

2 KILLED IN CTG Deceased were Jamaat members Party says its ‘planned murder’

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two people who were killed in a mob beating “on suspicion of being robbers” in Chattogram’s Satkania upazila’s on Monday night were identified as active members of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, said police.

Jamaat leaders claimed that the two members of their organisation were murdered in a planned manner by those who want to establish dominance in the area.

The deceased Md Nezam Uddin, 45, of Kanchana union, and Md Salek, 35, of the same union, were identified as supporters of Chattogram Metropolitan Jamaat’s Ameer Shahjahan Chowdhury, said police sources.

“Salek stood accused in two murder cases, and Nezam had also been accused in several cases. After the incident, police and army personnel visited the spot and tried to find out what exactly happened there,” Chattogram Superintendent of Police Saiful Islam Shantu told this newspaper.

“The incident took place during the Taraweeh prayer. After they [victims] went to the upazila’s Chankhola area, an announcement was made through a mosque’s loudspeaker that robbers were spotted in the area, prompting the public to gather,” said the SP.

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As office hours end and the time for iftar approaches, the capital’s metro stations get packed with commuters rushing to get home. The photo was taken at the Motijheel metro rail station yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

COX’S BAZAR CLASH Father of victims files murder case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox’s Bazar

A murder case has been filed seven days after the death of Shihab Kabir Nahid during an attack and clash near an under-construction Air Force base beside the airport in Cox’s Bazar.

His father, Md Nasir Uddin, filed the case with Cox’s Bazar Sadar Model Police Station on Monday night.

The incident occurred on February 24 near Cox’s Bazar town.

The air force on February 27 filed a case against two locals of Samitypara and 300 unidentified individuals. According to the case statement, the air force sustained damages worth Tk 69.4 lakh.

Shihab’s father in the case filed on Monday said he and his wife had gone to the Community Eye Hospital in town for treatment on the morning of February 24. Around noon, a young man named Mohiuddin informed him that his only son, Nahid, 30, had been “shot dead” allegedly by an air force member and that his body was at Cox’s Bazar Sadar Hospital.

Upon hearing this, he rushed to the hospital with his wife. The hospital authorities told him that the body would be handed over after an autopsy. The body was handed over at 6:00pm.

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60pc of adults will be obese by 2050 worldwide Say researchers

AFP, Paris

Nearly 60 percent of all adults and a third of all children in the world will be overweight or obese by 2050 unless governments take action, a large new study said yesterday.

The research published in the Lancet medical journal used data from 204 countries to paint a grim picture of what it described as one of the great health challenges of the century.

“The unprecedented global epidemic of overweight and obesity is a profound tragedy and a monumental societal failure,” lead author Emmanuela Gakidou, from the US-based Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), said in a statement.

The number of overweight or obese people worldwide rose from 929 million in 1990 to 2.6 billion in 2021, the study found.

Without a serious change, the researchers estimate that 3.8 billion adults will be overweight or obese in 15 years – – or around 60 percent of the global adult population in 2050.

The world’s health systems will come under crippling pressure, the researchers warned, with around a quarter of the world’s obese expected to be aged over 65 by that time.

Calls grow in Germany to bring back military service

AFP, Berlin

Germany’s conservatives who are set to lead the next government argued yesterday that the country should quickly reintroduce compulsory military service.

Friedrich Merz, head of the CDU/CSU bloc that won last month’s elections, has argued that in the era of US President Donald Trump, Europe will have to better handle its own security.

The defence policy spokesman of his centre-right alliance, Florian Hahn, told Bild daily that Germany’s “suspension of conscription no longer fits the current threat situation”.

“The first conscripts will have to walk through the barracks gates in 2025,” Hahn told the daily. “We cannot stand by and watch as the world around us becomes more unsafe.”

Fears about the future strength of NATO have surged in Europe after Trump has increasingly sided with long-isolated Russia against Ukraine, upending the Western consensus of recent years.

Merz has vowed to break with many policies of former CDU chancellor Angela Merkel, including on migration, but also on her 2011 decision to suspend compulsory military service.

No room for mob justice

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She, however, said the government does not support any form of violence against women.

The press briefing was attended by Chief Adviser’s Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam, Deputy Press Secretaries Apurba Jahangir and Abul Kalam Azad Majumder, and Assistant Press Secretary Suchismita Tithi.

Order came from AL govt high-ups

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“We have received a list of 1,067 Bangladeshis incarcerated in Indian prisons over the last two to two-and-a-half years. We are checking if any of them were victims of enforced disappearance.”

