

Mugger stabs five cops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five policemen were stabbed by a mugger on Bangshal Police Station premises in the capital Wednesday night.

The injured policemen are Sub-inspector Robi Ahsan, Assistant Sub-inspector Tajul Islam, constables Nazrul Islam, Sajeb and Shafiqul, said police.

Of them, constable Nazrul was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The rest of the injured members of the police station were released from the hospital after receiving primary treatment, said police.

The incident took place around 11:30pm after a team of police arrested two muggers in the capital's Gulistan area and took them to Bangshal Police Station on a police van.

The accused are Emon, 27, and Jewel, 25, said the law enforcers.

Police took them inside the police station and started searching them.

At one point, one of the muggers brought out a knife and started stabbing the law enforcers indiscriminately, said Alamgir Hossain, sub-inspector of Bangshal Police Station.

This incident happened a day after another policeman was attacked in the capital's Gulistan.

On Tuesday, another youth, aged around 20, stabbed a sub-inspector of Shahbagh Police Station near police headquarters.

The back-to-back attacks on policemen have made their high-ups concerned, according to some officials.

A top official of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Division suspected that the mugger in Bangshal might have stabbed the policemen to flee.

Asked, he said they would investigate the incidents and look into other possible motives too.



A mother covers her son as they lay on the ground after hearing shelling during Ukraine-Russia conflict, in the besieged southern port of Mariupol, Ukraine on Wednesday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

West showcases unity against Russia

Nato bolsters chemical, nuclear defences of its troops on eastern flank as Ukraine war enters second month; US, UK announce fresh sanctions on Moscow

AGENCIES

Western leaders showcased their unity against Russia's war in Ukraine yesterday, with Washington seeking more military aid for Kyiv, Nato assigning more troops to its eastern flank and US, Britain imposing fresh sanctions against Moscow.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky called on Nato, EU and G7 countries all meeting in Brussels to help Kyiv fight the invasion, which has killed thousands and driven a quarter of Ukraine's 44 million people from their homes.

"We agreed to strengthen our deterrence and defence for the longer term. We also agreed to give further support to Ukraine and to continue to impose costs on Russia," Nato Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said after the leaders gathered at the Western military alliance's headquarters.

Nato, which has already massively increased its presence on its eastern borders since the start of the war, with some 40,000 troops spread from the Baltic to the Black Sea, yesterday agreed to set up four new combat units in Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Slovakia. More jets will be deployed, it added.

The United States and its allies are also

working on supporting Ukraine with anti-ship missiles, a senior US administration official said as US President Joe Biden took part in the closed-door session.

Nato said in a statement its continued support to Ukraine, would include helping protect it against potential chemical, biological or nuclear attacks as Moscow's assault on its neighbour entered its second month.

Nato has, however, rejected repeated pleas by Kyiv to defend Ukraine's skies from Russian air strikes, and Zelensky - who joined the Nato summit through a video call - has complained the West had not provided tanks or modern anti-missile systems.

Nato would also not send troops or planes to Ukraine, Stoltenberg reiterated, as the alliance extended its mandate for a year until the end of September, 2023.

"Nato has yet to show what the alliance can do to save people," Zelensky told the summit.

A Nato official estimated that up to 15,000 Russian troops have been killed in Ukraine so far and a total of up to 40,000 have been killed, wounded, taken prisoner or are missing, reports Reuters.

The month-long land, sea and air assault has hit residential areas, schools and hospitals in Ukrainian cities including Kharkiv and the besieged port of Mariupol on the Sea of Azov. Russia denies targeting civilians.

Ukraine yesterday said its forces had destroyed the Russian landing ship the "Orsk" at the Russian-occupied port of Berdyansk on the Azov Sea.

The US and its allies yesterday imposed fresh sanctions on Russia, targeting dozens of Russian defense companies, hundreds of members of its parliament and the chief executive of the country's largest bank.

The US Treasury Department also issued guidance on its website warning that gold-related transactions involving Russia may be sanctionable by US authorities, a move aimed at stopping Russia from evading existing sanctions.

Britain yesterday imposed sanctions on another wave of Russia's lenders including Gazprombank and Alfa Bank, as well as a woman London said was the stepdaughter of Sergei Lavrov, Putin's veteran foreign minister.

The EU was due to announce steps to wean itself off Russian energy.

Arrogance and a disaster Loved ones lost to demons

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certain in terms of international conduct between countries if such behaviour of big countries is not condemned most vociferously. Imagine the state of all small countries sharing border with big neighbours.

