

| SHUTTERSTORIES |



THE CONGREGATION FOR PEACE

PHOTOS: PALASH KHAN
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On the bank of Turag River in Bangladesh, millions of Muslims from all over the world congregate to supplicate before one God. Overcoming all the obstacles, sacrificing all their worldly activities, spending hard earned resources, these devotees come here for a spiritual peace that money cannot buy and even the richest men of the world cannot afford. This three day long congregation is also the annual meeting of the preachers of Islam. Followed by the concluding prayer, these devotees spread all over the world to preach the message of peace, harmony and equality.



| STRIKING A CHORD |



POLICE BRUTALITY ON THE LOOSE

ELITA KARIM
PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Recently, an online news report caught my eye. A young man, on his way back from visiting his brother in Mirpur, was accused of carrying Yaba, eventually being picked up by the police. Apparently, the police had planted the Yaba tablets in the young man's pockets at the check post where he was stopped. And as the story goes, the young man was put inside a van along with a few officers, driving round the city. Clearly the officers wanted money, and the young man was also made to communicate with his brother. Thankfully enough, the authority and the superiors in the police got to know and radioed the police van to let the young man go. (I wonder what happened to the officers who had 'kidnapped' the young man!)

This strikes me as unusual because the incident had occurred right after outrage swept the country over how SI Akash and SI Arshadul Islam Akash of Mohammadpur and Jatrabari Police Stations respectively, had tortured two citizens in Dhaka. Eventually, both the officers were suspended. But what was unusual was that the two examples of the sub-inspectors being suspended did not perturb the officers mentioned earlier. Are the consequences not being taken seriously by the law enforcers at all?

In all the three cases, which thankfully came to light, the police had behaved like complete hooligans. It was just another form of mugging – a frequent criminal activity that occurs in the capital. The citizen would be 'kidnapped' late at night or early in the morning, and would be

beaten to a pulp – either demanding money or showcasing their power.

While kicking and punching with joy, one of the officers apparently screamed at the victim – DSCC Conservancy Officer, Bikash Chandra Das, critically injured in a police brutality attack when he was going

more worse. But the incidents mentioned earlier brings upon a fresh surge of fear within the regular working class in the country. Do we now devise strategies to save ourselves from muggers, *chintakariss*, *malam-parties* and also the police? (One feels ashamed to have written such a line!)

Clearly, these incidents were not isolated ones and quite a handful of them occur every day. The government must take special action against such officials.

THESE INCIDENTS WERE NOT ISOLATED ONES AND QUITE A HANDFUL OF THEM OCCUR EVERY DAY. THE GOVERNMENT MUST TAKE SPECIAL ACTION AGAINST SUCH OFFICIALS. THE AUTHORITIES MUST OFFER COUNSELLING TO DISTRESSED, SICK AND DEPRESSED OFFICERS, SO THAT THEY DO NOT GO AROUND VICTIMISING REGULAR, HARD-WORKING CITIZENS.

to work around 4:15 am – "Macher raja Elish, Desher raja Police" (Hilsa is the king of all fish, the police being the king of Bangladesh". The very thought of law enforcers hoarding such thoughts and ideas within is absolutely sickening and of course frightening.

Of course, such cases continue to occur every now and then, not only in Dhaka, but also outside – which is all the

The authorities must offer counselling to distressed, sick and depressed officers, so that they do not go around victimising regular, hard-working citizens. And also, the general people must come together and voice out against such barbarism. Otherwise, it won't be long before the country begins to disrespect the uniform, experience yet another case of brain-drain and distrusts the law enforcing body.