The commission has also received a list of 140 individuals who were pushed into Bangladesh from Indian territory since the fall of the Awami League on August 5, 2024. An initial investigation into the list did not find any victims of enforced disappearance, but further investigation is underway.

However, Justice Moyeenul noted that one individual, Mohammad Rahmatullah who was “picked up by Rab” on August 29, 2023, was allegedly pushed into Bangladesh through the Chapainawabganj border in December.

The commission has so far received 1,752 complaints of enforced disappearances and has investigated 1,000 of them.

It has found secret detention centres run by Directorate General of Forces Intelligence, the police’s Counter Terrorism and Transnational

Crime unit and Rab in Dhaka, Bogura, Narayanganj, Rajshahi, Chattogram and several other districts. The commission did not disclose the exact number of the sites.

“We found one centre inside the police lines in Bogura that was specially built over the last decade,” Nur Khan Liton, a member of the commission, told the press conference.

Commission members Justice Md Farid Ahmed Shibli, rights activist Sazzad Hossain and researcher Nabila Idris were also present at the event.

Speaking about the about the update on the arrest warrants for 12 individuals, including six former heads of the DGFI, former police IGP and Rab chief Benazir Ahmed and former DIG and counter terrorism head Md Asaduzzaman, Justice Moyeenul said, “If they cannot be arrested, they will be tried in absentia.”

The arrest warrant was issued on January 6, but the police have not been able to arrest them yet. The Anti-Corruption Commission raided the home of one ex-DGFI chief, Lt Gen Saiful Alam on February 27, but

did not find him.

Commission member Nabila Idris said that officers have told the commission that they acted on orders from high-ups in the previous government. However, the current government has a mandate to investigate and ensure justice for the victims of enforced disappearances.

“So, those who are now helping generals escape are not acting on the orders of superiors. This is your individual responsibility, and you are perpetuating the cycle of crime,” she said.

The commission once again pointed out they had ordered the DGFI and Rab to stop the destruction of evidence that had happened post-August 5 at the secret detention centres housed in their respective headquarters, namely Joint Interrogation Cell and Taskforce for Interrogation centre.

Asked if they are taking action against those who had tried to impede the investigation by destroying evidence, the commission said that determining who should bear the responsibility remains a matter of enquiry.

Mob violence persists amid weak policing

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before handing him over to police in the capital’s Mohammadpur. Witnesses said Shanto was caught after he snatched a phone from someone.

In Domshar area of Shariatpur around 10:00pm on Friday, a mob beat six people to death on suspicion that they were robbers.

Police could not identify the deceased as of yesterday, according to Helal Uddin, OC of Palong Police Station.

The deceased men had two shotguns, he said, adding that two cases, one for attempted robbery and another for illegal arms possession, had been filed.

According to a database of the Human Rights Support Society, 17 incidents of mob beatings took place in February, resulting in 10 deaths.

In January this year, 16 people lost their lives at the hands of mobs, ASK data shows.

According to Ain o Salish Kendra, mob beatings claimed at least 128 lives last year, with 96 occurring between August and December. The number of such deaths was 51 in 2023.

The home ministry in a statement

yesterday said the government was resolute in ensuring that all individuals involved in mob violence are brought to justice.

Noted rights activist Nur Khan Liton said, “When there is unrest in a society and the rule of law is weak, people take law into their own hands. Recently, we have seen these incidents rise due to instability, slow police response, and the lack of strict measures.”

He added that Home Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury’s comment regarding the assault on two women in Lalmatia reflected an attempt to cover up the government failure.

“The only solution to the problem is to establish the rule of law. Without it, there is no way out,” he said.

The current interim government is not elected, he said, adding that it took office under certain circumstances. “Many wrongdoers are taking advantage of this.”

On March 1, two women were taken into custody after they were physically assaulted by a group of men at a tea stall in the capital’s Lalmatia. The argument began after the men asked them not to smoke.

The next day, Adviser Jahangir

said that smoking in public was prohibited for both men and women and urged people not to smoke in public spaces.

On February 25, a young man was killed in Gazipur’s Tongi and two others were seriously injured in Dhaka’s Uttara in mob beatings.

Hafizur Rahman, OC of Uttara Pashchim Police Station, said there was no evidence that the two young men in Uttara were involved in any crime committed that day.

“We sent them to jail. They were shown arrested in a case filed earlier,” he said, adding that no cases had been filed regarding the mob violence.

Talebun Rahman, DC (media) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said a few isolated incidents of mob violence happened in Dhaka. The DMP urges people to hand over suspects to law enforcers, he said.