Yes, the US did the same in invading Iraq but one wrong cannot be used to justify another.

Yesterday marked one month of Russian invasion of Ukraine, which was in no way a match for the super power that Russia is and could have posed any security threat to its huge neighbour. Within these 30 days, according to the UN, 10 million people have been displaced and 3.6 million made refugees. A total of 977 civilians were killed and 1,500 injured. Unicef says that out of a child population of 7.5 million, 4.3 million are on the run and 1.8 million have become refugees. According to Russian official figures, 498 of its soldiers have been killed and 1,500 injured. WHO verified that during this period 64 hospitals, clinics and other healthcare facilities were destroyed.

How all this made Russia more secure? With so much unjustified destruction of its neighbour, can Russia ever expect good neighbourly relations with Ukraine?

Russian narrative is that Nato came too close to its doorstep and that Ukraine's desire for its membership posed a

security threat. There is merit in this position. Following the collapse of the old Soviet Union, Nato expansion eastwards was irresponsible to put it mildly and provocative in the real sense. Many American foreign policy experts including Henry Kissinger cautioned against Ukraine's inclusion into Nato. But the US was reckless and France, Germany and others were too timid to prevent this dangerous policy.

Nato's expansion was a dangerous game that the US played. But Russian invasion of Ukraine is a far more dangerous game that Russia has started. And the whole world is caught between this reckless game of two superpowers, and the country and people of Ukraine are the casualties.

What Bangladesh and perhaps the rest of the world find it additionally deplorable and condemnable is the threat to use nuclear weapon. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told CNN Tuesday, "We have a concept of domestic security, and it's public. You can read all the reasons for nuclear arms to be used. So if it is an existential threat for our country then it can be used in accordance to our concept." What are we to understand from it? Every country has a right to defend itself. And countries maintain an arsenal of these deadly weapons only for that dreaded day when their "existence" is threatened. But who

is threatening Russia's existence at present? Has anybody attacked Russia? Has a single foreign soldier crossed the Russian border? Has a single bomb been dropped on Russian soil? So what "existential threat" is Peskov talking about?

Like all the peace-loving people, we in Bangladesh want Russian invasion of Ukraine to be stopped immediately. Serious negotiations should start without further loss of time. President Putin has overplayed his cards endangering Russian future as never before - not in security terms, for Russia is powerful enough to protect itself - but in economic terms. If it had any dream of emulating the Chinese economic miracle, that lies in ruins today.

As we sadly observe the first month of this unnecessary tragedy, we are afraid that one small thing will lead to another and soon the big powers will have reached the so-called point of "no-return" and their pompous notions of self-aggrandisement will prevent them from taking rational decisions. We will then enter the world of manufactured events for self-justification and we will lose sight of facts. Let us never forget that the first casualty of conflict is truth, and losing sight of that in a nuclear world makes us all extremely vulnerable.

Stop it now, before arrogance and false pride engulf us all.

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As they shuddered in fear, her husband returned home to the staff quarter around half an hour later.

"Let's flee right now," Sunil told Bakul.

Around half an hour earlier, tanks and truckloads of Pakistani soldiers broke through the boundary wall opposite the UOTC building (now BNCC). They also entered the dormitory through the north and the south gates and fanned out across the premises.

Tracer fire lit up the night sky. Bullets were flying overhead. The sharp cracks of rifles with shelling of mortars were all around. "Operation Searchlight" had just begun.

As Sunil's family and those of his neighbours' stepped outside, they saw the army men lining the students up in the playground and shooting at them. Sunil and the others hid behind a mandap near a tin-shed building for the resident students.

The marauding army men continued their search all over the dormitory. While the family members were hiding, a child suddenly began to cry. The soldiers lit up their torches and found them out within moments.

"They got my husband and dragged him away. I tried holding on to him, but a soldier kicked me hard. I lost consciousness," Bakul told The Daily Star while sharing the horror unleashed on that fateful night.

After regaining consciousness, she walked

a few steps and saw house tutor Anudvaipayan Bhattacharya being dragged away. His hands were tied together with his dhuti, as the soldiers beat him with the rifles. They took him to the line near the southern building of Jagannath Hall.

"They put him in the line and shot him down," said Bakul, now in her mid-70s.

The Pakistani army launched the Operation Searchlight and mercilessly killed the Bangalee members of East Pakistan Rifles and police, students and teachers as well as thousands of common people in Dhaka city.

Jagannath Hall, and Iqbal Hall, now renamed Sergeant Zohurul Haq Hall, Pilkhana, Rajarbagh Police Lines, and Hindu neighbourhoods in Old Dhaka were the main targets.

