

Dhaka court's delinquent staff

Fake bail allows criminals to go free

THAT a temporary staff engaged with Dhaka court has managed to forge bail documents for seventy inmates charged with dealing in drugs, arms and ammunition over a period of five months speaks volumes of the state of the principal jail in the country. As per his confession before a Dhaka court, the accused confessed to his crime but we understand he acted in collusion with a certain bench assistant at the court. We are very fortunate that this racket has come to light, thanks to an investigation by the court. While this particular event was nipped in the bud, it merely goes to show the ease with which criminals may go scot-free, in the absence of seriously cross checking of court documents as they are presented to jail authorities.

We will probably never know how many such incidents have occurred before this was detected. Going by what has been reported in this paper, the two accused have in the past forged signatures of judges and issued fake bail orders resulting in some 110 accused getting bail. While the misdeeds of the past cannot be undone, we can however take measures that it does not occur in the future. Given the gravity of the situation, the matter should not be treated as a one-off incident. Such breaches of security allow criminals to get back into circulation and resume their villainous activities. Surely, a thorough investigation is in order to ascertain just how widespread this racket is and bring to book those involved.

Poor status of emergency treatment in Nitor

Bring discipline and develop capacity

IT is disheartening to note that the emergency unit of the country's prime hospital for accident victims, National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (Nitor), is suffering due to mismanagement and inadequate staff. As a result, critically injured patients are badly suffering from lack of proper emergency treatment.

Each day around 120 to 180 patients rush to the emergency unit. But it has only 30 beds, most of which remain occupied most of the time. The unit is also understaffed. The patients suffer due to the long queues in the operation theatre. Due to lack of space the injured patients have to wait in front of the operation theatre risking infection. The situation is made worse as a syndicate of unscrupulous staff, with the help of local brokers, exploit the insufficiency of the unit. They make quick bucks by manipulating serial numbers for surgery and delivery of test results. They also charge extra money to admit patients in the emergency ward.

The most perplexing aspect is the lackadaisical attitude of the hospital authority towards these irregularities. When asked about it by this paper they replied that they could not take action against anyone as they did not get any written complain from the patients. The authorities must take a proactive approach and investigate the irregularities. They can make best use of existing resources and manpower by bringing discipline to the unit. The government should also allocate sufficient funds to make the emergency unit adequately staffed and well-equipped.

COMMENTS

"Japan 'outraged' at Hoshi killing"
(October 6, 2015)

Taj Muhammad

The practice of always blaming BNP-Jamaat should be stopped. A fair and authentic investigation is needed rather.

"BNP mustn't be bracketed with Jamaat"
(October 5, 2015)

Reaz AU

Why are you ashamed of being bracketed with Jamaat? Your party has been doing this since 1975!

Hridoy Sopon Hridoy
Jamaat is controlling BNP now.

"Cricketer Shahadat's wife held"
(October 5, 2015)

Aam Munna

Justice should be ensured.

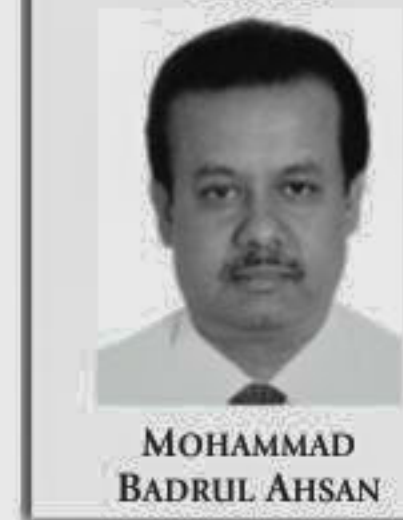
"PM smells link of BNP-Jamaat"
(October 5, 2015)

Mustaqeem Asad

So it's always BNP and Jamaat, nobody else!

Is the wolf just around the corner?

CROSS TALK



MOHAMMAD
BADRUL AHSAN

TWO foreign nationals have been slain in this country in the space of five days. Who killed them has got the hierarchy of three answers starting at the bottom rung with the motorbike-riding assailants, who fired the fatal shots. Next is the Islamic State, which allegedly claimed responsibility for both the killings and threatened to kill more. The uppermost layer has the conspiracy theory changing with the sleight of mouth. In short, these two murders are inlaid with three mysteries squeezed into one doubt.

It's possible that all three of these mysteries are real in their respective contexts. The killers killed, the claimants claimed and the conspirators conspired. It's also likely that the murders at once have criminal, militant and political angles to them. All of these three things in this country have reached their boiling points.