Meanwhile, Dhaka District Police in a statement last night urged people not to post about robberies and other “sensitive things” on social media without proper verification.

The statement came after someone posted on social media about a robbery in Dakkhin Keraniganj that turned out to be false, reports BSS.

CR Abrar ‘next education adviser’

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Foreign Service Academy in the capital yesterday.

Abrar is a former professor of the University of Dhaka’s international relations department and the president of Odhikar, the human rights organisation founded by Adilur Rahman Khan, the adviser for the ministries of industries and housing and public works.

Abrar is also the executive director of the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit founded by his wife Tasneem Siddiqui, a member of the committee formed by the interim government to prepare a white paper report on the Bangladesh economy.

He will take over from Wahiduddin Mahmud as the education adviser.

“Wahiduddin Mahmud has long expressed that managing two ministries simultaneously has been challenging for him. Given his advanced age and the heavy responsibilities at the planning ministry, CR Abrar is being added to the advisory council,” Shafiqul said.

However, the exact number of new advisers who would be sworn in today remains uncertain.

The expansion follows the passing of adviser Hasan Ariff and the resignation of adviser Nahid Islam, which have left Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus with additional ministerial responsibilities.

Since he prefers not to handle too many portfolios himself, new appointments are being made to redistribute the workload, The Daily Star has learnt from people involved in the proceedings.

Prof Yunus’s advisory council expanded twice after the interim government took office on August 8 last year. He also reshuffled council responsibilities multiple times.

At present, the advisory council consists of 22 members, including the chief adviser.

Additionally, three special envoys and special assistants hold advisory ranks, while three deputy minister-ranked special assistants assist the advisers of three ministries.

Constituent assembly, nat’l polls can be held together

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This justice must serve as a precedent to ensure that no fascist regime emerges in the future.”

Sarjis Alam, chief organiser (Northern region) of the NCP, stated that as long as Hasina is not on the gallows, no one should “even mistakenly talk about elections”.

“Where killer Hasina has disposed of the bodies is still unknown. Mothers are desperately looking for their children’s remains. Until justice is served, how can we think about anything else in this country?”

The party’s Chief Organiser (Southern region) Hasnat Abdullah, said the current government came to power through the blood of students and the public.

“They must remember that if justice is not ensured, the entire process [of the interim government’s formation] will be questioned. Justice must be ensured as quickly as possible. If necessary, the number of special tribunals should be increased to expedite the trials.”

Those present at Rayerbazar also included NCP’s Member Secretary Akhtar Hossain, Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwary, Senior Joint Chief Coordinator Abdul Hannan

Masud, and other party leaders.

Earlier, around 8:30am, Nahid and Akhtar led the NCP leaders to the National Memorial in Savar to pay homage to the martyrs of the Liberation War by placing wreaths. They then observed a one-minute silence.

Speaking to reporters there, Akhtar said the key principles of the independence achieved in 1971 – equality, human dignity and social justice – have remained elusive for 54 years.

“We, the leaders and activists of the NCP, are committed to building the Bangladesh that upholds the equality, human dignity and social justice of 1971. NCP will continue to work to build that Bangladesh, and we have many proposals for the whole of Bengal to see Bangladesh as a country that can stand tall in the world.”

At the same event, Nasiruddin Patwary mentioned that the party slogan “Inquilab Zindabad” has come up in discussions recently.

“We want to tell the whole of Bangladesh and the whole world that the people of Bangladesh will write Inquilab Zindabad across the whole sky, inshaAllah.”

Ukraine can hold out on frontline

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continue to work with the US through all available channels in a calm manner,” he told a press conference. “We only have one plan – to win and to survive. Either we win, or the Plan B will be written by someone else.”

Zelensky himself stayed silent over the aid freeze.

Russia said the suspension of US Ukraine aid was the “best contribution” to peace, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said, adding that it was a “solution which could really push the Kyiv regime to a peace process”.

Europeans are racing to boost their own military spending and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen yesterday unveiled proposals to boost spending on defence in the EU,

which she said could mobilise up to 800 billion euros (\$840 billion). The EU is holding an emergency summit tomorrow.

Meanwhile, Russia said yesterday that any normalisation of relations with the United States would require the lifting of sanctions against Moscow.

“It is probably too early to say anything. We have not heard any official statements, but in any case, our attitude towards sanctions is well known, we consider them illegal,” Peskov said.

“And, of course, if we talk about normalising bilateral relations, they need to be freed from this negative burden of so-called sanctions,” he added.



Smoke billows from an apartment targeted in an Israeli raid in the eastern neighbourhood of Jenin amid a weeks-long offensive in the occupied West Bank yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP