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## DHAKA UNDERWORLD Top criminals hold the reins from abroad

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Several Bangladeshi mob bosses holed up abroad have been pulling the strings behind criminal activities here with the authorities unable to bring them back for trial.

Over a dozen top criminals fled the country about two decades ago, and many of them managed to obtain citizenship in different countries.

Law enforcers say their links to tender grabbing at government offices and extorting business people often crop up during investigations.

The connections of notorious criminals Jisan Ahmed and Jafar Ahmed Manik with the murders of Awami League leader Jahidul Islam Tipu and college student Samia Afran Jamal Prity have once again put them under the spotlight. The murders took place on the street in the capital on March 24.

Accused in at least eight cases, including six for murders, Jisan came into focus after he was accused of shooting two Detective Branch officers dead at a hotel in the capital's Malibagh in 2003.

He is on the list of 23 top criminals published by the home ministry over two decades ago. The ministry announced bounties of up to Tk 1 lakh for information leading to his arrest.

Manik, on the other hand, used to control the underworld of Motijheel. He fled to India and now travels between India and the USA, said police.

Some of the others on the list are Prokash Kumar Biswas, Trimoti Subrata Bain, Khandaker Tanvirul Islam Joy, Mollah Masud, Nabi Hossain, and Aminur Rasul Sagar alias Tokai Sagar. Interpol red notices have been issued for their arrest.

Other than those named on the list of 23 criminals, mob bosses Bikash Kumar Biswas, Naruttam Saha Ashiq, Shaheen Shikder, Shahadat Hossain, Robin, Sakhat Hossain Chanchal, Dalim, and Mehedi often make headlines for trying to extort people in Dhaka city with threats.

An official at the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police said their local cronies do not hesitate to shoot and kill people who refuse to pay extortion money.

People who receive the calls from the expatriate mobsters often do not dare inform the police, he said. Police and Rab officers monitoring the criminals' activities for years said a lack of concrete information about their whereabouts is a major challenge.

Sadly, the law enforcers do not have biometric data of the 23 criminals, which is a barrier to proving that they are Bangladeshi criminals, they added.

An official of the National Central Bureau (NCB), the focal point for Interpol in Bangladesh, said the investigating units of police often cannot provide specific information about the criminals' whereabouts abroad.

However, a top Rab official said they cannot keep watch on Bangladeshi criminals staying abroad. So, they need

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**FEASTING ON TURAG ...** Encroachers sand-fill the Turag past the concrete boundary markers near Birula bridge in Dhaka. Locals say the grabbers sometimes use heavy equipment to move the pillars after midnight. Vessels carrying sand are seen moored to both banks of the river. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

**Positivity rate creeps up**  
It's now 8.62pc, one dies of Covid

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

The daily positivity rate of Covid-19 continued to rise for the seventh consecutive day yesterday, indicating a fresh increase in transmission following its fourth wave.

The positivity rate was 8.62 percent yesterday against a total of 2,574 tests, nearly double of 4.93 percent against 4,659 tests on September 4.

"Considering the daily number of fresh cases, it can be said the transmission has started rising again. If this continues, we will witness the next wave of Covid-19 shortly," Mushtaq Hussain, consultant to the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), told The Daily Star.

He said the total number of fresh cases detected in the past seven days was more indicative than the positivity rate.

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## FEMALE MIGRANTS IN SAUDI ARABIA Lure of good days lands them in nightmare

JAMIL MAHMUD and RASHIDUL HASAN

When Julekha Begum left the country in mid-February for a housekeeper job in Saudi Arabia, she promised her seven-year-old son of better days.

The wage of 1,000 Saudi riyals (about Tk 26,000) for two years seemed attractive to her poor family in Kamolganj, Moulvibazar.

"But I returned home empty-handed four months later, barely able to walk as my employer beat me up with a rolling pin and fractured my leg," the 40-year-old woman told The Daily Star.

Julekha said she was treated in Riyadh for a month before the family of her employer sent her home to avoid a lawsuit. "When I worked there, my female employer would beat me up over trifles and they paid me in full only for two months."

Like Julekha, many Bangladeshi women return home after enduring torture and abuse at the hands of their employers in the Gulf state.

The Obhibashi Karmi Unnayan Programme (Okup) which provided reintegration support to Saudi-returned women migrants between April 2020 and July 2022 found that 80 of the 156 women returned home before completion of the two-year contract while 50 of them returned within a year.

