

The broker was heard telling the patient: Here treatment would take more than a month and you have to spend Tk 500 a day. I can arrange everything at a private clinic at the same cost, where you will get better treatment and go home within 7 to 10 days.

The broker was eventually successful in luring the patient out of the hospital. Such scenes are common at the hospital.

According to hospital sources, 5 to 10 patients leave the hospital every day without completing treatment. Sometimes, serious patients are also taken away by brokers.

"In such case, we close the file and complete our duty by writing that the patient is absconding," said a senior nurse at the hospital.

Apart from brokers, drug addicts also move freely inside the hospital. Theft is a common incident.

Six out of the 10 doctors including Civil Surgeon Dr. Nurun Nahar Begum work at different private clinics in the district town. The Civil Surgeon is also superintendent of the hospital.

Sources claimed that Civil Surgeon Dr. Nurun Nahar and Dr. Salim Matubbar of the hospital do part-time jobs at 'Himi Poly Clinic'. The clinic is owned by a doctor working at Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical Collage Hospital (BSBMCH).

Dr. Mizanur Rahman, Resident Medical officer (RMO) of the hospital works at 'Nova Diagnostic Center in the town.

Gynaecologist Dr. Mahmudur Rahman of the hospital works at three private clinics in the town.

Orthopedic consultant Dr. Musahid Uddin works at 'Mukti Clinic'.

When contacted, the hospital authorities declined to talk on this issue.

## PRESENCE OF OC UP chairmen boycott law and order meet in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A scheduled meeting of Satkhira Sadar upazila law and order committee was not held yesterday as all the 14 Union Parishad chairmen in the area belonging to ruling BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami boycotted it protesting presence of the Sadar thana Officer-in-Charge.

They also demanded the OC's withdrawal alleging his involvement in corruption, failure to maintain law and order and misbehaviour with local body leaders.

The meeting was scheduled to begin at the Sadar upazila Nirbahi Officer's room at 10-30am.

In a joint statement issued yesterday the elected public representatives urged the authorities to withdraw OC Golam Mohammad within 24 hours. They vowed to call a 24-hour hartal in the area on Thursday and go for tougher action for non-compliance.

Signatories to the statement are UP Chairman Abdur Rouf of Alipur, Abdul Alim of Lapsa, Abdur Rahman of Agardari, Azmal Hossain of Jhhowdanga, S Alam of Bhomra, Abdul Gaffar of Kushkhali, Shahidul Islam of Brahmmarajpur, Modasserul Haq Huda of Dhulihar, Adbur Rahman of Balli, Shahid Hasan of Baikari, Habibur Rahman of Fingri, Shahiduzzaman of Banshdah, A Rahman of Ghona and Abdul Mujid of Shibpur UP.

On contact, Abdul majid said that the boycott decision was taken at a meeting on Sunday.

He said he informed the matter to higher authorities.

The OC could not be contacted over phone for his comment despite repeated attempts.

# Jhenidah AL holds council today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

After postponement twice in the current month due to internal feud, Jhenidah district Awami League (AL) will hold its council today after about eight years. Earlier, the council was first scheduled for October 1 and then rescheduled for October 10 but was postponed. The last council was held in 1997.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil will open the council at the Shapla Chattar at 11.00 am. Former minister and AL Presidium member Abdur Razzaque will be the chief guest. Central Organizing Secretary Abdul Mannan, Assistant Secretary SM Kamal Hossain, central member Talukdar Abdul Khaleque and Mirja Sultan Raja will attend the council as the special guests.

Party sources claimed that a great enthusiasm is seen among party rank and file centering the council. Though councils in upazila and union levels have been completed, the enthusiasm is shadowed by intra-party feud at different levels as local leaders and activists are allegedly divided into two groups, one

backed by district AL convener Abdul Hai MP and the other by former organising secretary Tayeb Ali Joarder.

Talking to this correspondent yesterday Abdul Hai however denied internal feud in the party. "There is rivalry over leadership. Such rivalry for leadership is not unusual in a big party like AL", he said.

Party leaders are now engaged in last minutes lobbying and keeping closed contact with the 240 councilors for posts in the new district committee.

Party sources said convener Abdul Hai, former MP Golam Mostofa and former vice-president Abdul Wahed Joarder will contest for the post of president.

AL leader Advocate Abdul Aziz, central joint-convener of Awami Shechhasebak League Saidul Karim Mintu, former organising secretary of district AL Tayeb Ali Joarder, district Krishak League president Abdur Rashid and joint-convener of district AL Shafiqul Islam Opu are in the race for the post of General Secretary.

## Training on HR begins in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

A three-day training programme on Promoting Human Rights and Governance for field level staff of local NGOs began in Rangamati yesterday.

Manusher Jonno (for man), a local NGO, organised the programme aimed at creating awareness about human rights and good governance among people of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

Forty participants from Greenhill, Social Advancement Society, Kapo Seba Shangha of Rangamati, Anannya Kollyan Shangha and Mrochet of Bandarban are taking part in the programme.

Speakers on the first day of the workshop said human rights are being violated mainly due to ignorance of people and failure by law enforcers in taking steps against the violators.

Only a massive campaign to create awareness can improve the situation.

The media and local government leaders can play an effective role in this regard, they said.

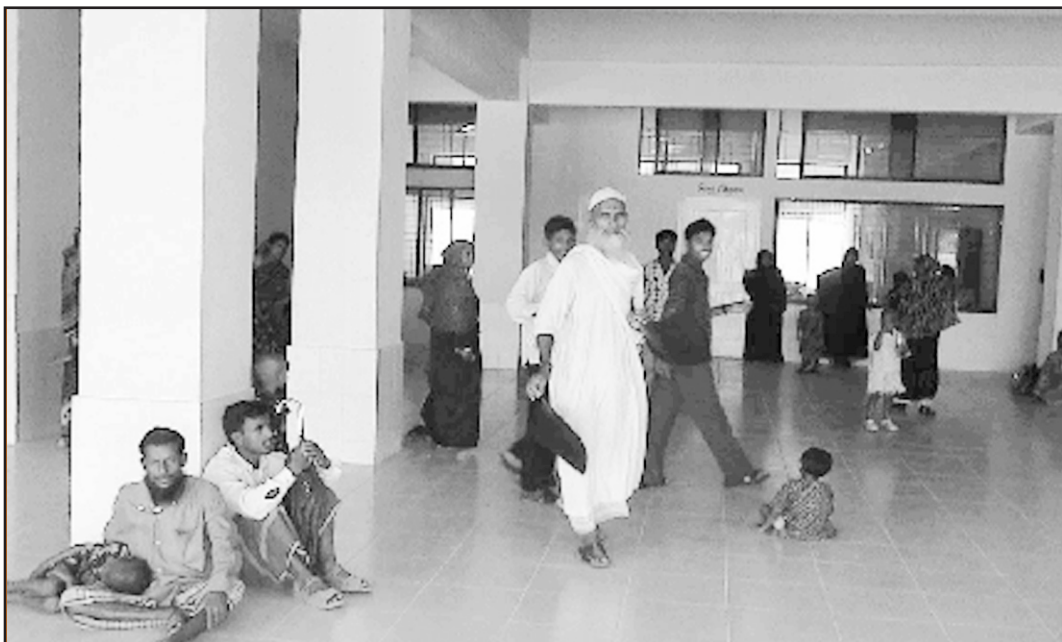


PHOTO: STAR

The upgraded 250-bed Patuakhali General Hospital looks spruced up but it is failing to serve the purpose as patients are lured out by brokers to private clinics in the town.

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