

MP AZIM KILLING DNA reports confirm remains belong to him

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

DNA tests by West Bengal CID have confirmed that human remains recovered from a septic tank and canal belong to former Bangladesh MP Anwarul Azim Anar, who was killed in Kolkata.

Azim, a three-time Awami League MP from Jhenaidah, was allegedly murdered in a New Town flat on May 13, a day after arriving in Kolkata for medical treatment.

CID investigators recovered body parts during searches and sent them for forensic analysis. DNA samples collected from Azim's daughter, Mumtaz Ferdous Doreen, during her visit to Kolkata in November matched the recovered remains, a senior CID officer confirmed.

"The DNA test reports confirmed the remains belonged to MP Anwarul Azim Azim," the officer said, adding that the samples were analysed by the Central Forensic Science Laboratory.

Kolkata police initially confirmed Azim's murder on May 22, following his disappearance. Flesh specimens were retrieved from a septic tank in North 24 Parganas, and bones were found on the banks of a nearby canal in South 24 Parganas. Investigators suspect Azim was strangled, dismembered, and the remains disposed of in multiple locations.

Kolkata police handed the case over to CID, while Dhaka Metropolitan Police's detective branch arrested seven suspects, and West Bengal CID apprehended two others.

Azim's business partner, Aktaruzzaman Shaheen, an American national and the alleged mastermind, remains at large.

Authorities in both countries continue their investigation into the high-profile case.



Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus presents the "Art of Triumph", an artbook prepared by Bangladeshi students after the July mass uprising, to Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi. The photo was taken at the Presidential Palace in Cairo on Thursday. PHOTO: PTD

Take risks to fulfill dreams Yunus urges Egypt university students

BSS, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus urged students of Al-Azhar University to take risks to fulfil their dreams in life.

He was delivering a lecture at the university in Cairo on Thursday night.

Referring to challenges he faced during the establishment of Grameen Bank, he said the people of Bangladesh are enjoying the benefits from the bank today as he accepted the challenges.

"If you don't have a dream, you won't succeed in life," he told the students.

Referring to his "Three Zero Theory", the Nobel Laureate said it is urgent to give importance to these three issues -- zero carbon emission, zero poverty and zero unemployment -- to move the world forward.

Earlier, Al-Azhar University President Prof Salama Dawoud welcomed Prof Yunus on his arrival on the university campus.

ALL THREE HOSPITALS RUN BY DSCC

Limping along due to shortage of manpower, limited resources

DIPAN NANDY

Acute manpower shortages, underutilised facilities, and the plights of patients—these are the things this correspondent observed while visiting all three hospitals under Dhaka South City Corporation.

These hospitals serve as a crucial lifeline for the lower-middle class and impoverished communities, offering essential medical services at affordable rates. However, the reality is that these institutions, are now limping along, struggling under the weight of neglect and mismanagement.

Patients, many of whom rely on these hospitals as their sole recourse for treatment, often find themselves waiting for hours, even days, for attention, while doctors and nurses are stretched too thin to offer the level of care that's desperately needed.



Service seekers wait for a long time at the outpatient department of Dhaka Metropolitan Children's Hospital. PHOTO: DIPAN NANDY



Empty beds at the high-flow oxygen ward at Dhaka Mohanagar General Hospital.

At one of the hospitals, Sabera Khatun, a frail woman, clutching her young son in her arms, described her experience: "I've been here for over 12 hours, waiting for a doctor. My child is burning with fever,

but no one is around to help." Her words echoed the frustration felt by many others who have no other choice but to endure the long wait in hopes of receiving care.

"Is this how public healthcare in one of the country's largest cities is meant to function?" Sabera asked.

A senior doctor at one of the facilities, speaking under condition of anonymity, shared, "We are fighting an uphill battle. The number of patients keeps growing, but we're working with half the manpower we need."

DHAKA MOHANAGAR GENERAL HOSPITAL

Dhaka Mohanagar General Hospital, established in 1989, has 150 beds and facilities for 31 types of diagnostic tests.

