PURBACHAL RAID

Seven women detainees get bail

4 of 26 released from jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least seven of the 26 women arrested during a raid on the Purbachal residence of Additional Deputy Inspector General of Police Abdullah Al Jahir have secured bail from a Dhaka court since Sunday.

Judge Md Shahjahan Kabir of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court granted them bail, according to a court employee.

According to court records, at least 30 people, including seven women, have so far filed appeals against their convictions.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, Oliva Sharmi, jailer of Kashimpur Women's Central Jail in Gazipur, said three of the women were released yesterday, while another had

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Prime Minister Tarique Rahman waves to expatriate Bangladeshis during an exchange of views at the New Otani Hotel in Tokyo, Japan, yesterday. His wife, Dr Zubaida Rahman, was also present. PHOTO: PID

Thakurgaon-1 by-polls today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Voting in the Thakurgaon-1 by-election will be held today amid allegations by the Jamaat-led 11-party alliance that the local administration is not acting impartially.

The Election Commission, however, yesterday said there was no cause for concern, adding that it was closely monitoring the polling environment and law-and-order situation.

Five candidates are contesting the by-election, including BNP-backed Mirza Faisal Amin, who is running with the "sheaf of paddy" symbol, and Delawar Hosen of the Jamaat-led alliance, whose symbol is the "scales".

The others are Islami Andolan Bangladesh-backed Khademul Islam (hand fan), Bangladesh Khelafat Andolan-backed Abdul Alim Nizami (banyan tree) and Bangladesh Congress candidate Muhammad Omar Farukh (green coconut).

The seat fell vacant on August 21 after former Thakurgaon-1 MP Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir was elected president and took oath of office.

The constituency, comprising Thakurgaon Sadar, Bhulli and Ruhia upazila, has 516,138 voters. Polling will take place from 8:00am to 4:00pm at 185 centres.

Md Quamrul Islam, returning officer and district election officer, said all necessary measures had been taken to ensure peaceful and credible polling.

A total of 185 presiding officers, 989 assistant presiding

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Tension grips Gurudaspur over JCD leader's murder

Natore-4 MP's son remanded, case sent to DB for probe

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

Tension prevails in Natore's Gurudaspur upazila following the death of a Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal leader, who succumbed to his injuries on Monday night, 12 days after being attacked.

Shakil Islam, 30, joint general secretary of the JCD's Gurudaspur upazila unit, died at a hospital, triggering anger among party activists who demanded exemplary punishment for those responsible.

Nooruzzaman, elder son of Natore-4 BNP lawmaker Abdul Aziz, has been arrested and placed on a three-day remand in connection with the murder. However, the attackers have yet to be identified.

Angry locals chanted slogans against the lawmaker when he attended Shakil's janaza on Tuesday night. Earlier, Aziz had announced Tk 20 lakh in financial assistance for the victim's family.

Following the janaza, protesters vandalised Rash Mega Shopping Mall in Chachkoir Bazar, owned by expatriate Russell Hossain, a close associate of Nooruzzaman.

Meanwhile, Gurudaspur Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Abdul Hannan was withdrawn yesterday for professional negligence, while the murder case was transferred to the Detective Branch for investigation.

Gurudaspur Upazila Nirbahi Officer Fahmida Afroz said additional law enforcement personnel had been deployed across the upazila.

"Aside from the vandalism at the shopping complex, no other untoward incident has occurred, and the situation is under control," she said.

Police said helmeted assailants hacked Shakil with sharp weapons in Chachkoir Bazarpara on October 14.

He was initially taken to Gurudaspur Upazila Health Complex, then transferred to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital before being referred to Dhaka for advanced treatment.

On October 19, Shakil's father filed a case against 8-10 unidentified people with Gurudaspur police.

Natore Additional Superintendent of Police Mohammad Ifte Khayer Alam said, "Police are working from various angles to identify and apprehend both the attackers and the masterminds behind the incident".

He declined to disclose further details, citing the ongoing investigation.

