

Dentist a victim of mugging

Say detectives after arresting four

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dentist Ahmed Mahi Bulbul was stabbed to death by muggers in the capital as he tried to resist them on Sunday, said police.

The Detective Branch of police revealed it yesterday, hours after arresting four alleged muggers from Pallabi and Savar in connecting with the killing.

The arrestees are Raihan alias Sohel alias Apan, 27, Rasel Hossain Hawlader, 25, Ariyan Khan Hridoy, 23, and Solaiman, 23.

The muggers are professional, AKM Hafiz Akhter, additional commissioner (DB) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told a press briefing.

The law enforcers also recovered a mobile phone mugged from the victim and a knife used to kill him from the arrestees, he said.

Bulbul, 39, bled to death after being stabbed on his thigh in Mirpur's Kazipara on Sunday morning.

His family suspected that Bulbul, also a contractor, was killed due to professional enmity.

Asked about it, the police officer said they would also focus on the family's allegation during investigation.

According to detectives, five muggers, including the four, were on Begum Rokeya Sarani when an auto-rickshaw carrying Bulbul was passing the area.

Three of them intercepted the vehicle and attempted to mug him. As Bulbul resisted, one of them stabbed him in the thigh, they said.

Raihan is the ringleader of the gang. He was arrested in February last year but got released on bail in recently. Rasel was arrested and also got released last month, said Hafiz.

Asked about any negligence in treatment of Bulbul by Al Helal Hospital, Hafiz said they would also look into it.



After an iron bridge gave way, this sand-laden truck fell into the Chitra river on Jhenidah's Kaliganj-Khajura road yesterday. With the frail constructions of Bailey bridges, such accidents occur almost regularly in different districts of the country.

PHOTO: STAR

CONSERVING BIG CATS OF SUNDARBANS

Comprehensive survey on tigers, preys from April

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The government is going to undertake a major survey to assess the animals that Bengal tigers prey on in the Sundarbans and also monitor the current situation of the habitat under a new project of the forest department.

The authorities will also conduct a tiger census in the world's largest mangrove forest and take measures to reduce human-tiger conflict with an aim to ensure a safe environment for the big cats in the Sundarbans.

The three-year-long project, styled "Sundarbans Tiger Conservation Project" and undertaken by the forest department, will be implemented from April 2022 to March 2025 at an estimated cost of Tk 35.93 crore, said project officials.

The current tiger population in the country is yet to be known as there have been no surveys since 2018. The last survey put number of tigers in the Sundarbans at 114.

In 2010, at a summit in Russia, Tiger Range Countries committed to double the global tiger population by 2022. Bangladesh

was among the 13 countries where tigers still roam in the wild.

The summit had also decided that the countries would conduct surveys every four years.

"Keeping in mind the next tiger summit, we have decided to conduct the census in the Sundarbans and are hopeful to start from October this year," Dr Abu Naser

Mohsin Hossain, divisional forest officer of Sundarbans West Division of Khulna, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"For the first time we are going to conduct a tiger prey animal survey along with the tiger census under this project."

He said in the project they will also see the health condition of the animals and if anything of concern is found, actions would be taken based on the findings.

The major threats to the Bengal tiger are poaching of the animal and its preys, including deer, and habitat loss.

Bangladesh has taken several steps for tiger conservation, including the Tiger Action Plan 2009-2017 and National Tiger Recovery Programme. The second phase of the Tiger Action Plan, which started in 2018,

will continue till 2027.

Project officials said camera trapping method, with the installation of over 200 cameras, will be used to provide data for their movement in the Sundarbans.

They said that under the project, members of village tiger response teams and community patrol group will be trained to raise awareness to reduce human-tiger conflict – one of the major concerns in tiger conservation.

"These two groups are inactive for a long time. So now we are planning to motivate them and make them aware," Mohsin said.

Under the project, the capacity of the forest department in tiger conservation will be enhanced through training and purchase of necessary equipment.

Mohsin said in some spots of the Sundarbans, the male-female ratio of tiger is not balanced, so an initiative may be taken to install a satellite collar on the body of a tiger in the Sundarbans to monitor where there are few or no tigers in the forest.

He said satellite collar will be installed in two tigers to identify the no tiger zone.

Contacted, Dr M Monirul H Khan, chairman of the zoology department at Jahangirnagar University, said it seems that the study is very comprehensive and it would give a clear idea about the Sundarbans tigers and its habitats.



Dhaka stood

FROM PAGE 1

Hasina said the US after 9/11 suggested countries curb terrorism and the then BNP government established Rapid Action Battalion as per their advice.

The PM said there is no doubt that the BNP used Rab indiscriminately, but the elite force worked to curb terrorism, militancy, repression on women, and conducted investigations into murders during the tenure of the Awami League government.

She said some people in the country remain well whenever an "unusual government" stays in power as they become persons of very high importance at that time. "When any democratic process continues in the country, they engage themselves against it."

The leader of the House said some representatives of that vested group went to the USA and filed complaints with the justice department and other offices during meetings. She said no official of the Bangladesh embassy was allowed in those meetings. "And the sanctions came."

Hasina said whenever any Rab member did anything wrong, he was brought to

justice immediately. "Even a minister's son-in-law, who was an army officer, was not spared. He was brought under trial."

The PM mentioned that there is a group of people in the country such as intellectuals or various types of organisations, who job is to earn money by speaking against Bangladesh.

"Whatever you say they don't like it because their income or consultancy will be stopped if they don't speak or defame Bangladesh abroad."

She said those people actually don't want to see Bangladesh move forward.

PM'S HAPPIEST MOMENT IN LIFE

Replying to another question, Hasina said the government is giving houses to the homeless and landless people of the country on the occasion of the "Mujib Borsho".

