

Two killed in 'gunfights'

Rab claims they were accused in several cases

STAR REPORT

Two suspected criminals were killed in "gunfights" with Rab in Gazipur and Narayanganj early yesterday.

The dead in Gazipur is Masud Parvez, 33. His family alleged that one of his friends handed him over to some unidentified men on Monday.

In Narayanganj, Tuhin Hossain, 23, was killed around four hours after he was picked up by Rab men from Cumilla's Rasulpur area.

Md Kamruzzaman, assistant director of Rab-1 in Gazipur, said a team of Rapid Action Battalion raided Saatkhaima Bazar area in Gazipur's Sreepur upazila around 2:30am yesterday on information that a group of robbers was taking preparations for a robbery.

Sensing the presence of law enforcers, they fired shots at the Rab men. The Rab returned shots.

The criminals escaped after sometime. The Rab found a man lying on the ground injured. He was sent to Sreepur Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared him dead, Kamruzzaman said.

The Rab claimed to have recovered several firearms from the spot.

Sreepur OC Liakot Ali said Masud was accused in 11 cases filed with different police stations.

The body was sent to Gazipur Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmad Medical College for an autopsy.

FAMILY'S VERSION
Speaking to The Daily Star, Masud's

mother Rani Begum said her son used to stay at his in-law's house in Mymensingh town.

"Around 4:00pm on Monday, one of Masud's friends went to his in-law's house and got him into a microbus saying that they would go to Gopalganj. But at night, Masud called me and said his friend handed him over to some unidentified people who blindfolded him."

"I may not return home. Please look after my daughter," Rani said, quoting her son.

The Rab claimed that the family's version was not true.

ANOTHER KILLED IN N'GANJ

Maj Talukdar Nazmus Sakib, deputy commander of Rab-11 in Narayanganj, said a Rab team picked up Tuhin Hossain, an accused in several cases, from Cumilla's Rasulpur area around 1:00am yesterday.

Gleaning information from him, the Rab team raided Syedpur area of Narayanganj around 4:00am to recover arms and arrest Tuhin's associates.

Sensing the presence of law enforcers, criminals opened fire at the Rab men, forcing them to return shots, said Talukdar.

At one stage, Tuhin along with his associates tried to flee. He was hit by bullets, but his cohorts managed to escape, said the Rab official.

Tuhin was declared dead by doctors after being taken to Narayanganj General Hospital.

OUR GAZIPUR AND NARAYANGANJ
correspondents contributed to this report.



People switch on the light of their mobile phones as they participate in a football human chain event organised by pro-democracy protesters at Victoria park in Causeway Bay district in Hong Kong yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Migrants in KSA

FROM PAGE 16

To earn back the money, migrants looked for work beyond their contract.

It had not been a problem for them until recently, Shariful said, as Saudi police started strictly enforcing a law forbidding work without work permits.

"There is an increasing trend of deportation for working without permit."

Echoing the views of Shariful, an official at the Bangladesh embassy in Riyadh said according to Saudi law, a foreign worker has to work under the employer who arranged his work visa, and working somewhere else is illegal.

Saudi Arabia, home to around 11 lakh Bangladeshis, had been lenient in enforcing the law until the middle of 2017, but since then it has been strictly enforcing the law, he told The Daily Star by phone, preferring anonymity as he is not authorised to talk to the media.

GOING FOR EXTRA MONEY

Delowar yesterday said he was a caretaker of a building owned by his official employer, but his work contract showed that he was a driver. He used to clean the building, collect rents from tenants, and repaint walls whenever necessary.

As he was done with the job, he cleaned and looked after two other buildings owned by other Saudis for making extra money.

His monthly pay had increased from Saudi Riyal 800 (Tk 18,000) in 2007 to SR 1,200 (Tk 27,000) this year.

"My employer took care of all my needs -- food, clothing and accommodation. He even bought me tickets to come home in every two years," Delowar told The Daily Star over the phone.

He had been working happily until two weeks back when the Saudi police arrested him along with 18 other migrants at a grocery shop.

A father of two boys and a girl, Delowar said he wanted to go back to Saudi Arabia, but he could not because of the ban.

Another returnee, Monir Hossain, still has a debt of Tk 1 lakh that he could not pay back in the last two years.

His brokers took Tk 5 lakh to send him to Saudi Arabia, promising him a job of a machine operator. Later, he found it to be of a construction worker. He got a monthly salary of SR 1,000 instead of SR 1,600 as mentioned in the contract.