Despite the installation of ICU units and high-flow oxygen equipment during the COVID-19 pandemic, these facilities remain unused due to a lack of personnel.

The hospital provides diagnostic tests at Tk 20-600 and offers 45 types of medication free of charge.

On average, 400 outpatients are treated daily, while only 5-6 patients are admitted.

Badsha Mia, a patient, said, "As a poor man, I can't afford treatment at big hospitals, so I come here. But there are very few doctors, so it takes a long time to get treatment."

The hospital's surgery department has been non-functional since 2015 due to the departure of a consultant. While gynaecological surgeries continue, high-

dependency unit (HDU) beds installed in 2021 remain unused. The hospital's director, Dr Ammata Noor Wahida Sultana, said, "We have written to the health ministry and DGHS several times requesting staff, but to no avail."

Currently, only 17 of the required 32 doctors are employed, leaving 15 positions vacant. Most doctors focus on outpatient services, disrupting care for admitted patients. "Since 2015, the hospital has had no surgery consultants, effectively reducing it to a 100-bed facility," Dr Sultana said.

DHAKA METROPOLITAN CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Established in 1990, the Dhaka Metropolitan Children's Hospital serves 200-250 children daily but shuts its doors by 8:00pm due to staff shortages. Critical patients are referred elsewhere, and the surgery department has been closed for over a decade.

Since 2012, the paediatric surgery department has remained locked due to the absence of a surgical consultant, leaving 40 of the hospital's 100 beds unused. The physiotherapy department operates only once a week, relying on an external physiotherapist.

The hospital employs six consultant doctors and 13 medical officers, but only two consultants and seven medical officers are currently available.

Patients from low-income families crowd the outdoor department for affordable care.

Hazera Khatun, a slum resident from Lalbagh, said, "Getting treatment here costs much less than other hospitals. That's why we, the daily wage earners, come here."

The hospital's director, Salina Akhter, said, "We have written to authorities. They

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5

Leader of Maulana Saad faction held

STAR REPORT

Police arrested Muaz bin Nur, a leader of the Tablighi Jamaat faction aligned with Maulana Saad Kandhalvi, early yesterday in connection with a case over the killing of three devotees at the Biswa Jtema ground in Tongi.

Muaz, 40, known as a spokesperson for the Saad faction, was detained during a raid in Uttara, said Iskander Habibur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Tongi West Police Station. He is the fifth accused in the murder case filed by SM Alam Hossain, a follower of rival Tablighi leader Maulana Zubair Ahmed.

Alam, a Kishoreganj resident, lodged the case on Thursday, naming 29 Saad supporters and hundreds of unidentified others.

The deadly clash, which broke out early Wednesday over control of the Jtema Maidan, left four dead and 50 injured. Both factions blamed each other during separate press conferences in Dhaka.

Habibullah Raihan, media coordinator for Zubair's faction, accused Saad's followers of undermining the faith and pledged to file more cases.

He said that Maulana Saad's followers claim the current issue is caused by a third-party in the Tablighi movement.

"We want to clarify that the Tablighi movement is vital to the faith, and ulema are its protectors. Maulana Saad cannot repeatedly undermine the efforts of the faith through his actions, while the ulema remain silent. This can never happen," he added.

In Mirpur, Maulana Junaid Al Habib of Hafazat-e-Islam termed the violence a premeditated attempt to destabilise the interim government.

Despite the tensions, both groups plan to hold their phases of the Biswa Jtema as scheduled next year. Zubair's faction will gather from January 31 to February 2, while Saad's will convene from February 7 to 9.

Saad's followers alleged political interference within Tablighi is threatening communal harmony and demanded Maulana Saad's participation in the Jtema.

Gazipur correspondent contributed to this report.