Locals alleged that Shakil was close to the lawmaker's younger son Mahamuduzzaman, who has a longstanding political rivalry with Nooruzzaman, and that the killing might have been linked to their dispute.

However, MP Aziz rejected the allegation, saying the disagreement between his sons was a "family matter" unrelated to Shakil's death.

Natore DB OC Nazrul Islam said Nooruzzaman's name had surfaced during the murder investigation.

Govt seeks World Bank funding for MRT Line-2

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government has finally sent a formal request to the World Bank to provide funding for the 30.4-kilometre Metro Rail Line 2, stretching from Gabtoli to Narayanganj via New Market.

The estimated cost for the metro line is Tk 60,837 crore, which is about $4.95 billion at the current exchange rate, according to the Dhaka Mass Transit Company.

In the letter sent to the WB early this month, the government sought technical assistance for overall metro rail management alongside financing for the Metro Rail Line 2, The Daily Star has learnt from finance ministry officials involved with the proceedings.

After several years of slow progress in metro rail construction, the current government is emphasising the speedy execution of all metro rail projects.

The government plans to construct six metro rail lines in Dhaka city. Among these, construction work has begun for MRT Line-6, Line-1 and Line-5 (Northern Route), all with funding from Japan.

ROUTE
Gabtoli to Narayanganj via New Market

LENGTH
30.4km

ESTIMATED COST
Tk 60,837 crore
($4.95 billion)

During Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's ongoing tour of Japan, emphasis was placed on expediting the implementation of Japan-funded metro rail projects.



The MRT Line-5 (Southern Route), funded by the Asian Development Bank and South Korea, got the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council approval last month, while the government is awaiting a response from Korean Exim Bank for the MRT Line-4.

Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury will be travelling to South Korea from Japan on a six-day visit to discuss Korean financing for the two metro rail lines.

The WB, which is preparing a new country programme for Bangladesh, is being sought for the MRT Line-2 financing. The MRT Line-2 will start from Gabtoli; stop at Dhaka Uddan, Bosila Mor, Mohammadpur BRTC Bus Stand, Dhanmondi 15 (Jigatola), Science Lab, New Market, Azimpur, Lalbagh, Chawkbazar, Mitford, Nayabazar, Dholaikhal, Dayaganj, Jatrabari (Kanchpur/Kanchla), Demra, Signboard, Bhuigarh, Chashara (Jalkuri), Shib Market; and stop at Narayanganj, according to the preliminary development project proposal (PDPP).

Khosru, also the planning minister, approved the PDPP on September 20.

It will have interchanges with both the routes of MRT Line-5 at Gabtoli; MRT Line-6, MRT Line-1 and MRT Line-4 at Kamalapur Metro Station; and MRT Line-4 at Signboard.

Of the total length of 30.4 kilometres, 7.5km would be underground and rest overground.

Out-of-pocket medical bills

FROM PAGE 1

OOP payments are the money households pay directly for healthcare, including medicines, diagnostic tests and treatment, rather than having the costs covered by the government or others.

A person faces financial hardship when OOP healthcare payments exceed 40 percent of the money remaining after meeting basic needs, while impoverishing OOP payments are those that push a household below the poverty line.

The study analysed four rounds of the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES), conducted in 2005, 2010, 2016 and 2022, to assess trends in healthcare spending, its impact on poverty and inequalities in access to publicly funded health services.

The incidence of catastrophic health expenditure climbed from 12.5 percent in 2005 to 32.1 percent in 2022, the study found.

"This indicates a sharp deterioration in households' ability to afford healthcare without facing financial strain," Subrata said.

Catastrophic health expenditure (CHE) occurs when OOP healthcare payments exceed 10 percent of a household's total consumption expenditure. The WHO replaced the indicator with financial hardship last year, as CHE does not reflect the actual situation.

Average monthly household OOP payments (inflation adjusted) rose from Tk 1,241 in 2005 to Tk 3,238 in 2022, and the proportion of households reporting any OOP payment rose from 52.5 percent to 92.7 percent during this time, Subrata said.