Motorbike killers are nothing new for Bangladesh, because these hired hands on wheels have long been a growing menace. They have been carrying out vendetta killings, political assassinations and snatchings and robberies in the streets and alleys of this country for many years now. In the last couple of decades, militants have mushroomed in this terrain and hordes of them being hauled to prison almost every day is failing to stem the flow. And, the political despair has long persisted to

provide a spark for some kind of an ignition.

If the question about who killed the two foreigners engenders three answers, it also engenders three new questions. The first question: Who coordinated the two murders involving criminals, militants and politicians? Secondly, why have they chosen now as their timing for these atrocious acts? Thirdly, why are they targeting foreigners?

It's obvious that somebody is trying to fish in the troubled water. The shooters may have killed for money or

behind the murders, not the IS. The Home Minister has ruled out the possibility of IS footprint in Bangladesh. The American ambassador has informed us that the US is working with Bangladesh to verify the IS claim of killing the foreign nationals. The additional superintendent of police, who is leading a CID probe into the killing of the Japanese national, is convinced that hitmen, not militants, have committed this particular crime.

Sherlock Holmes warns us in *A Scandal in Bohemia* that it's a capital

global attention to these two murders. Foreigners are getting killed everywhere almost every day. The Egyptian army killed eight Mexican tourists last month mistaking them for Islamic militants. Last June, 30 Britons, three Irish, two Germans, one Belgian, one Portuguese, and one Russian were killed in the beach attack in Tunisia. According to statistics from the U.S State Department, 811 Americans died abroad from non-natural causes in 2014.

Hence, it largely hinges on the IS claim. If that proves wrong, the murders will look like street crimes taking the sting out of their investigation. But the nature of the crimes tells us one thing for sure, that these are the work of professional men. Whether those men acted on their own, or on behalf of an extremist group, or a political cartel is critical because that can give us an idea at what rate the fuse is burning to set off explosion.

If criminals collaborated with politicians in this particular instance, they have created an even more fertile ground for extremists. If it has been between extremists and politicians, in that complicity criminals have found their indulgence. And if criminals joined extremists, politicians can still save the day if that's what they want. If all of them joined hands, the countdown to doomsday has started.

For long criminals and politicians have nourished each other, and if the militants have joined them now, that will further complicate the compound. The Aesop's fable adequately warns that every time one cries wolf, the wolf may be just around the corner.

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out of ideological excitement. The IS may have stepped in to expand its jurisdiction, and the local politicians may simply have been tempted to seize the day. But did these three parties find each other at the confluence of their common interests? Or, is there a catalyst that brought them together to increase the rate of reaction without being consumed in the process?

As of now, everything looks iffy and nothing looks impossible. The Prime Minister believes that BNP-Jamaat is

mistake to theorise before one has data in hand. He explains that it leads to insensibility because one begins to twist facts to suit theories instead of theories to suit facts. The government is theorising to blame rival political parties. The opposition parties are theorising to blame the government. But what strikes as odd is that the IS has been mum on this subject except for its dubious tweets.

It's the unconfirmed claim of IS involvement that has drawn so much

GUN POLITICS IN THE US

LAVINA AMBREEN AHMED

ON October 1, President Barack Obama gave an angry speech at the White House Press briefing room, in the aftermath of a deadly shooting in the United States. On that day, nine people were killed at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon. The usually composed President Obama barely hid his rage and frustration for being unable to do anything to prevent these horrific crimes from occurring again and again. The president said that mass shootings in the U.S. "have become routine" and that "people have become numb." But he made an important point. Saying that thoughts and prayers to the victims are not enough, he urged American citizens to take control of the decision making process by voting for the next president whose views reflect theirs.

Gun control is one of the oldest and most contentious debates in the history of US politics. And now that it is election season, it is one of the "hot topics" between Republican and Democrat politicians vying for the highest office in the country. All the Republican candidates are staunch gun advocates and against stricter gun control laws. They quote the Second Amendment in the US Constitution, which guarantees the right of American citizens "to keep and bear arms." This often stated constitutional right of Americans to defend themselves with firearms is as old as the country's history and almost as sacred as the Bible - inalienable and indisputable. Many Republican politicians and the powerful National Rifles Association (NRA) instead argue that the focus should be on "mental illness," since many of the perpetrators of mass shootings were suffering from some sort of mental disorder. The more liberal Democrats feel that this is avoiding the real issue that gun violence is a serious problem in the US, and that it is because of the easy access to firearms.

