

Custodial torture or bike accident?

DMP, PBI probes come up with conflicting reports over torture of jewellery-shop worker

MUNTAKIM SAAD

A jewellery-shop worker was allegedly picked up, beaten with cricket stumps and given electric shocks by errant cops on February 11, 2019.

As per allegations, the incident culminated in the seizure of gold valued at Tk 11.58 lakh and Tk 41,300 in cash. He was released upon a payment of Tk 2 lakh made by his family members to the cops involved.

Later, Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Professional Standard and Internal Investigation Division withheld five consecutive yearly increments of three police officers, after a probe found them guilty of the crime.

DMP conducted the probe in phases between May 2019 and March 2020 before submitting the report on January 22, 2022.

However, just months after, the Police Bureau of Investigation probed the same incident and came up with a different narrative.

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At the station, SI Mizan and ASI Farid beat Rajib with a cricket stump in lockup, causing him to faint. When he regained consciousness, ASI Farid and SI Jalil tortured him again, this time with electric shocks. He was then taken to Mitford Hospital (Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital) and given treatment there.

back to the police station, where his phone was returned to call home for money.

Rajib claimed he was released after paying those officers Tk 2 lakh.

The Daily Star tried to get in touch with the accused, who were no longer with Kotwali Police Station, but they did not pick up their phones despite multiple attempts.

PBI FINDINGS
In response to Rajib's case, the court tasked PBI with carrying out an inquiry into the complaint.

In his report, Miah Kutubur Rahman Chowdhury, the then additional superintendent of police at PBI, ruled out any incident of custodial torture.

"When the police officers were taking Rajib to the police station on a motorbike, he tried to flee and fell from the bike," his report said.

After first aid, Rajib was kept in the lockup of the police station. Sometime later, when he started feeling unwell, the duty officer sent him to Mitford Hospital.

Contacted, Kutubur, who went on retirement in January this year, said he prepared the report based on statements from witnesses and persons relevant to the incident.

"I knew that the departmental probe had found evidence of an illegal raid. As per the court order, I probed the allegation of torture in custody."

When this reporter told him the DMP probe also found evidence of custodial torture, he claimed that he was unaware of it.

Contacted, PBI's current chief Banaj Kumar Majumder defended the PBI probe. "The mistake on the part of the then Kotwali police officers was that they didn't properly keep a record of the chain of events. They have a record of some of the things that happened in between. If he [SI Mizanur] noted down the entire incident in the GD [general diary], the whole procedure [drive] would not be illegal," he said.

DMP FINDINGS
Prior to the PBI report, DMP found that Rajib was apprehended

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PBI is trying to save the accused police officers. I filed a no-confidence petition against the PBI report in March. The court has fixed multiple hearing dates but yet to record my statement.

RAJIB KAR

'Victim' of custodial torture

Hospital records show that Rajib was taken there for treatment at 5:30am.

According to his medical report, the 28-year-old had injuries on his upper and lower lips, right index finger and ring finger, and sustained trauma to his back and both arms, which were inflicted by blunt weapons.

From the hospital, Rajib was taken

ROAD ACCIDENT

Tk 10 lakh demanded for each deceased

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity, a group working on road safety, yesterday demanded Tk 10 lakh for the family of each victim killed in road accidents and Tk 5 lakh for those injured.

It also demanded full implementation of the existing law in all road accident cases.

According to the existing law, families of each deceased are entitled to Tk 5 lakh and the injured Tk 3 lakh from the road accident victims' financial assistance fund.

On the eve of National Road Safety Day, Mozammel Hoque Chowdhury, secretary general of the Samity, placed the demands at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity in the capital yesterday.

According to the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), around 4,016 road accidents occurred from January to September this year, killing

3,727 people and injuring 5,781.

According to those statistics, the families of the deceased are entitled to Tk 186.35 crore and the injured are entitled to Tk 173.43 crore in compensation, he said.

On Thursday, for the first time, the government provided compensation worth Tk 7.8 crore to 162 road crash victims and their families.

Mozammel also said even though the BRTA and the Road Transport and Bridges Ministry have formed Road Safety Units, they do not have any research to prevent road accidents.

As a result, the number of road accidents and deaths is increasing every year.

Jatri Kalyan Samity also demanded an extension of the deadline for applying for financial assistance to one year from one month, transparency and accountability in releasing the fund, and introduction of an e-traffic prosecution system with CCTV cameras.



The second phase of construction work of Dhaka Elevated Expressway is underway. Work is going on around the clock to enable easy access from the airport to Kutubkhali area. The photo was taken in the Moghbazar area recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Comprehensive law need of the hour

Speakers tell roundtable on road safety

UNB, Dhaka

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday called for a comprehensive road safety law to achieve Sustainable Development Goals and the UN's Global Plans to reduce casualties from road accidents by half.

They made the call at a roundtable on "Road Safety Law: Bangladesh Perspectives" organised by Road Safety Coalition Bangladesh at a Dhaka hotel.

Deaths and injuries are preventable if the road safety issue is prioritised alongside developing infrastructures on roads, speakers said.

A strong policy with necessary legal framework is also needed, they added.

The speakers mentioned that developed countries have framed their legal and policy frameworks in light of a "safe system approach" to achieve safer roads.

The law must include evidence-based road safety measures following five steps recommended in the Global Plan, including multi-modal transportation, safe road infrastructure, post-crash response and safe road use.

Brac Road Safety Director Nazmul Hossain, Nirapad Sarak Chai Chairman Ilias Kanchan, and Buet Prof Mahbubur Rahman Talukder spoke, among others.

Dengue claims 20 more lives

STAR REPORT

At least 20 more people died from dengue in 24 hours preceding 8:00am yesterday as the country grapples with a record outbreak of the mosquito-borne disease. Of the 20 deaths, 10 were reported in the capital.

At least 1,889 dengue patients were hospitalised in the 24-hour period, according to data from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Dengue has so far claimed at least 1,246 lives this year and nearly 252,990 were infected, making this the deadliest year since the first recorded

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Reunited after 35yrs

Brac helps man return to his family after being stranded in Pakistan



PHOTO: COURTESY

Abdul Jabbar with his family members.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Brac Migration Programme on Friday night handed a man to his family members, following his return to Bangladesh from Pakistan after 35 years.

Abdul Jabbar, 70, had reportedly been stuck in Karachi all these years, while en route to Iran for a job arranged through a middleman, as per information from Brac and his family.

Shariful Hasan, the associate director of Brac Migration Programme, yesterday said they have handled a minimum of 10 cases in the last six years, involving the need to locate the families of returnees and reunite them following a prolonged lack of communication.

In the past six years, Brac Migration Programme provided support to about 34,000 returnee migrants. Out of these cases, Brac had to find families of 124 returnees and reunite them, Shariful told this newspaper over the phone.

As part of its initiatives, Brac Migration Programme provides various support services to both returnee and outbound migrant workers at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the capital.

Shariful said they learnt about Jabbar's case when his son Kamal Hossain communicated with them a couple of months back and sought support to get back his father.

He said Jabbar returned home on a flight on Friday night.

Later, he was taken to Brac's welfare centre in Ashkona where his family members were waiting, he said. After due procedure, Jabbar was handed over to his family around 11:30pm that night.

Kamal told this newspaper over phone that when his father left the country in 1988, he was in

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PRAYER
TIMING
OCTOBER 22

Fajr

Zohr

Asr

Maghrib

Esha

AZAN 4:50 12:45 4:00 5:36 7:15

JAMAA 5:25 1:15 4:15 5:39 7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION