Dealing in Death

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The attack on a police station in Bagmara, Rajshahi should be a wake-up call for the government

Incidents of violent attacks like mugging have been on the rise in the last couple of weeks. A woman in her flat has been murdered; the most gruesome of such kind of ghastly deaths happened last week when an army personnel was knifed to death in Kafrul, at the heart of the capital, while trying to save a woman from mugging. Last Sunday, a constable was shot point blank in the head by terrorists belonging to a banned Maoist outfit. A day later a man identifying himself as a member of the PBCP (Purbo Banglar Shorbohara Party; The Proletarian Party of East Bengal) has claimed responsibility for the attack.



Even though they may seem dissimilar in nature, especially the last one, being a terrorist attack with an aura of idealism attached to it, these incidents mark a rising trend which has made us think that the law and order situation has deteriorated to the extent that we should be worried. The PBCP is one of those microscopic groups of thugs who opposed our war of liberation, not only that, as its name suggests, the party has refused to accept the country as a separate entity-- it still calls Bangladesh East Bengal. It has very little to do with Marxism-Leninism so to speak, with party leadership itself devoid of any ideological grooming, its armed cadres have been running amuck in the last two decades. In fact the PBCP is an ideal example of the areas a Marxist party must never tread on--killing, mugging, rape, extortion.

The PBCP is nothing but a bunch of criminals who live on blood money. Unlike the Maoists of Nepal who have a political leadership guided by a clearly defined ideology and political belief, these thugs in the North and Northwestern Bangladesh thrive on people's misery; there are numerous instances where the farmers and the rural poor (supposed to be a friend of the revolution) are extorted, or have robbed of their cattle. They are criminals and the government should treat them in that day. A combing operation by the police has become a necessity, and in any case the government should have to launch one for the general election is getting near and a drive to retrieve illegal weapons and arrests criminals is a must. What is alarming about the incidents of mugging, extortion and killing is that more and more young people are using firearms, which have become easily available on the underground market, and can be bought at a few thousand takas.

The police must take a more pro-active role in the country in general to improve the law and order situation. In the long run there is no substitute to making the law enforcing agencies more equipped to handle crime. A general rise of salary for our boys and girls in blue is necessary, if not a must, particularly when the rate of inflation has touched the double digit long ago.

The government must start to crack down on the criminal activities in the country. The web of illegal proliferation of small arms must be wiped clean, keeping in mind that the law and order situation must improve to make sure that people feel safe to invest, to feel safe enough to build their own lives. This is of utmost importance at a time when the economy is going through stagflation and an election is in the offing. The sooner the drive starts the better.