The study identified medicines, diagnostic tests, hospitalisation and consultation fees as major contributors to household healthcare expenses. It also found growing reliance on pharmacies for outpatient care, with their share rising from 32.5 percent in 2016 to 55.4 percent in 2022.

In 2022, 90.8 percent of people in the poorest consumption quintile faced financial hardship due to healthcare spending, compared with only 13.6 percent in the richest quintile, he added.

Rural people bore the brunt, although financial hardship increased in both rural and urban areas. The study found that 47.9 percent of people in rural areas faced financial hardship in 2022, compared with 28.2 percent in urban areas.

Barishal division showed a striking reversal, he said. In 2005, it had the lowest rate of financial hardship among all divisions, at 22.5 percent. By 2022, it had the highest, with 59.1 percent of people facing financial hardship.

Public facilities remained the main provider of inpatient care, but their share fell from 61.3 percent in 2016 to 56 percent in 2022, while the private share rose from 36.9 percent to 42.5 percent during this time, he said.

The report also raised concerns over the distribution of public healthcare benefits, finding that public health spending no longer clearly favoured poorer households despite their greater needs.

"Compared with 2016, the findings suggest a loss of the previously observed pro-poor distribution of inpatient public health benefits, raising concerns about whether public resources are adequately reaching populations with the greatest health and financial needs," the study says.

To reduce financial hardship, the study recommended increasing public financing, improving spending efficiency and equity, restoring the pro-poor distribution of public healthcare benefits, ensuring free and reliable access to essential medicines and diagnostics, and providing continuous and affordable care for chronic conditions.

Speaking at the programme, State Minister for Health MA Muhit said the findings reflected the dire straits of the health sector under the Awami League government.

Expressing deep concern over the alarming rise in OOP healthcare expenditure, Muhit said the government was committed at the highest level to curbing irregularities and corruption in the health sector.

Touhidul Islam and Sayem Ahmed of WHO Bangladesh gave separate presentations on the study. Rajesh Narwal, acting WHO representative to Bangladesh, was present at the programme, which was chaired by Enamul Haque, director general of the HEU.

Mob killings

FROM PAGE 1

"A gang of youths committed a mugging in the area on Tuesday morning. Locals chased them. Two were caught and beaten while the others fled."

The deaths of Jony and Nishat occurred just six days after Alam Sheikh, who came to Dhaka in search of a job and reportedly had some mental health issues, was beaten to death on the premises of Shaheed Suhrawardy Hospital on October 21 on suspicion of being a kidnapper.

The Daily Star, however, could not contact Arafat and Harun for comments.

The three killings within a week are among at least 15 deaths reported in mob beatings by media across the country this month, again raising questions about the authorities' ability to prevent such violence and bring those responsible to justice.

"What is being called mob beating is actually mob violence, or outright terrorism," rights activist Nur Khan Liton told The Daily Star. He said the violence continued because the state and law enforcers had failed to take visible and effective action.

Kamarun Munira, assistant inspector general (media) at Police Headquarters, said police were taking action whenever they received information about mob beatings. She also claimed that such incidents had declined compared with earlier periods and that the overall situation had improved.

The government repeatedly said mob violence would be dealt with firmly.

On September 1, Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed pledged strong action against mob violence, saying that the government was fully alert to the situation.

"We are very alert and aware. We will firmly tackle the culture of mob violence that had developed in Bangladesh, Insha Allah," he told reporters after inaugurating a BGB facility in Sylhet.

The minister also said no separate law was necessary to deal with mob violence, as existing laws already provided sufficient scope for action against the perpetrators.

MOB VIOLENCE DATA

The government's assessment of mob violence also differs sharply from the figures documented by rights bodies.

According to a home ministry report released on October 20, based on Police Headquarters data, 40 people were killed in 63 incidents of mob beatings between January and September this year.

