

Jubo Dal man shot dead in Ctg’s Raozan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A little over two weeks after the killing of a BNP activist in Hathazari upazila, a Jubo Dal activist was shot dead in broad daylight in Raozan upazila of Chattogram yesterday afternoon.



Alamgir

The victim, Mohammad Alamgir, alias Alam, 40, of Ward No. 9 in Raozan Municipality, was gunned down around 5:00pm on Rashidar Para Road, near the Chattogram–Rangamati highway, police said.

“Unidentified assailants on a motorcycle opened fire on Alamgir, leaving him critically injured before fleeing the scene,” said Balayat Hossain, assistant superintendent of police (Raozan circle).

Locals rushed Alamgir to the Raozan Upazila Health Complex, where doctors declared him dead. Police later recovered the body and took it to the local police station.

A police official, requesting anonymity, said Alamgir was accused in five cases, including robbery, filed with the Raozan Police Station.

In a statement, Golam Akbar Khandaker, former president of the BNP’s Chattogram North District unit, strongly condemned the killing, calling it a “brutal murder” near Alamgir’s home beside the Kaikobad Jame Mosque.

The statement added that Alamgir had recently been released from prison after nearly 12 years of imprisonment during the Awami League regime.

On October 8, businessman and BNP activist Abdul Hakim was shot dead in a similar daylight attack in Hathazari’s Madunaghat area when armed assailants blocked his private SUV.



People inspect the wreckage of a vehicle targeted by an Israeli strike in the southern Lebanese village of Haruf yesterday. Lebanon’s health ministry said one person was killed and another wounded in the strike.

PHOTO: AFP

60 UN members sign cybercrime treaty

Tech companies, rights groups warn of expanded state surveillance

AFP, Hanoi

Countries signed their first UN treaty targeting cybercrime in Hanoi yesterday, despite opposition from an unlikely band of tech companies and rights groups warning of expanded state surveillance.

The new global legal framework aims to strengthen international cooperation to fight digital crimes, from child pornography to transnational cybercams and money laundering.

More than 60 countries were seen to sign the declaration yesterday, which means it will go into force once ratified by those states.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres described the signing as an “important milestone”, but that it was “only the

beginning”.

“Every day, sophisticated scams, destroy families, steal migrants and drain billions of dollars from our economy... We need a strong, connected global response,” he said at the opening ceremony in Vietnam’s capital yesterday.

The UN Convention against Cybercrime was first proposed by Russian diplomats in 2017, and approved by consensus last year after lengthy negotiations.

Critics say its broad language could lead to abuses of power and enable the cross-border repression of government critics.

“There were multiple concerns raised throughout the negotiation of the treaty around how it actually ends up compelling companies to share data,” said Sabhanaz Rashid Diya, founder of the Tech Global

Institute think tank.

“It’s almost rubber-stamping a very problematic practice that has been used against journalists and in authoritarian countries,” she told AFP.

Vietnam’s government said this week that 60 countries were registered for the official signing, without disclosing which ones.

But the list will probably not be limited to Russia, China, and their allies.

“Cybercrime is a real issue across the world,” Diya said. “I think everybody’s kind of grappling with it.”

The far-reaching online scam industry, for example, has ballooned in Southeast Asia in recent years, with thousands of scammers estimated to be involved and victims worldwide conned out of billions of dollars annually.

Police stations buckling under budget strain

Commission races against time

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solvent. But in most cases, they turn to “special funds” of police stations.

When asked about “special funds”, several inspectors and sub-inspectors said that to meet the expenses, they collect money through various channels such as donations from businesspeople and payments for releasing accused from custody promptly upon bail. In some cases, complainants are asked to bear investigation costs.

According to police, Tk 6,000 is allocated for probing a murder or dacoity case; Tk 5,000 for a case over abduction or human trafficking; Tk 4,000 for an unnatural death case; Tk 2,000 for a case over women and child repression, rape, narcotics and cybercrimes; and Tk 3,000 for a case over acid attacks, anti-terrorism, possession of arms and explosives, and money laundering.

They said the actual cost of investigations is several times higher than the allocated amounts in almost all cases.

When contacted, Md Akram Hossain, additional inspector general

80,000 for refreshments per month.”

He further said the station requires around Tk 1.5 lakh each month for supplies like paper, printer ink, bulbs, and toiletries but receives Tk 70,000 every four months. The allocation has recently been increased to 1,40,000, but after paying taxes and VAT, the station received a little over Tk 1,00,000 this month.

The government also supplies police stations with some of the items they request each month, but only a portion of the demand is met.

According to a document obtained by this newspaper, one police station sought six printer toners, five keyboards, 20 rims of A4 paper, 20 rolls of toilet tissue, 15 cans of mosquito aerosol, 10 bottles of Savlon, and 10 packs of mosquito coils, among other items.

In response, it received three printer toners, no keyboards, seven rims of A4 paper, eight rolls of toilet tissue, three mosquito aerosols, two bottles of Savlon, and three packs of mosquito coils.

Besides, cleaners are hired from private firms, and technicians need to be called in when fans or other electrical

“The allocation of 15 litres of oil for each patrol vehicle per day is grossly inadequate. Moreover, we sometimes have to hire cars to conduct operations and pay for them from the same allocation,” the OC said.

Officers of several other stations in the capital said they have no other choice but to depend on donations from local influential people to meet shortfalls.

“If there were adequate allocations, police would not need to rely on such donations, which undermine the force’s independence and damages its image,” said an inspector.

“True reform of the force will remain elusive unless these shortfalls are addressed.”

Contacted, Additional IG Akram Hossain said, “We are preparing a budget proposal to be sent to the home ministry, seeking to increase funds for police stations.”

The Daily Star contacted Home Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury on September 29 and asked him whether the government has any plan to increase budgets for police stations. He declined

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However, the meeting members could not agree on either option as both were seen as problematic, legally and politically.

Another constitutional expert who attended the meeting said the core disagreement was over what should happen if the reforms are not implemented within the 270-day deadline.

“Legally, dissolving parliament might be valid, but politically it would be unacceptable. It could trigger another constitutional crisis and possibly require a new national election, an outcome that would be costly and impractical.”

The expert said automatically incorporating the reforms into the constitution without parliamentary approval would also be unrealistic. “We are not preparing any draft reform bill. Such a bill should be debated and passed by elected representatives in parliament,” the expert said.

A third option – forming a Constitution Reform Assembly before convening parliament – was also discussed but rejected as unfeasible since it would require the interim government to stay in power longer.

“That would be politically unacceptable. So far, we have not found any solution that is both legally valid and politically acceptable,” the expert said, hinting that the commission might retain the 270-day deadline without specifying consequences for non-compliance.

On the proposed referendum, the expert added, “It could be held on the same day as the national election or

earlier. That decision will rest with the government.”

When asked about international precedents, the expert said, “In theory, if a parliament fails to complete such work, it should be dissolved and a new Constituent Assembly elected. That would be logical, but not necessarily practical in our situation.”

The commission is also planning to propose that the government first issue a July Charter Implementation (Constitutional Reform) Order, followed by an ordinance to conduct a national referendum.

Once a new parliament is formed, it will function as a Constitution Reform Council for its first nine months, debating and approving the constitutional reforms while continuing its regular legislative duties.

MEETING WITH NCP

A five-member delegation of the National Citizen Party (NCP) met the commission yesterday morning and demanded that the legal basis, and content of the July charter’s implementation order be made public.

Speaking to reporters at the LD Hall of the parliament, NCP Member Secretary Akhter Hossen said, “The text, content, and scope of its effectiveness should be explained to the nation.”

He confirmed that the commission is drafting the order to operationalise the charter, calling it a positive step, but noted that the draft text has yet to be presented to the party.

Akhter stressed that the implementation order must be “free from political bias” and “belong to the

IMAM’S ABDUCTION

Gazipur police cautions against speculation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

The Gazipur Metropolitan Police (GMP) yesterday urged the public to remain patient and avoid assigning blame prematurely regarding the abduction of Mufti Mohammad Mohebbullah Miyaji, the imam of Tongi T&T Colony Mosque.

In an official statement, the GMP confirmed that a formal case was filed on Friday at Tongi East Police Station in connection with the incident.

Acknowledging the gravity of abducting a respected religious scholar, the police said they had initiated the investigation even before the case was formally registered.

So far, no individual has been conclusively identified as responsible due to a lack of sufficient evidence. The GMP appealed for public cooperation in the ongoing investigation and emphasised the importance of refraining from speculation.

Miyaji went missing on Wednesday morning and was rescued in Panchagarh Sadar upazila the following day.

Teacher arrested over rape of 12-year-old

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A madrasa teacher was arrested on charge of rape of a 12-year-old boy amid protests by locals in Gazipur’s Sreepur upazila on Friday.

The arrestee was identified as Md Mohsin, 35, from Kachutia village in Netrokona’s Atpara upazila, a teacher at Darun Hikmah Hafizia Madrasa in Sreepur’s Maona Chowrasta area.

The child’s family alleged that the incident took place inside the madrasa in the afternoon.

As the news spread, locals detained Mohsin and took him to the police box at Maona Chowrasta. Around 10:00pm, a mob of over a hundred people formed on the spot. On information, two police teams from Sreepur Police Station went there to control the situation.

Later, police rescued Mohsin and took him to the police station after additional police teams were dispatched to disperse the mob around 11:00pm.

Later, the victim’s father filed a case, in which the teacher was shown arrested, said Sreepur Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mohammad Abdul Barik.

GAP BETWEEN ALLOCATION AND ACTUAL COST		
	ALLOCATION	ACTUAL COST (estimated)
Recovery, autopsy of unidentified body	Tk 6,000	Tk 25,000
Murder investigation	Tk 6,000	Tk 30,000
Case over abduction or human trafficking	Tk 5,000	Tk 15,000
A meal for a detainee	Tk 30	Tk 80
Operational expenses at a police station	Tk 70,000 (every four months)	Tk 1.5 lakh (monthly)

(finance) at the Police Headquarters, admitted that the allocations for investigations are far below what is required.

