

# Killings decline, robberies increase in 10 SW dists

AMANUR AMAN, From Kushtia

Incidents of murder marked decline in the 10 southwestern districts in the last 10 months but those of abduction hovered around last year's figure.

Robberies increased but rape cases declined, a top police official told this correspondent seeking anonymity.

He said 310 people were killed in the 10 districts till November 15 this year against 755 last year. The victims this year included 23 political leaders and 6 journalists. Most of rest of the victims were businessmen, killed for toll.

The police official claimed improvement in overall law and order in the crime-infested areas because of vigilance by law enforcers including Rapid Action Battalion (Rab).

Death of alleged criminals in 'crossfire' with law enforcers also declined during the period, he said. A total of 108 hardened criminals were

killed in crossfire so far this year against 158 last year, he claimed.

"Allot steps have been taken to check crimes and there has been some success. We are hoping more success in an area where outlaws are active for about 30 years.

"The law and order will not improve overnight because most of the outlaws behind murders are sheltered by political leaders of ruling and opposition parties", he claimed.

A section of leaders of major political parties are involved with various criminal gangs and outlaws in the region. These leaders use them to establish supremacy in their areas and to rig vote during election. This is an old tradition in the area, he said.

According to sources, there are about 8000 illegal firearms still in possession of outlaws in the 10 districts. At least 10 outlawed parties with 20 gangs are active in the region covering Kushtia, Jhenidah,

Meherpur, Chuadanga, Magura, Jessore, Khulna, Narail, Sathkhira and Bagerhat districts. Their total strength could be around 10,000, other police sources said.

Of the crossfire victims, 16 were top leaders of outlawed parties and eight were chiefs of various criminal gangs. The highest number of 79 crossfire incidents took place in Kushtia, followed by 69 in Khulna.

Of the crossfire victims, 95 belonged to PBCP (Janajuddho), including five ringleaders. The PBCP-ML lost 81 including two top leaders and BCP lost 20 including two top leaders. Other outlawed parties lost 61 cadres to crossfire incidents. Two Union Parishad (UP) chairmen, four BNP men and eight Awami League activists were also killed in crossfire during the period, police records said.

The law and order is showing signs of improvement following the death of outlaws, the police official said.

Police records show that incidents of abduction in the last ten months rallied around last year's figure of about 200.

But incidents of highway robbery increased to 112 so far from last year's around 100.

The most sensational incident took place on the Meherpur-Kushtia road on November 1 when highwaymen took away Tk 30 lakh from traders in a bus days before the Eid-ul-Fitr.

The number of rape incidents reported to police would be around 35 so far this year against last year's 63, the police official said.

Police also had to pay for this as outlaws vowed to avenge the 'crossfire' killings.

The outlaws killed at least 18 police personnel including three police officers in the region in 21 month since January last year, the police official said.



The scenic Plain riverbank in Jafflong is being ravaged by illegal stone collectors but the local administration is indifferent to it.

PHOTO: STAR



The All Party Student Unity held a rally at Barisal BM College yesterday to press its demand for upgrading the college to a full-fledged public university.

PHOTO: STAR

## 13 injured in BM College clashes

### Students agitate to upgrade college to university

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

At least 13 people including students, teachers and police were injured, 5 of them seriously, as police and students chased each other for two hours on Barisal Government B M College campus yesterday.

Police resorted to baton charge to disperse students who ransacked 13 departments, college auditorium and its canteen.

Students under the banner of 'Sarbodolya Chhatra Oikya,' (all-party students' unity), are agitating for the last two days to upgrade the college to a full-fledged public university.

Sub-inspector Habibur Rahman

and five students were admitted to local hospitals and clinics.

The demonstrating students also boycotted classes and brought out protest processions in the last two days in support of their demand.

When contacted, the principal and vice principal of the college, Prof Md. Nazimuddin and Prof Maksuda Begum said to this correspondent that they had reviewed the situation at a meeting of the college academic council and informed it to the higher authorities.

On Saturday, eight teachers and students were injured when the agitating students ransacked the office of the principal and other offices.

## Awal organised JMB in 3 districts, police say

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Alleged JMB leader and mastermind of August 17 bomb blasts in Nilphamari, Hafez Saidur Rahman, provided important information to police on the second day of his remand yesterday, police sources said.

Saidur Rahman was produced before a First Class Magistrate court under special arrangement on Saturday. The court placed him on three days' remand.

Nilphamari police with the help of Kurigram police arrested Saidur on Friday from Kodai Kuthi village in Rajibpur upazila in Kurigram district. Nilphamari police sources Saidur was hiding in the village since the August 17 bomb blasts in Nilphamari.

Earlier on Thursday, police arrested two suspected militants from

Dimla upazila. Both teachers at Darus Salam Dakhil Madrasa, they are Rabiul Islam, 28, of Dakhkhin Titpara village and Nur Hossen, 22, of Uttar Titpara. They would be taken on remand for interrogation.

Police also claimed that that another JMB leader from the village -- Amzad Hossen -- is now hiding in Dinajpur.