The Democratic frontrunner Hillary Clinton submitted a proposal on gun control less than a week after the recent Oregon massacre. Describing gun violence as an "epidemic that knows no boundaries," the former Secretary of State presented a gun control plan that is a combination of legislative and executive actions including stricter regulations on gun sales and comprehensive background checks. Clinton calls the NRA members "extremists," and vows to do everything in her power to impose effective gun laws. Her rival for the Democratic Party nomination, Senator Bernie Sanders, an independent from Vermont, is less forceful when it comes to gun control. Although Senator Sanders is known for his very liberal, leftist views, particularly on economic inequality, this is one issue where the Senator is not nearly as passionate or vocal as Clinton or other Democratic leaders. As a matter of fact, he has supported some pro-gun laws in the past.

While the heated gun debates continue, one thing is certain - something has to be done to change the mindset of gun advocates. Australia is a good example of a developed country that curbed gun violence by changing laws. In 1996, a gunman opened fire on a seaside resort in the Australian island of Tasmania, killing 35 people and wounding many more. Twelve



days after the incident, the then newly elected conservative Prime Minister of Australia, John Howard, made a quick and smart decision. His administration announced a bipartisan deal with state and local governments to enact effective gun control measures. The result - there has been no mass shootings in Australia in the last 19 years since the major tragedy. This is proof that stricter gun laws work. Enforcing tough laws may not be able to magically eliminate gun violence from the US or elsewhere for that matter. However, practical measures will certainly reduce the number of mass shootings by making it difficult for mentally disturbed and socially alienated people to purchase weapons.

Although critics in Australia and across the world are quick to chastise the US for not enacting gun reform laws, it is not a straightforward matter. Unlike the Australian Prime Minister John Howard, President Obama does not have the same kind of power to easily make policy changes in the US. President Obama has to deal with structural hurdles every step of the way - from the Republican-led Congress, to politicians who get financial help from gun lobby groups, to even some liberal politicians who don't want to lose the support of their own voters, the impediments are many. And more importantly, the Australian Prime Minister also did not have to deal with the "Second Amendment" that often effectively stops any backlash or political discussion on gun control. That is why Obama directly appealed to voters to take responsibility for the change they want to see. This need of civilians to own guns for self defense may seem bizarre to people in both developing and developed nations outside the US, but the reality is, this is ingrained in the psyche of many American people. There is no way politicians can take away this fundamental right guaranteed by the Second Amendment whether they like it or not.

New York Times journalist Nicholas Kristoff summed up the dilemma perfectly in his article: "We are not going to eliminate guns in America, so we need to learn to coexist with them." He suggests taking a public health approach to dealing with this issue. Kristoff feels the same model used to reduce deaths from car accidents, swimming pools and smoking can be applied to gun deaths to prevent tragedies. Since 1970,

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more Americans have died from guns than in all US wars going back to the American Revolution. Kristoff also points out that in the US more preschoolers are shot dead each year (82 in 2013) than police officers are in the line of duty (27 in 2013). The numbers speak for themselves. The need for US to combat gun violence is now or never.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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The International Day of Older Persons

The International Day of Older Persons was celebrated on October 1, 2015. In Bangladesh, the day has no significance and elderly people do not enjoy any privileges. In USA and most European countries, public buses offer 50 percent discount in the fare for persons aged above 65 years. In India, buses and metro rails have seats reserved for the elderly and there are special counters at buses, railway stations and hospitals for senior citizens.

In the TDS issue of October 1, a letter was published with regard to there not being enough seats reserved for women in buses in Bangladesh. In India and other advanced countries, if bus companies do not ensure reserved seats for women, organisations can sue them.

Reza Hussain
Baridhara
Dhaka

Justice for the victims

Two foreigners have been brutally murdered within the span of one week. Cesare Tavella, an aid worker from Italy, was shot dead in the highly protected diplomatic zone in the capital and after five days Kunio Hoshi, a Japanese citizen, was gunned down by unidentified assailants in Rangpur. It was an extremely cowardly and shameful act. We condemn these heinous acts committed by those trying to destabilise the country and defame its secular image around the world. The ruling party should stop pointing fingers at its opposition BNP-Jamaat. Our PM accused the BNP while she was addressing a press conference in New York. This kind of politicisation of the situation is not only detrimental to the investigation but also emboldens the murderers. We demand that the government nab the culprits immediately and dispense justice and peace to the departed souls.

Nawfal Talukdar
On e-mail