“It takes around Tk 30,000 to recover and bury an unidentified body, whereas the allocation is only Tk 6,000. We’ve already analysed investigation expenses and will soon submit a proposal to the Pay Commission to raise the allocations.”

In reply to a question, Akram said, “We will seek Tk 25,000 for a murder case investigation, and similar adjustments for other cases.”

EXPENSES AT POLICE STATIONS

These correspondents visited a police station under the DMP’s Tejgaon Division multiple times between September 27 and 29 to get a clear picture of its daily expenses.

Seeking anonymity, the OC of the station said they receive Tk 40,000 a month as “source money” from the authorities for investigations and daily operations.

“The bulk of it goes to refreshments for visitors and 131 staff in my station. Around 200 guests, including political leaders and businesspeople, visit the station every day,” said the OC.

“On average, we need more than Tk

items break down.

“We have to pay a cook Tk 15,000 and a cleaner Tk 10,000 per month. An electrician or mechanic charges around Tk 600 per visit,” said the OC.

Food allowances for detainees are capped at Tk 30 per meal whereas a proper meal now costs around Tk 80, said the OC.

In many cases, the police station has to pay for meals so that prisoners don’t starve if their families fail to provide support.

Asked how the station manages to pay for all these, the OC said the money comes from a special fund, not from any formal channel.

“The high-ups are aware of the situation... How can we meet people’s expectations when we have to rely on donations to meet our expenses?” said the officer.

At the station, four of the eight vehicles malfunction frequently while the remaining ones are old and unable to keep pace with fast-moving cars or motorbikes, the OC said.

“A police station must operate round the clock to carry out patrols and deal with all sorts of cases. But the funds fall far short of what is needed to sustain this workload.”

to comment.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REFORM
In its report submitted to the chief adviser in mid-January, the Police Reform Commission recommended several measures that will help police stations overcome financial and operational challenges.

It suggested increasing operational allowances for police stations, establishing an audit and inspection wing to oversee procurement, and allocating funds directly to superintendents of police to streamline expenses.

The proposals also include increasing funds for investigations, allocating budgets for purchase and repair of furniture in police stations, and raising budgets for vehicles and fuel.

Tawohidul Haque, associate professor at the Institute of Social Welfare and Research of Dhaka University, said, “How can we expect police to work for public welfare if they have to depend on unofficial or unlawful channels to meet the costs of routine work?”

“It is imperative to carry out reforms that ensure adequate funding for investigation and operational needs at police stations,” he added.

Warehouse owner ran illegal chemical trade

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Visiting the area last week, our correspondent spoke to several residents and workers.

Abdul Motalib, president of a local unit of Sramik Dal who has lived in the area for four decades, said he had known Alam for 20 years. “He set up the chemical warehouse on Road No 4 some 15 years ago. A few years later, he shifted it to the next road.”

The area is a densely packed hub of garment and packaging factories, washing plants, printing presses, and chemical warehouses, interspersed with residential buildings near Rupnagar Housing Estate and the Bangladesh University of Business and Technology campus.

Residents said Alam owns three residential buildings and three commercial plots in the area, located close to one another.

He lived on the second floor of a six-storey building and ran the chemical business from an office about 100 yards away.

Alam used to work from 9:00am to 11:00pm every day, supplying chemicals to clients in Ashulia, Savar,

Gazipur, Narayanganj, and different parts of Dhaka, they said, adding that administrative officials were often seen visiting his office.

Asked if Alam maintained connections with the administration, Inspector Mokhesur said he was new at the police station and did not know about this.

Rafiqul Islam, security guard of Alam’s house, said Alam and his family left the building on the afternoon of the incident and have not returned since.

Locals said they knew the chemicals were used for washing plants but were unaware of the risks.

Rakibul Islam, who runs a tea stall in the area, said Alam’s rapid financial rise caught their attention, but they did not know his business was illegal.

“We thought bleaching and detergent powders were stored in the warehouse. We didn’t know that such dangerous chemicals were there. People even used to spend leisure time next to the warehouse and smoke cigarettes.”

He added that locals have now agreed that no chemical warehouses will be allowed in the area. “We want the administration to take tough action

against this business.”

Inspector Asadul Islam of the Department of Explosives earlier said no licences had been issued for chemical warehouses in Mirpur.

“Due to high demand from garments, dyeing, and washing plants, many warehouses have been set up illegally under the guise of licensed entities.”

According to the Fire Service and Civil Defence, the warehouse was crammed with chemicals, and large quantities worth several crore taka had been delivered there just a day before the fire.

Mohammad Saleh Uddin, deputy director of the Fire Service and a member of the seven-member committee investigating the incident, said Alam Traders had no documents or approval to operate. “We’ve been trying to find Shah Alam to hear his version but couldn’t locate him yet. The chemicals were mainly used for washing plants.”

The committee has been asked to submit its report within 15 working days. Two other probe bodies are also investigating the incident.