During the corresponding period last year, 63 people were killed in 107 incidents, indicating a 41.12 percent decline in the number of incidents. The number of injured people also fell from 82 to 65, according to the report.

But Ain o Salish Kendra documented 171 deaths in mob beatings during the first nine months of this year, more than four times the government's figure. Human Rights Support Society recorded an even higher toll, reporting 187 deaths and 401 injuries in 398 incidents during the period.

According to ASK, 128 people were killed in mob beatings in 2024 and 198 in 2025. Its records show that 497 people were killed between January 2024 and September this year. HRSS documented 168 deaths in 2025. The organisation recorded 259 deaths in 413 incidents between September 2024 and January 2025.

Even victims who were targeted were taken from hospitals after being injured in mob beatings and subjected to further beatings. Take the instance of Wahiduzzaman Shamim, 38, who died after being beaten up in Debhata, Satkhira, over "hurting religion sentiments" on October 13.

Police rescued him from the attackers and admitted him to hospital. However, a group later took him away from the hospital and assaulted him again. He died on the way to another healthcare facility.

MUCH-TALKED CASES

Despite hundreds of deaths caused by mob beatings since 2024 and repeated promises of swift justice, several high-profile cases remain unresolved.

In Rangpur, Rupalal Das and Pradip Das were beaten to death on August 9, 2025, on suspicion of theft. Videos showed hundreds of people assaulting them at Burirhat High School. Eight police personnel were suspended for failing to intervene.

The victims' families alleged that Rubel Paikar, accused of planning the killings, threatened them after securing bail in January. They filed a general diary and a complaint.

Inspector (Investigation) Abdullah Al Mahmud of Taraganj Police Station said 19 people were arrested and a chargesheet would be submitted soon.

At Dhaka University's Fazlul Huq Muslim Hall, Tofazzal Hossain was beaten to death on September 18, 2024, on suspicion of theft. Police initially submitted a chargesheet against 21 people, while Police Bureau of Investigation later filed a supplementary chargesheet against 28.

On March 10 this year, a Dhaka court accepted it and issued arrest warrants against 22 accused. Six were arrested.

On the same day, former Chhatra League leader Shamim Ahmed, known as Shamim Molla, was beaten to death at Jahangirnagar University over allegations of involvement in attacks on quota reform protesters. The PBI has yet to submit its investigation report.

Another ex-BCL leader, Abdullah Al Masud, was beaten to death on September 7, 2024, at Binodpur Bazar near Rajshahi University. The probe moved from local police to the DB and then to the PBI, but no one has been arrested, and no significant progress has been reported.

On December 18, 2025, garment worker Dipu Chandra Das was beaten to death in Mymensingh's Bhaluka over "hurting religious sentiments". His body was later hung from a tree and set on fire. According to media reports, 23 people were arrested.

Nur Khan said mob violence had become widespread since August 5, 2024, with groups targeting people over land disputes, personal issues, and political rivalries. He said the failure to ensure exemplary punishment had created a culture of impunity. Although some perpetrators were arrested, many later secured bail.

"The state has repeatedly failed to send a strong message to perpetrators, encouraging them to believe they can escape punishment."

ASM Nasiruddin Elan, director of Odhikar, said people often lost their sense of right and wrong when joining violent crowds, while some mobs were deliberately formed to serve personal interests.

He blamed the government's failure to take a strong stand against such violence and called for nationwide awareness campaigns, particularly in rural areas, alongside punishment for perpetrators.

Tawhidul Hoque, associate professor at DU's Institute of Social Welfare and Research, said, "When people lose confidence that the state will protect them, the tendency to take justice into their own hands increases."

He said inadequate action by successive governments and the tendency to justify mob violence due to social divisions had encouraged perpetrators to believe they could escape punishment.



Firefighters work at the site of an industrial facility hit by a Russian drone strike in Kharkiv, Ukraine, yesterday. The strike injured five people, including a 4-year-old child, Ukraine's emergency service said. PHOTO: REUTERS