A 2019 expatriates' welfare ministry report found that 102 women returned from Saudi Arabia before completion of their two-year contract and 84 of them returned in less than one year. Only 16 returned on completion of the full tenure.



The report, submitted to the parliamentary standing committee on the expatriate welfare ministry, identified nine causes for female migrants' early return from Saudi Arabia with irregular payment (48 cases) topping the list followed by physical and sexual abuse (38 cases), inadequate food supply (23 cases), physical illness (10 cases), and being forced to work in more than one homes (seven cases).

Migrant rights activists say recruiting agents in both Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia should be held accountable for such abuse.

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## MISSING YOUTHS Radicals out to swell ranks

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Once again, youths are leaving their homes after being indoctrinated into extremism online, found law enforcers working to combat terrorism.

Just a week after seven young men went missing in Cumilla, four others in the same area left their homes on September 1. The Rab, however, claims it apprehended the four, aged 17 to 17, soon afterwards.

Commander Khandaker Al Moin, director of Rab's legal and media wing, confirmed the development to The Daily Star yesterday.

"We took the four to the 'centre to deradicalise' and ensured they were in touch with their families. They were also being motivated to return to a normal life."

On September 6, they were returned to their families.

Moin said the four had connections with the seven who went missing on August 23.

"All of them were brainwashed by the same outfit - [Al-Qaeda inspired] Ansar-Al Islam ... We were confirmed about this after interrogating the four that we rescued. We suspect more people are involved with the group."

Besides Cumilla, there has been

**"All of them were brainwashed by the same outfit - [Al-Qaeda-inspired] Ansar-Al Islam ... We were confirmed about this after interrogating the four that we rescued ..."**

information on some young men missing from Chandpur district as well, said the official.

Moin further said they suspect Ansar Al Islam has been playing a key role behind all the recent disappearances as the outfit chooses this method of "keeping their contacts close" and making them perform "hijrat".

"Hijrat" is an Arabic word, derived from "hijr," which means "to depart." It is also used for "to shift" or "abandonment." In Islam, it generally means "to give up one's own land" or "to migrate from one place to another place" mostly for the sake of Deen/faith and Allah.

Till yesterday, the seven missing since August 23 could not yet be traced.

In July last year, four other young men have left their homes in Sylhet.

They are also believed to have been radicalised by Ansar Al Islam, also known as the Bangladesh chapter of Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS).

In August last year, the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit claimed at least 19 people went missing from Narayanganj's Arahazar Upazila.

Since the seven have been missing from Cumilla, law enforcers have begun making

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## Allow Rohingyas to work Urge diplomats as repatriation continues to be elusive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh government should provide the Rohingya refugees with livelihood opportunities as their repatriation to Myanmar would not be taking place anytime soon, said diplomats yesterday.

"We are holding Myanmar accountable in the United Nations Security Council. However, the current dispositions in the security council do not make it easy," said Robert Chatterton Dickson, the British high commissioner to Bangladesh.

Dickson's comments came at a programme organised by the Bangladesh Centre for Indo-Pacific Affairs, a platform founded by the faculty members of the Department of International Relations at Jahangirnagar University, at the Amari Dhaka.

"We are making sure that the Rohingya conflict is not forgotten among the many conflicts in the world. However, there is a need for the Rohingyas to lead a decent life here - ideally, livelihood-generating activity, or at least voluntary activity."

To penalise Myanmar for the Rohingya genocide, the UK is discouraging trade relations with the Southeast Asian nation, Dickson said.

"The UK has an extremely small foreign direct investment in Myanmar. We actively discourage British companies from supporting the regime," Dickson added.

Livelihood opportunities must be allowed inside the camps because this will cut down on crime, said Ito Naoki, the Japanese ambassador to Bangladesh.

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The locally made vehicle, powered by a tiller machine, has no safety mechanism and is illegal. Yet, many people are travelling on it, risking their lives. The three-wheelers seen in the background are also illegal as they cannot be registered with the BRTA. The photo was taken recently on Tongbari-Munshiganj road.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



**PM to leave for UK, US on Thursday**

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will leave on September 15 for a 15-day visit to the UK and the US.

During the visit, she will attend the UN General

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NOTICE

We have brought out a four-page colour supplement on THE DAILY STAR-DHL BANGLADESH BUSINESS AWARDS 2021 with our regular Star Business pages today. Please look out for your copy.