"My company didn't have any work for the last five-six months. So we didn't receive any pay," Monir said.

During this period, he switched jobs and worked as a plumber, cleaner and in a clothing factory producing burqas. He earned SR 2,000 to SR 2,200 a month.

"I don't want to go back, but I don't know what I will do here," he said.

The Bangladesh embassy official said they contacted the Saudi interior ministry several times to say that the Saudi law was abused in some cases, as some migrants alleged that they were detained from markets when they were buying daily essentials.

The Saudi ministry provided the embassy with some photographs and said if the workers were buying essentials, they would have been staying in front of the shop, rather than staying behind, the official added.

"Therefore, our advice is that the Bangladeshis should go by the Saudi law," he said.

Dope test for drivers

FROM PAGE 16

Paribahan bus ran over and killed singer and music composer Parvez Rob, when he was trying to board another bus in Turag area.

Two days later, his son Yamin Alvi and some of his friends spotted another bus of the same company in Uttara. When they tried to stop it, the vehicle hit them, badly injuring Alvi and killing one of his friends instantly, police and family members said.

At yesterday's meeting, Enayet Ullah said around 40 to 50 percent of drivers in Dhaka city, especially of buses, are addicted to various drugs, and addiction is the first and main reason for accidents in the capital. "We came to know about it by talking with bus company owners, workers and making field visits."

Enayet, also the convener of Dhaka Sarak Paribahan Malik Sramik Oikya Parishad, a platform of transport owners and workers, said that if a driver tests positive for drug abuse, he will be sent to jail directly and his licence will be revoked.

The mobile courts will test urine samples on the spot, and if the driver is found guilty, one from a pool of

drivers on standby will take the wheel, he said.

Voicing a note of caution, he said, "I am giving you [drivers] more than two months. Those of you, who are addicted, either come back to normal life or give up driving."

Enayet said he has already talked to the secretary of Road Transport and Highways Division and the chairman of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) and promised to assist the move.

Another major cause of accidents is the trip-based operation of buses, which triggers an unhealthy competition between buses, the transport leader said.

Talking about irregularities, Sadiqur Rahman Hiru, senior vice president of Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation, said, "We can't show our face in society for this."

Many bus owners rent out their vehicles to drivers on daily contracts. Under this arrangement, drivers pay a specific amount to the owner and keep the rest to them. To maximise profits, they drive recklessly to make as many trips as possible in a day.

On several occasions, transport leaders had decided to abolish the system, but things have not changed yet.

Enayet yesterday said they have worked to stop the trip system but

could not succeed as many owners reverted to the system again.

"We are working with the city corporations to set up designated ticket counters so that bus owners can sell tickets there and control the buses properly. Once the owners have control over their income, they will stop trip-based operation," he said.

Referring to several media reports on road accidents, Enayet, said, "We have invested a huge amount of money in transport business but we are hearing this kind of news because our sector is full of irregularities. So we have to be strict."

Talking about irregularities, Sadiqur Rahman Hiru, senior vice president of Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation, said, "We can't show our face in society for this."

"Even my granddaughter posted a Facebook status seeking road safety and asked me why we can't ensure safe roads," he said, adding, "If you [drivers] believe that we are working for your wellbeing, it's your duty to protect our honour."

Several drivers and transport owners also spoke at the programme.

Tale of 2 families

FROM PAGE 16

recently and arrested three of its members on Monday.

A laptop, believed to have been stolen from the EC, was also recovered from their possession, the sources said.

The arrestees included Joynal Abedin, an office assistant of Double Mooring Thana Election Office under the EC office in Chattogram.

On Tuesday, Double Mooring Thana Election Officer Pallabi Chakma filed a case against five people, including the three arrestees, with Kotwali Police Station under the Digital Security Act.

ACC Deputy Assistant Director (DAD) Md Sharif Uddin said based on information gleaned from Joynal, they came to know that the arrested used to head one of the syndicates while the other nexus was led by a technical expert at the EC office in Dhaka.

The five accused included Dhaka-based data entry operators Sagar and Satya Sundar Dey. They were on the run till last night, said investigators.

EC investigators said Joynal and his syndicate helped at least 67 Rohingyas get forged NID cards since January last year. They used to charge Tk 50,000 to Tk 60,000 for each forged NID card.

A laptop has been missing for a couple of years and ACC officials discovered the matter during a visit to the EC office in Chattogram on Saturday.

ACC and EC office sources said Joynal created his syndicate with the help of Sagar and Satya. Joynal's brother-in-law, an office assistant at the EC office in Chattogram, is also part of the ring, said the sources.

The brother-in-law used to maintain contact with Rohingya brokers in Cox's Bazar and bring "clients" to Joynal, they said.

EC officials said as punishment for his corruption, Joynal was transferred to other EC offices several times in the past. He, however, "somehow" managed to get back to the workplace every time.

EC sources said two of Joynal's relatives were posted to the Election Commission's offices in Dhaka and Rangamati.

Investigators were working to gather evidence against the suspects, said ACC sources.

Talking about the other syndicate led by the technical expert, ACC investigators said the brother of

the ringleader works at the Double Mooring Thana EC Office while the leader's nephew is a computer operator in Banskhali.

A cousin of the ring leader is a staffer at the Cox's Bazar Sadar EC office while his sister is a data entry operator at Panchali Thana EC office, said the investigators.

Two other cousins of the ringleader work as data entry operator at Bokalhali Upazila EC office.

The syndicate employs 10 to 15 others for outsourcing, the investigators said.

ACC DAD Sharif said, "We've sent a report containing our findings to our headquarters in Dhaka for the next course of action."

He said they would look into the wealth and bank statements of the alleged syndicate members.

NUR MOHAMMAD

ACC officials said they were confirmed that Nur got his NID card after fake information was uploaded to the NID server using an EC laptop with code number 4391.

ACC sources said Nur's application mentioned his permanent address the port city's Panchali area.

THREE ON REMAND

Yesterday, a Chattogram court placed three arrestees, including Joynal, on remand in the case filed over the NID scam.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mehnaz Rahman put Joynal on three-day remand while the other two arrestees -- Bijoy Das, 23, a driver, and his sister Sima Das alias Sumaiya Jahan, 26, -- were placed on one-day remand each.

JCD votes

FROM PAGE 16

M Ilias Ali were elected president and general secretary of JCD through direct voting in 1992.

The JCD council was scheduled for Sept 14, but a Dhaka court issued an injunction on it on September 12. On Tuesday, the JCD councillors made BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman the organisation's guardian.

The JCD's last committee was formed on October 14, 2014, with Rajib Ahsan as its president and Akramul Hasan as general secretary, and it was dissolved on June 3.

ACC sources said the brother of

the other syndicate led by the technical expert, ACC investigators said the brother of

Traditional beliefs, rituals fuel tensions over Mugabe's funeral

APP, Harare

As public wakes for late Zimbabwean leader Robert Mugabe have drawn to a close, traditional chiefs are demanding the body be buried according to spiritual traditions.

Those requests have been part of a dispute over the final burial of Mugabe, who died September 6 almost two years after a coup ended his increasingly autocratic 37-year rule.

He died during a medical trip to Singapore aged 95, leaving Zimbabweans torn over the legacy of a man who some still laud for his role as a colonial-era liberation hero.

Mugabe's burial has already been caught up in a dispute between his family -- who wanted to bury him at his rural homestead Zvimba -- and the government, which pushed for the body to rest at a national monument in the capital.

They finally agreed Mugabe would be buried at the National Heroes Acre monument, in about 30 days, once a mausoleum was built for him.

But Mugabe was a non-practising chief in his homestead, and the burial feud has highlighted the spiritual beliefs, superstitions and rituals surrounding deaths of traditional leaders in parts of Zimbabwe.

Once Mugabe's remains were returned to Zvimba on Monday, traditional leaders demanded the burial remain in line with local rites.

One of the Zvimba chiefs, Raphael Zvikaramba, said they had "so far" accepted the government's proposal, but refused to comment on the details.

"(Zvimba) chiefs are buried in caves and the burial is secretly conducted at night," Mugabe's nephew Dominic Matibiri told AFP, standing outside his late uncle's rural house.

A prominent Zimbabwean traditional healer, Benjamin Burombo Jnr, detailed the cultural beliefs and superstition surrounding the deaths and funerals of chiefs.

The Resident Coordinator system is meant for bringing together different UN agencies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of operational activities at country level.

The PM will join a high-level daylong meeting on universal health

Dhaka to push for stronger

FROM PAGE 16

he told a press briefing at the ministry on the UNGA, which began on September 17.

Hasina will attend the UNGA from September 24 to 29.

The five proposals the PM had put forward in the 72nd UNGA in September 2017 are still relevant, the minister said.

The proposals include: Myanmar must stop the violence