

When the allegation is of 'death threat' but the investigation is on 'corruption'



GOLAM MERTOZA
The controversies revolving around Mizanur Rahman, Deputy Inspector General of Police, Moazzem Hossain, former OC, Sonagazi Police Station, and Khandaker Enamul Basir, Director, ACC, came to the spotlight in close succession.

Although the news reports prompted public outcry at first, with time, the issues faded away. Then we became aware of their existence once more as they made the headlines yet again. The details of the incidents are enough to create frustration among the general citizens.

Let me come to the issue of DIG Mizan first. Although he came under the scanner in January last year, after some time, we all seemed to forget about him until recently when he became a topic of discussion once again. When we first came to know about him, AKM Shahidul Haque was the IG of police. He had to say this about DIG Mizan: "When a female media professional brought allegations against DIG Mizan, I was the IG of police. Right after getting the complaint, I sent him off to the police headquarters. I formed a three-member probe committee which submitted the investigation report to the home ministry. Now, it's up to them what they want to do with the case."

What was in the report?
"The probe committee found the allegations brought against him to be true. The report was submitted to the home ministry." (DBC News, June 12, 2019)

The allegation against DIG Mizan was that he forced a female media professional to be in a relationship with him. Making false promises, he tortured and abducted her. He threatened the woman over phone saying that he would kill her and cut her body into pieces. Audio and video footages of him threatening the woman had spread in the media.

The woman spoke to the media where she brought the same allegations against DIG Mizan. As the media reported it, DIG Mizan allegedly made death threats to the journalist.

Although the allegations brought against him were proved to be true one and a half years ago, the home ministry did not take any action against him. Former IGP AKM Shahidul Haque punished him by "withdrawing" him from his post at the Dhaka Metropolitan Police. He faced no further punishment. The allegations against him of making death threats to the journalist were never investigated.

Much has been said about whether withdrawing a police official from his post can be termed as "punishment". But this culture in the police force has never changed. After all, DIG Mizan is still in the police force holding the position of a "DIG".

What is surprising is that although the woman brought allegations against him of torturing her, making false promises and death threats, the ACC conducted investigations into his "illegally amassed wealth". There is no doubt that such investigations are important and the ACC has the right to do so. But the question is: are the investigations into his "illegally amassed wealth" intended to bury the allegations made by the woman in question?

The court asked the ACC why DIG Mizan was not being arrested over the corruption allegation and whether he is more powerful than the ACC. But the allegations brought by the female media professional are no longer a topic of discussion. Perhaps, there is no one to raise these questions.

Moazzem Hossain, former OC of Sonagazi Police Station, was arrested 20 days after the arrest warrant was issued against him. The

home minister said that he would be arrested, and he has been arrested. The home minister and the police force have been commended for taking this step. While I too thank them, I would like to raise a question: what are the allegations against OC Moazzem?

After being sexually harassed by the principal of her madrasa, Nusrat Jahan Rafi along with her family members went to OC Moazzem seeking justice. Moazzem illegally filmed her statement and posted it on social media. So, one allegation against OC Moazzem is that he spread the video of the statement which is illegal. But what is the main allegation against him? He as well as the local police force didn't discharge their duty as they did not stand beside Nusrat when she needed them. Instead, OC Moazzem took the side of Nusrat's killers. Although he knew about the incident of harassment and the attempted murder, he told the media that it was "suicide". If the OC had done what he ought to do according to the law, madrasa principal Siraj-ud-Doula would not have been able to take the decision to kill Nusrat. The question is: why was OC Moazzem not named in the charge-sheet of the Nusrat murder case?

There are two interpretations. One, he did not commit a "criminal offence" directly. He neglected his duty, remained inactive, and



Deputy Inspector General of Police Mizanur Rahman (left) and former OC of Sonagazi Model Police Station Moazzem Hossain.

didn't abide by the law. So, he cannot be implicated in the murder case. But the police department can take action against him for his crime.

Another interpretation is that Moazzem not only remained inactive and neglected his duty but also took the side of the killers. He propagated that it was a case of suicide, not murder. If he had performed his duty, Nusrat would still be alive today. His name should have been in the charge-sheet because he supported the killers. Debates regarding this are ongoing and they will likely continue for some time.

Let's now look at the punishment that was awarded to Moazzem. After the allegations were brought against him, the police department "withdrew" him from Sonagazi thana of Feni. He was then transferred to the Rangpur range. After a lawyer filed a case with the court under the Digital Security Act, the court ordered Moazzem's arrest. But the arrest was not made until 20 days after the issuance of the warrant. The DIG of Rangpur range said that Moazzem had gone to Dhaka. Officials in Dhaka then said that OC Moazzem was not in Dhaka. The police department then said that although he was not on leave, he was not attending office. Although his cell phone was on at first, later it was found to be switched off. Then the police admitted that former OC Moazzem was absconding. They said that they would arrest him but it would take time. Now, finally, he has been arrested.

The readers themselves can try to find

answers to the two following questions. First, what actions have the home ministry and the police taken against OC Moazzem? Second, where is the ASP of Feni who wrote a letter to the police headquarters showing the Nusrat murder case as suicide? Has there been any investigation into this?

Let me now come back to the issue of DIG Mizan. He himself claimed that he bribed Khandaker Enamul Basir, the investigation officer of ACC, Tk 40 lakh. To prove his claim, he even released an audio clip on the internet. The discussion is now circling around whether the punishment for giving and taking bribes should be the same. The home minister said that "if the allegations of bribing the ACC official are proved true, DIG Mizan will be punished."

Answering a question, former IGP AKM Shahidul Haque said, "If the allegations of bribing an official are found to be true, then he is guilty. And if they are proved false, he will also be held to account for trying to implicate an innocent person." (DBC News, June 12, 2019).

Although we are being told that action will be taken against DIG Mizan, as far as we know, up until now, no action has been taken. Enamul Basir, the ACC director, has been



Deputy Inspector General of Police Mizanur Rahman (left) and former OC of Sonagazi Model Police Station Moazzem Hossain.

suspended temporarily. The director general of ACC has informed us that Basir has been suspended "not for taking bribes but for leaking confidential information."

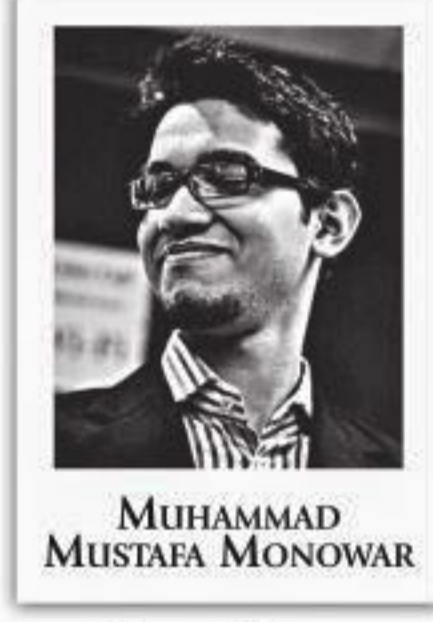
What we gather from the DG's statement is that he cannot take action against Enamul Basir, as the allegations against the latter of accepting bribes have not been proved. If so, then how was he able to take action against Basir on allegations of the latter leaking information since this was also not proved?

Sadly, in Bangladesh, while such instances of torture and harassment are visible everywhere, signs of good governance are not. A person is still holding onto his job even after doling out bribes and circulating an audio footage of a telephonic conversation as proof of his claim. But the main allegations against him have effectively been buried.

While Enamul Basir has been suspended from ACC for a completely different reason, Sonagazi OC Moazzem has been arrested after a lot of drama. It's evident from all this that there is a serious lacking in the enforcement of the rule of law. And this comes as a stark contrast to what we hear on a regular basis: that the country has been making "progress".

Golam Mertoza is a journalist. The article was translated from Bangla by the editorial desk.

How will machine learning shape the future of writing?



MUHAMMAD MUSTAFA MONOWAR
A few days ago, I had performed a Turing test on one of my best critics and keen readers so far: my wife. I showed her a poem and asked her what she thought of it.

"It's a bit repetitive, but otherwise the usual; you have much better pieces," she had remarked. When I told her that it was in fact written by two authors, one human and one a non-human entity, she was deeply puzzled. The poem goes something like this:

"Before you knew I spoke to myself, and I knew I had known you before the universe was born. I'm thinking, the sun's going to get down, so I'll just put it this way, maybe it's going to rain because I've got you and you don't want it to rain, you're all that's left of me and I'm dying."

If you cannot tell which lines were written by me or my co-author AI (Artificial Intelligence), then this was probably well worth your read.

Before this, I had stumbled upon an organisation called Open AI which had in February unveiled "a language model called GPT-2 that generates coherent paragraphs of text one word at a time."

According to their website, Talk to Transformer, the organisation, has decided only to release "small and medium-sized versions of it which aren't as coherent but still produce interesting results" such as the above one.

When I first tested the bot, I was awestruck by the sheer amount of possibilities this technology could lead to. The technology that has been producing these kinds of texts is called machine learning.

Machine learning is a widely used application of AI that allows programmes to learn from extensive datasets without being programmed manually. At the heart of this application are the Artificial Neural Networks, which mimic human neurones and use pattern recognition on a broad variety of data categories and sets to learn and produce similar and fascinating results by themselves.

Uses of this kind of text generation are already happening at large, without many of us understanding it. Take for example the fact that it has the potential to provide an additional tool for content creation. With a very low cost in computational resources, this would mean that content creators with limited or no funds could take advantage of this in a very efficient fashion. Such content, that is, could replace advertisements with texts and be used as a substitute for, say, ads placed by internet businesses or other third parties, thereby creating a more efficient alternative to such marketing techniques.

The words after "the fact that it has" in the previous paragraph were generated by AI. As you can see, this is an extremely efficient way to cut budget for writers—both creative and non-creative. Moreover, it can replace, as the paragraph itself implies, certain writing tasks being automated, leading to job loss for low-cost/low-skilled writers.

Most of us have come across the debate as to whether AI will replace us. Some experts say that they will, sooner or later,

but others have been on the sceptical side.

I have always been a firm believer in human creativity and originality. But seeing new inventions like these sometimes casts doubt on such beliefs. Being creative is a process, not everyone is born creative; it is for the most part a process of rigorous training of experimenting and coming up with aesthetic ideas and innovation. This process involves studying the works of the older generation and then creating something new out of it. If this is an accepted definition of creativity and the creative process, then we are at danger here. Imagine this: it takes almost half a lifetime for a human being to read enough to be able to pick up the art of writing and then actually write and get published, let alone be exceptionally adept in it. It takes a long time to study and absorb the amount of creativity or skills demonstrated above. Imagine a machine doing the same thing—only at a faster speed. What would it mean for the new generation of human writers?

And then, there are concerns for the readers as well. We are already immersed in a world of text and information. Human labour has value, and that is why we still patronise such labour. If you cannot differentiate the text written by a human author from that written by a machine, would you be willing to pay for it as much as you did before?

What about trust and validity? Imagine a rogue programmer, creating a programme to spread fake news. AI is not only good at generating text, but also visuals. Coupled with these, and the wretched wisdom of the crowd, a potentially harmful and seemingly innocent fake piece of news could easily bombard everyone's screen, thus instigating acts of mass violence and hatred. In fact, this may already be happening, and maybe we are not fully aware of it yet.

Does this mean the death of the author as we know it? Does this mean that the profession of writing will eventually perish? I think not. At least not yet.

I can only anticipate that the profession of writing will become a lot harder to pursue in the coming days.

Human creativity, apart from following others and learning certain strategies, also requires raw feelings and emotions. This is the most essential element of being human. We can turn our emotions into a work of art whereas machines can only mimic what has already been felt by others and reproduce from it.

So, what lies in the future? I can only anticipate that the profession of writing will become a lot harder to pursue in the coming days. With that, the demand of human creativity will also rise. The machine cannot create anything on its own. It still needs a human guide. The only hope I see for the near future is collaboration between machines and human writers where, rather than competing with each other, both would complement each other's skills and continue to produce great reads.

Muhammad Mustafa Monowar is currently studying Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science at the University of Birmingham.

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

JUNE 19, 1961
KUWAIT REGAINS COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE FROM BRITAIN

The State of Kuwait marks its Independence Day on June 19, an important date that helped to shape the development of the country. The Kuwaiti people and their late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah realised that the protectorate treaty Kuwait signed with Britain in 1899 was not feasible anymore.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Big finale
7 Frozen desserts
11 Wear down
12 Parent's warning
13 Became unpleasant
14 Therefore
15 Peripheral device
16 Venice sight
17 Canary snack
18 State without proof
19 Guernsey, for one
21 Non-deighton
22 Writer-alcoholic drinks
25 Heir, often
26 Charged atoms
27 History makeup
29 Los Angeles team
33 Floor models
34 Wash against
35 Fix a story
36 Dakota city
37 Hold power
38 Like some chats
39 Expedited
40 Slogged away

DOWN
1 Hacienda homes
2 Home
3 Puritanical person
4 Like lampoon stories
5 Unspoiled spot
6 Primary color
7 Exemplary
8 Ithaca school
9 Hires
10 Hot
16 Spotless
18 Some singers
20 Revue segments
22 Set an earlier time for
23 Eight furlongs
24 Tel Aviv native
25 Passover meals
28 Famous
30 Rainy month
31 1914 battle site
32 Spirited horse
34 Flooring stuff, for short
36 Cook's need

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