Awal used to hold meetings with local JMB militants in Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat and Panchagarh. Nilphamari police are now trying to trace out the meeting venues and local militants, the sources said.

The Officer-in-charge of Nilphamari Sadar thana, Sohrab Hossen, told this correspondent that they are raiding suspected madrasas, mosque complexes and mazars in search of JMB militants.

In last five days, police conducted raids at a number of madrasas and mazars including Hafizia Madrasa on the premises of Masjid Tamam-Ibne-Abbas on the outskirts of Nilphamari town but could not arrest anyone.

The madrasa run by AL-Forkam Foundation was constructed with financial assistance of a Saudi donor organisation, police said.

Police also raided the Al-Jamiatur Rahmania madrasa near the main mosque of Tablig Jamaat in the district but could not anyone.

Earlier, Panchagarh police, acting on information provided by Md Awal, son-in-law of JMB chief Shaikh Abdur Rahman, arrested three alleged members of JMB suicide squad Friday night.

## 'Punish killers of Goutam'

### Journalists continue protest

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Journalists across the country are still protesting killing of Dainik Samakal Staff Reporter Goutam Das in Faridpur on Thursday.

They held rallies and processions yesterday in Khulna, Kushtia, Rangamati and Pabna demanding arrest and punishment to the killers.

Our Khulna Staff Correspondent reports: Khulna Union of Journalists (KUJ) held a rally in the morning on the Press Club premises.

KUJ president Makbul Hossain Mintu presided over the rally while it was addressed by, among others, Wadudur Rahman Panna, AK Hiru, SM Zahid Hossain, SM Habib, Md Faruk Hossain, Amiya Kanti Pal, Mamun Reza, Rakibuddin Pannu and Hare Krishna Ghose.

Speakers criticised the government for failure to ensure security of lives of journalists. They stressed on greater

unity of journalists to resist similar attacks in future.

Later, KUJ members brought out a procession in the city wearing black badges.

Our Kushtia Correspondent reports: A meeting was held at Kushtia Reporters' Unity (KRU) where speakers expressed their grave concern over the incident and demanded security of journalists working across the country.

KRU president Matiur Rahman Laitu presided over the meeting while it was addressed by, among others, The Daily Star correspondent Amanur Aman, The Daily Deshathya Editor SM Halimuzzaman, KRU general secretary Munshi Torikul Islam, Bhorer Kagoj correspondent Noor Alam Dulala, Jugantar correspondent Al-Mamun Sagar, Jahid Hasan of the Manabjabin, Nurul Kader of the Nayadiganta, Arif Mehmod of the Banglabazar and journalists Anisuzzaman Dablu,

Rahmat Rezvy and Sarif Biswas.

Our Rangamati Correspondent reports: Journalists in Rangamati brought out a silent procession in the town.

Processionists paraded the main thoroughfares of the hill town. The procession ended in front of the Deputy Commissioner's (DC) office.

A rally was held there which was addressed by the Press Club president Sunil Kanti Dey and Ittefaq correspondent AKM Moksud Ahmad.

A Pabna Correspondent reports: A procession was brought out in the town. Journalists working in different newspapers, news agencies and TV channels took part in the procession.

Pabna Press Club President Md Mohiuddin led the procession. Later, a memorandum was handed over to the Additional District Magistrate, Anwarul Hakim.



Barisal Reporters Unity staged a sit-in in front of Aswani Kumar Hall (left) and Rangamati journalists brought out a procession in the hill town yesterday to protest the murder of Goutam Das.



PHOTO: STAR

# Cashing in on patients' woes

## 21 unregistered clinics in Magura doing illegal business

HOSSAIN SERAJ, Magura

Unregistered clinics are doing brisk business illegally in Magura town and three upazilas, cashing in largely on the patients, allegedly in connivance with a section of government doctors.

There are 31 clinics in the district, 21 of them unregistered and 10 registered. All of them have brokers at Magura Sadar Hospital and upazila health complexes to lure patients assuring them of 'better treatment'.

Some doctors at government hospitals also get 'commission' for sending patients to such clinics, it is widely alleged.

The brokers run after patients from well-to-do families. Poor patients who can not get admission to the government hospitals and health complexes seldom draw their attention.

The brokers enjoy free access to the hospital and health complexes. A section of nurses and other staff at the government hospitals also work as brokers, many of the patients and their attendants alleged while talking to this correspondent recently.

At government hospitals, patients are often advised by a section of doctors to go to certain clinics for 'better treatment'. The patients are left with no choice but to follow the

'advice', thereby unknowingly falling prey to the greed of unscrupulous people.

During this correspondent's visit to Magura Sadar Hospital and three other upazila health complexes, some brokers admitted that they are paid to lure patients to private clinics.

"As doctors are also involved in the process, I do not consider it unethical", said a broker asking not to be named.

Another broker, Saifullah, said he gets Tk 200 to 250 from the clinic owner for luring one patient. "It is the only means to maintain my family", Saifullah admitted.

A government doctor gets 'commission' ranging from 30 to 35 per cent of the money the patient spends at the private clinic. The other staff get between 10 to 15 per cent for sending a patient, sources said.

"I was refused admission at the Sadar Hospital on Sunday. A doctor informed me that I would have to wait at least six days to get admission. When I come out of the doctor's room, a staff came to tell me that I could be treated at a private clinic", said Shafiqul Islam, a businessman, now under treatment at a clinic at Sayed Ator Ali road in Magura town.

Shafiqul is suffering from breathing problem and slow heart beat.

"When I showed interest, the staff took me to a man standing near the emergency ward. He gave me the address of the clinic. But the quality of the treatment is extremely poor here".

When asked, Resident Medical Officer (RMO) Md. Moslemuddin at the Sadar Hospital however expressed his ignorance about doctors' getting commission. He said, "Adequate measures have been taken to prevent brokers from entering the hospital", he said.

During this correspondent's visit to one such private clinic in the town, some of the patients complained that they spent a lot of money for so many diagnostic tests which were seemingly unnecessary. But they did not get proper treatment.

They even alleged that the clinic had no registered doctors and trained nurses. It is not even properly equipped with instruments.

"These clinics follow no rule. They see patients as a source of money only", a leading doctor at Magura Sadar Hospital said.

There are numerous allegations of malpractice, wrong treatment, wrong diagnosis and post-operative infection due to unhygienic condition. Death or permanent disability from alleged wrong treatment is not few and far between, which at times leads

to clashes and ransacking of clinics. But the authorities are unmoved.

Common allegations are poor state of operation theatres (OTs) and post-operative rooms.

But the most frightening thing is that the number of such unregistered and below standard clinics is increasing in the absence of inspection by the authorities concerned, sources said.

This is the best business one can think of, said a clinic owner, referring to the virtually unregulated trade. The few registered clinics are getting frustrated because unregistered ones dominate the business through adopting unfair means. Yet there is no action, he said.

When contacted, Magura Civil Surgeon (CS) Farid Uddin Ahmed admitted existence of unregistered clinics and their unethical business.

He said, "A committee headed by me and comprising Additional Deputy Commissioner, Additional Superintendent of Police and Municipality Chairman after inspection has already listed the unregistered clinics and ordered them to stop their illegal business within 15 days.

"Otherwise, action would be taken against them", he said.

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Leaders of Awami League led 14-party alliance at public meetings in Brahmanbaria and Tangail have called upon the people to dislodge the BNP-Jamaat government as it is protecting militants who are doing violence in the name of Islam.

Our Brahmanbaria Correspondent reports: Awami League (AL) Presidium member Abdur Razzak MP alleged that the JMB militants who blasted bombs across the country in August 17 are being protected by the government.

He alleged that Jamaat ul

Mujahideen, Bangladesh (JMB) is an organisation of Jamaat-e-Islami. They have prepared a hit-list of political leaders and intellectuals.

The meeting was organised by the local by 14-party committee.

With AL leader Lutful-Hi-Satchu in the chair, the meeting was also addressed by, among others, Gono Forum Presidium member Mafizul Islam Khan, JSD Joint Secretary Seeren Akter, Workers Party leaders Anisur Rahman and Shahrier Md Furuj, Brahmanbaria AL leaders Amanul Haque Sento and Md Helal Uddin, JSD leader Akter Hossain, Gono Forum

leader Farid Ahmed, Kamruzzaman Ansary and Md Joydul Haque.

Our Tangail Correspondent reports: Leaders of Awami League -led 14-party alliance at public meeting here have alleged that the BNP-Jamaat alliance government patronises militants who are doing destructive activities in the country in the name of Islam.

The rally was organised by the local unit of the 14-party opposition alliance. The meeting was addressed by, among others, AL Presidium member and former minister Tofail Ahmed, its central leaders Aktaruzzaman and Dr. Abdur Razzak Bhola MP; Gono Forum

Presidium member Pankaj Bhattacharya; JSD General Secretary Syed Zafar Sazzad; Gono Azadi League leader Abdus Samad; Gono-tontry Party central leader Abdul Bari Zoardar; Sammabadi Dal central leader Prodyut Kumar Bhoumik; AL leader Meher Afroz Chumki; Workers Party central leader Hazera Sultana and Tangail AL General Secretary Fazlur Rahman Khan Faruque. Tangail AL president Shamsur Rahman Khan Shajahan was in the chair.



A one-km human chain was formed in Barisal city yesterday to press a 9-point demand for development of Barisal division.

PHOTO: STAR

## 1-km human chain formed in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A one kilometer long human chain was formed in Barisal city yesterday for development of Barisal division.

The program held in front of Barisal Aswani Kumar Hall from 10-30 to 11-30 am was organised by the Association for Development and Protection of Barisal Division's Interest, a civic body.

Cross sections of people, including students, teachers, political and cultural activists, professionals and NGO leaders took part in the programme.

It was marked with a rally, presided over by Barisal city BNP President Mahmud Golam Salek.

Speakers at the rally vowed to launch tougher agitation to realise their 9-point demand including regular Biman flight, pipeline gas supply from Bhola gas field, setting up of a public university, shifting of BIWTA head office there, development of Kuakata tourist spot and establishment of export processing zones in Barisal and Patuakhali.