Once the lifelines of Dhaka, the city's canals are now mere shadows of their former selves -- clogged with pollution, suffocated by encroachment, and neglected due to flawed urban planning. In this seven-part series, The Daily Star explores the current condition of the capital's canals, botched restoration attempts, and how the sorry state of these waterways is exacerbating the city's waterlogging woes. Together, these stories reveal what it will take to bring Dhaka's dying canals back to life. Here is the final part of the series:

TURNING THE TIDE

How to revive Dhaka's canals and fix waterlogging

HELEMUL ALAM

Throughout this month, we have published six reports on Dhaka's canals, detailing how these water bodies, once the lifeblood of the capital's drainage system, are now clogged, encroached upon, and reduced to narrow, polluted channels.

Many canals have completely disappeared, replaced by roads and structures. This in turn has put the city's draining system into disarray, with the capital drowning every time it rains above a certain threshold. People even die in the waterlogged streets of Dhaka, coming in contact with live wires underneath or simply drowning.

Without immediate and sustained intervention, the waterlogging crisis will worsen,

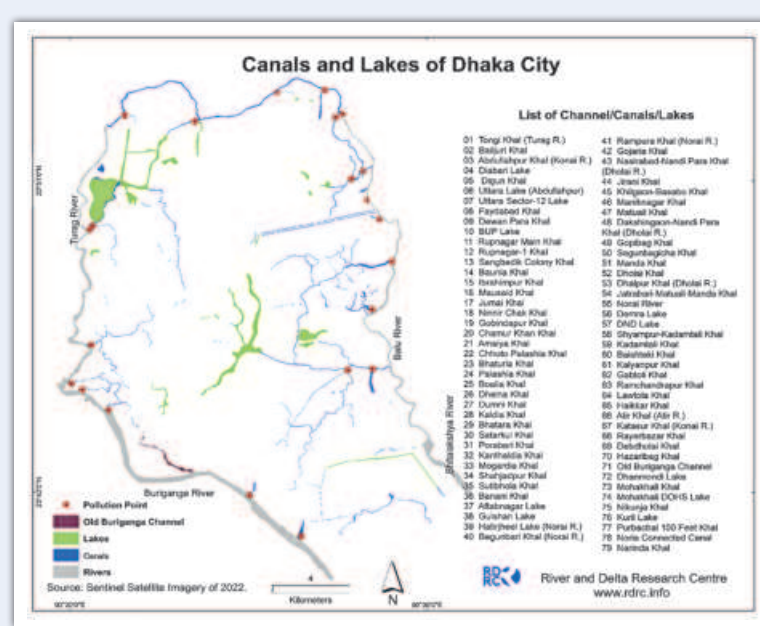
as climate change means the city may experience unusually high rainfall anytime -- already seen in many places near Dhaka this year, according to experts, policymakers, and planners.

THE EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM

Over the years, Dhaka has lost significant canal space due to unchecked encroachment. Major water bodies have been filled, converted into box culverts, or obstructed by infrastructure projects.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, adviser to the environment ministry, said, "Canals formed the natural drainage system of this city. Regrettably, we lost most of them due to urbanisation, conversion into culverts, and encroachments."

"Then there is pollution.



Sewage and industrial effluents are discharged into the canals in a manner as if they are meant to be used as private drainage. Added to this, solid waste and plastic clog the waterways, further obstructing their flow," Rizwana said.

Mohammad Azaz, chairman of the River and Delta Research Centre, said, "Dhaka was a wetland city, but it should have been a sponge city. Due to unplanned urbanisation, we no longer have spaces to retain water for a certain period."

RECOVERING, PROTECTING CANALS

At the heart of reviving Dhaka's canals lies the need to recover encroached areas and establish clear demarcations based on CS and RS maps. Authorities at both the Dhaka North City Corporation

(DNCC) and Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) have finally begun addressing this critical step.

Md Mahmudul Hasan, administrator of DNCC, said, "We are demarcating 29 canals and setting up pillars to prevent further encroachment. More than 1,000 pillars out of 1,100 have already been set up, and the rest will be completed by December. The army is implementing the project."

Meanwhile, the chief engineer of DSCC, Md Aminul Islam, said they have decided to earmark the boundaries of canals based on CS maps, a step that had not been undertaken earlier.

"We will apply it in the project to develop four canals, which have already been approved by the Encc. The design that was prepared earlier

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1