She said Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's dream was to ensure houses and land for each people of the country.

The PM said she gave a house to a landless person and saw smile on the recipient's face, which was the happiest moment of her life.

Iran again bans women from football stadium

AFP, Tehran

Iran has once again denied women entry to a football stadium to watch an international match, leaving hundreds of ticketed fans locked out, Iranian media said.

The World Cup qualifier against Lebanon on Tuesday night, won 2-0 by Iran, was played at the Imam Reza stadium in the northeastern city of Mashhad.

This city's a mess

FROM PAGE 1

which is partly blamed on the water supply system.

Dhaka is also experiencing fast depletion of groundwater table and pollution in the surface water sources – mainly the rivers in and around the city.

Besides, an invisible killer is wreaking havoc: sound pollution.

The latest report of the United Nations Environment Programme found the city was the world's noisiest in the world with noise level twice the tolerable standard.

The report stated that the average noise frequency in Dhaka stood at 119 decibels, the highest among 61 major cities of the world.

According to the WHO

guidelines, the permissible noise level is 55 dB (decibels) for outdoor residential areas and 70 dB for commercial areas and where there is traffic.

Sound pollution from traffic, construction sites or loudspeakers poses a serious public health risk since regular exposure to high levels of noise causes hearing loss and other health complications.

What makes the city dwellers suffer further day in and day out is the horrendous congestions on roads.

Traffic jams at certain hours are quite common in megacities around the world but what the commuters face in Dhaka is a total chaos and mismanagement.

In the World Traffic Index

2020 of user-contributed database Numbeo, Dhaka has ranked 10th in terms of poor traffic management among 228 cities.

The major factors behind this are absolute shortage of roads and inefficient traffic management. Besides, the existing public transport system fails to address the desirable mobility needs of the people in terms of reliability, comfort, speed and safety.

The list of problems doesn't end here.

Waterlogging is acute and the drainage system is precarious. Because of unplanned urbanisation, illegal occupation and encroachment of wetland and water bodies and indiscriminate dumping of garbage, a couple of hours'

rainfall inundate most of the roads.

The shortage of parks, playgrounds and green spaces have turned Dhaka into a gloomy city.

So, what can be done?

Urban experts suggest the government needs to go for simple, practical, people-oriented policy interventions to achieve sustainable urban environments.

Cutting down the pollution by switching to environment friendly and renewable resources, enforcing strict road traffic laws, increasing investment in the public transport system, discouraging the use of personal vehicles and making the stakeholders accountable could be some steps, they said.

Iqbal Habib, joint

secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, said Dhaka has become unlivable due to the lack of political will.

"It is possible to make the city liveable. It would not take more than two to three years to cut the air and noise pollution by around 60 percent," he said, stressing the need for adopting newer approaches.

ABM Badruzzaman, civil engineering professor of Buet, said the way the city is running, it seems nobody is there to take care of the things.

"The whole Dhaka city is a mess. I don't see any light at the end of the tunnel. There are a number of laws but their implementations are almost absent."

Badruzzaman, also a noise pollution researcher, said to make the city liveable, improving the public transport system should be given priority. Another crucial task that needs to be done is decentralisation, he added.

Communications expert Md Shamsul Hoque said a coordinated effort along with the determination to change is required to make the city liveable.

He noted that Dhaka is a victim of "scattered development" and the regulatory authorities should be held accountable.

"Integrated planning is required to make the city liveable. All it requires is the government's strong will alongside policymakers' good intention," he added.

Two UK judges resign from Hong Kong's top court

AFP, London

Two UK Supreme Court judges yesterday resigned from Hong Kong's top court, as the government in London said it was "no longer tenable" for its judges to serve in the former colony.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said senior UK judges continuing their roles risked "legitimising oppression" following the imposition of China's controversial national security law in 2020.

UKRAINE WAR IMPACT

Transport, agri production costs may spike

Foreign minister tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fuel prices would rise further in the international market if the Russia-Ukraine war prolongs, said Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday.

That would lead to increased transport and agricultural production costs, he said in response to a question from Awami League MP Shafiqul Islam in parliament.

Bangladesh currently imports 50 lakh tonnes of diesel, 13 lakh tonnes of crude oil, 2 lakh tonnes of furnace oil and 1.20 lakh tonnes of octane every year.

The fuel price is now at a nine-year high, said Momen, who is now on a four-day visit to Sri Lanka.

The ministers' answers to the lawmakers' questions were tabled in the House.

The foreign minister said the country now incurs a loss of more than \$15 crore every day through buying fuel at the current international price and selling it in the local market.

Although Bangladesh does not import much wheat from Russia and Ukraine, the supply would be affected due to the global market situation, he added. Momen said if the war continues, there is a risk of an increase in freight rates and insurance fees for cargo ships.

He said Bangladeshi companies that have agreements with Russia must be careful when making payments due to the SWIFT ban.

The Rooppur nuclear power plant construction project could be adversely affected, Momen said.

In 2018, Bangladesh inked a \$1,138 crore loan agreement with Russia for its construction.

Discussions are going on between Russia and Bangladesh on what could be an alternative system to financing and repaying loans for the ongoing projects, he added.

UNIVERSAL PENSION

Allowance to be disbursed thru' e-transfer

Says draft law

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pensioners will receive their monthly allowance on time under the Universal Pension Scheme by way of electronic fund transfer thanks to a clause in the draft National Pension Authority Act 2022.

For this, a centralised and automated pension disbursement infrastructure will be created, according to the draft law, which has been uploaded on the finance division's website for opinions and suggestions.

Once enacted, the national pension authority law will pave the way for a National Pension Authority (NPA), the statutory body that will launch the universal pension scheme and ensure its management.

Headquartered in Dhaka, the NPA will be comprised of an executive chairman and four

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