Dasu Ram Roy was another staff member of Jagannath Hall who was killed brutally. His daughter Giriza Rani Roy saw the shooting.

She said some soldiers forcibly took her father, saying that he should arrange the dead bodies. "My mother fell unconscious after they took away my father. As he was not returning after a long time, I left the house with my grandmother and sister," she said.

"I saw two lines being formed on the field. After a while, a man started firing a machine gun. Everyone dropped to the ground. We couldn't move our feet in fear," she recalled.

When the army men left,

she ran to the playground and started looking for her father.

"I finally found him... Initially I thought he lost consciousness as I could not find any bullet wounds in his body. Then I noticed blood oozing out of his ears. I realised a bullet pierced through his head."

The Pakistani force continued their mayhem until the next day.

Madhusudan Dey, owner of Madhur Canteen in DU, used to live in a house on the eastern side of Jagannath Hall. Madhusudan, his wife, son and daughter-in-law were murdered on March 26.

Arun Dey, the younger son of Madhusudan, said around 7:00am a military vehicle arrived at their house and another stopped in front of Prof Gobinda Chandra Deb's house.

They began asking, "Where is Madhu Da?"

Madhusudan was on the third floor of the building. Someone told the soldiers that he was on the first floor. On reaching the first floor, they learnt that he was in an apartment on the third floor.

Madhusudan opened the door after the soldiers went up there and knocked on the door. The men took him to the apartment next door, said Arun, who was also in the apartment.

"A soldier entered our apartment and started searching. Then he killed my brother and his wife. When they approached to kill my father, my mother said, 'I have lost everything,

Missing UP member found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

The body of a missing union parishad member was found on a paddy field in Manikganj's Satoria upazila yesterday morning.

The victim is Farhad Hossain, 50, recently-elected member of ward-6 of Baraid union in the upazila.

Muhammad Ashraf Alam, officer-in-charge of Satoria Police Station, said they primarily suspected that the victim was strangled.

According to family members, Farhad left home Wednesday afternoon and did not return home.

Court denies Babar bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected the bail petition of Khandaker Mohtesam Hossain Babar, sibling of former minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, and two others in a Tk 2,000cr money laundering case.

Judge Mohammad Narul Islam of the Special Judge's Court-10 in Dhaka passed the order, said sources at the court.

The court also summoned Uttam Kumar Biswas, investigation officer of the case, to specifically inform it about how much money was laundered by all 10 accused in the case.

The judge fixed April 17 for hearing on charge framing in the case.

Teacher suspended for harassing student

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A teacher was suspended on Wednesday for sexually harassing one of his female students in Habiganj's Lakhai upazila.

The accused is Muminul Haque, assistant teacher at Bamai Government Model High School in the upazila.

Earlier, students demonstrated demanding expulsion of Muminul.

The victim's father lodged a written complaints with deputy commissioner of Habiganj and upazila nirbahi officer of Lakhai.

A three-member inquiry committee was also being formed in this regard.

Court accepts charges against 8 in Churihatta fire case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday accepted charges against eight people who were made accused in a case filed over the Churihatta fire in February 2019 that killed 71 people.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Ashek Imam passed the order, court sources said.

The magistrate also sent the case to Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Md Rezaul Karim Chowdhury for next course of action.

The accused are Wahed Mansion owners Mohammad Hasan Sultan and Hossain Sultan Sohel; chemical warehouse owners Intiaz Ahmed, Mohammad Jawad Atir, Mohammad Mozammel Iqbal, Mohammad Nabil, and Mohammad Kashif, and their staffer Mozaffar Uddin.

All the accused are now on bail.



Abdul Khaleq



Roknuzzaman

Ex-MP, another to die

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Abdus Sobhan Tarafdar and Mujahidul Islam Shaheen stood for Khaleq while Gazi MH Tamim, appointed by the state, stood for Roknuzzaman.

The prosecution expressed satisfaction after the verdict as they had pleaded for the maximum punishment.

Defendant's lawyer Matiuur Rahman Akand said the verdict would be appealed to the High Court.

There were four accused in this case. Two of them - Abdullah-hil Baki and Zahirul Islam Tekka Khan

- died during the trial. On March 5, 2018, charges were framed against the accused. A formal complaint was lodged in the case on March 19, 2017.

The accused have been charged with seven counts of crimes against humanity, including murder, rape, detention and torture in different areas of Sadar and Ashashuni upazilas of Satkhira.

Although seven charges were brought against the accused, six charges were presented before the tribunal.