

## UPDF member shot dead in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

A member of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) was shot dead by unidentified assailants at Santi Bikash Karbaripara in Khagrachhari's Dighinala upazila early yesterday.

The deceased, identified as Junel Chakma, 31, was an organiser of the Tarabunia unit of UPDF (Prasit Group) from Amtoli village in the upazila.

According to Nurul Haque, officer-in-charge of Dighinala Police Station, some three to four unidentified armed assailants broke into the house of Master Lalit Chakma in the Kangarima Chara area early in the morning, where Junel was staying, and killed him.

Upon receiving the information, police recovered the body and sent it to Khagrachhari Sadar Hospital for an autopsy.

"It was not immediately clear who were the persons involved in the killing," said the police official.

Meanwhile, Angya Marma, district organiser of UPDF, accused the reformist Jana Samhati Samity (JSS-MN Larma) and UPDF (Democratic) of being responsible for the killing and demanded justice.

However, both groups refuted the allegation and denied their involvement in the incident.

Junel had recently joined the UPDF from the Democratic Jubo Forum, reports UNB.



With the nine-hour curfew break ending soon, people who've just got off work are in a hurry to return home before the curfew is back on. The result is standstill traffic on the streets, with many opting to go on foot. The photo was taken around 5:00pm in the capital's Panthapath area yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Block raids unnerve city residents

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to identify the troublemakers and trace their whereabouts," an officer said, requesting anonymity.

Law enforcers say these raids are meant to arrest four types of suspects -- those who ordered violence, provided funds, supplied firearms and those who took part in the violence.

But locals who witnessed such raids say law enforcers usually look for students, and if they find any, they check their phones, which is a breach of privacy.

"On Friday night, numerous police loaded in five trucks and many police vans and other vehicles cordoned off our area. They ordered students from many buildings to go on to the streets and stand in a single file. The street lights were off, but the headlights of their vehicles were directed at us. They said they would not arrest us this time; but we must leave Dhaka in three days," a student of a top public university said.

As the students said they offered private tuitions to support their education and so they cannot leave Dhaka now, some officers hit them and asked them to "shut up," the student said.

The Daily Star is not naming the student and the area where the raid took place for his safety.

Locals also saw helicopters flying low during these raids in some cases.

### AUXILIARY FORCES

On Wednesday night, police arrested Fazlur Rahman, a manager at a courier service, from Manik Nagar during such a raid.

"Police checked Fazlur's cell phone and found a video clip of the clashes. This is why they arrested him," said one of his relatives, on condition of anonymity fearing reprisal.

Biplob Kumar Sarkar, joint commissioner (operation) of the DMP, said they will make sure that no troublemaker can leave Dhaka.

"The miscreants have gone into hiding, but we have been conducting block raids. Besides, police drives are underway day and night in Dhaka. No matter where they flee, we will arrest them," Biplob told a media briefing.

Sources in law enforcement said they already identified several thousand people who joined violence at different points in Dhaka.

A top DMP official said the plan to conduct violence was hatched at least a month ago by opposition party leaders and activists.

For the block raids, areas like

Mohakhali, Mohammadpur, Jatrabari, and Uttara are on top of the list as some of the fiercest clashes took place in these areas.

Left Democratic Alliance (LDA), a platform of eight left-leaning parties; Anti-Fascist Leftist Association, a platform of six parties; and Bangladesh Jasdor yesterday said the mass arrest of innocent students and people by flashing searchlights from helicopters during block raids joined in by Chhatra League Jubo League activists to tract down the protesting students and other people brings to mind the activities of Razakar, Albadr and other collaborators who aided the Pakistani army as auxiliary forces to identify the houses of freedom fighters.

A statement of the platforms demanded "an immediate end to repression, torture and mass arrests, withdrawal of curfew, return of army personnel to barracks and ensure normal environment."

### PANIC ALL AROUND

The block raids have created a sense of fear among students and their families in many parts of Dhaka. Many of these families have already left their homes and seeking every opportunity to leave Dhaka, said witnesses.

Witnesses from areas adjacent to ECB Chittagong and Matikata area also said law enforcers carried out block raids in their areas too.

Late on Thursday night, a joint operation was conducted in Shaheen Bagh area of the capital. At that time, locals saw helicopters flying low and using searchlights.

"Use of searchlights from helicopters was terrifying," said a witness, recalling the memories of such choppers opening fire on the protesters.

"THIS IS NOT FAIR"

Locals from Bashundhara residential area said law enforcers conducted raids in the posh neighbourhood on Thursday night. Before the raids, police announced that no one should remain out of the house after 5:00pm. As the evening wore on, the presence of law enforcers increased.

A video footage shows members of the law enforcers firing when someone tries to capture the raid from top of a building. The video went viral on social media.

In Mohakhali, electricity connection was snipped before a block raid.

Panicked, many families left their homes and took shelter elsewhere for safety.

In Jatrabari for example, The Daily Star found several homes empty.

"Among 22 families living in our building, there are only eight now. All other families have left Dhaka. Those who could not leave are thinking of shifting to someplace else," said a resident in Jatrabari.

"Police are making the common people extremely nervous. This is not fair, and it will not help improve the situation," he said.

"From our balcony we saw some policemen beat up two people for

several minutes, forced them to do sit-ups and made them say they will never participate in protest again," he said.

### FEAR OF HELICOPTERS AGAIN

Many families in Jatrabari shared almost similar accounts.

"The local Chhatra League activists also joined the police during the raid and helped them identify houses where protesters live or the houses that provided food and water to them," said a witness to a block raid in Matuail.

A large number of law enforcers carried out raids on different houses in Mirpur 12 DOHS. Many students of different universities located near DOHS live there.

They said that during the raids, they looked for students and police checked their phones.

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She questioned why the "complete shutdown" continued after the apex court issued status quo on the quota issue making no quota in the government jobs.

"I don't know why their shutdown was not stopped despite meeting all of their demands."

Hasina urged the people to stand against violence and support the government's efforts to maintain peace and progress.

"I do not want to see mothers losing their children like this. I have lost my parents; I know the pain. I seek cooperation from all to prevent such tragedies," she said referring to the deaths.

The premier reiterated that her government would do everything to ensure proper treatment of the deaths.

They briefed the premier about the vandalism and arson attacks that took place on July 18.

She said the government will

provide artificial limbs to those who need them.

During her visit to the Pangu hospital, the PM enquired about the treatment of the injured people.

Minister Kazi Shamim Uzzaman apprised the PM of treatment of the injured.

Health Minister Samanta Lal Sen and State Minister for Health Rokeya Sultana, and former health minister AFM Ruhal Haque were present.

### PM VISITS SETU BHABAN

Later in the day, Hasina visited Setu Bhavan to witness the damage caused by the recent violence.

She inspected the vandalised floors and the premises of the building.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader and other senior ministry officials were present.

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