



Eid vacationers trying to go home crowd Nabinagar Bus Stand in Savar on the outskirts of the capital as intercity buses were running behind schedule yesterday.
PHOTO: STAR

Crimes on despite tightened security in capital

SHUDIPTA SHARMA

Although law enforcers have taken special security measures across the capital during the month of Ramadan and on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, criminal incidents are being reported almost every day.

City dwellers and homebound people are falling victim to crimes like killing, extortion, mugging and doping. At least 14 people were killed and more than 100 others doped and then mugged in the last three weeks in Dhaka city, sources said.

The crime statistics, however, do not reflect the reality properly, as most of the incidents go unreported, admitted a number of law enforcement officials.

On August 2, extortionists shot Mohammad Liton, 22, a construction worker, dead in the city's Pallabi after they failed to realise extortion money from his contractor.

Just a week later (August 9), muggers stabbed a businessman to death near Bangla Academy.

On August 14, another businessman was stabbed to death by muggers in Mirpur. The victim, Shahjahan Bhuiyan, 55, was a cloth trader in the capital's Islampur. He was stabbed in front of his eldest daughter and grandchildren.

In late July, unidentified criminals killed a retired army official and his wife at their house in the capital's Dakkhinkhan area and a businessman in his residence in Gulshan.

Monirul Islam, deputy commissioner of Detective Branch (DB) of police, said, "It is true that some criminal activities are still going on in the city regardless of our efforts. But the condition is better than the previous year."

"If we didn't take special measures, the number of criminal incidents might be higher than now," he said.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) has set up 35 check posts and deployed 384 patrol teams in the capital to check crimes during Ramadan and Eid to ensure security of the people.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) also has taken up three-tier security measures on the occasion across the country, including the capital's markets and shopping malls, banks and business organisations.

Police sources said in addition to their regular forces, plainclothes policemen were now patrolling the streets, shopping malls,

and bus and launch terminals. Ahead of Eid, different other gangs of muggers have become very active in the city. They are known as "Agyan Party" (muggers who make people unconscious by doping them) and "Molom Party" (muggers who rub ointment or other substances on victims' eyes to cause burning feeling).

These muggers prey on people especially at bus and launch terminals, rail stations, inside public transports or in crowded public places. Not only do they snatch valuables, but also rub chilli paste onto the victims' eyes after mugging or dope them or knock them unconscious or even stab them mercilessly.

Sources at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) and Mitford Hospital said every day each of the hospitals had been receiving around 5-10 victims who were doped and made unconscious by muggers.

According to the sources, at least 100 doped victims were admitted to DMCH in the last three weeks. The other city hospitals also saw a sharp increase in the number of patients who were found unconscious in streets.

On August 13, two men were found unconscious in Gulistan area. They were doped by muggers when they came out from a private bank at Fulbaria area after withdrawing money. Locals rushed them to DMCH.

Zahidul Kabir Azad, headmaster of a Mirpur high school, was doped at Jatrabari on August 10. Muggers doped him by feeding him coconut water as he was returning home after from Dania High School.

DB Deputy Commissioner Monirul Islam said they had arrested some 30 members of Agyan Party in the month of Ramadan.

On August 6, Rab personnel arrested six muggers and rescued two victims unconscious from Mohakhali bus terminal area and sent them to DMCH.

Alongside Agyan and Molom parties, many of the muggers are preying on people in the guise of law enforcers. Police caught seven of this gang red-handed in Gulshan and Shabagh areas on August 8 and August 9.

DC Monirul said, "It is true that Agyan party is not totally under our control, because many people are being doped at the outskirts of Dhaka city and come to the city being unconscious."

He, however, said police had been successful to prevent robbery during Ramadan.

New Dutch envoy to arrive August 21

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT



New Ambassador (designate) of the Netherlands Gerben de Jong will

arrive in Dhaka on August 21 to take up his first diplomatic assignment in Bangladesh.

As per the protocol, he will join as the Head of Mission of the Netherlands embassy and assume the post of ambassador after presenting credentials to the president, said a press release.

Gerben de Jong most recently served as ambassador in Senegal. Prior to that, he was director of Environment and Water Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands and was also ambassador in Vietnam.

The new envoy in a statement said Bangladesh is one of the priority countries for Dutch development cooperation and has recently been put on the list of priority countries for economic relations and trade.

The Netherlands is now the third largest investor in Bangladesh.

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