



Cox's Bazar is still crowded with tourists, three days after the Eid holiday. Thousands of tourists flocked to the longest sea beach in the world as the three-day Eid holiday turned into a five-day vacation. Hotel owners said yesterday there was no sign of the rush to taper off.

PHOTO: STAR

JMB, Huji activists in Jhenidah regrouping

Only 15 out of 45 'listed' activists held so far: Police cannot act for lack of govt nod

HOSSAIN SERAJ, back from Jhenidah

Activists of banned Islamist outfits Jama'atul Mujahideen, Bangladesh (JMB) and Harkat-ul-Jihad (Huji) are regrouping in Shailakupa, Harinakundu, Kaliganj and Sadar upazilas in Jhenidah district, according to intelligence sources and locals.

JMB and Huji men are coming back to mosques and madrasas in rural areas and resuming militant activities, taking the advantage of alleged lax vigilance by law enforcers, the sources claimed.

The top leaders of JMB and Huji had fled from the mosques and madrasas following the country-wide crackdown on militants.

"I have enough information that mosques and madrasas in my constituency are being used by militant groups. But as the government does not give green signal, police are not arresting them", Awami League (AL) lawmaker from Jhenidah-1 constituency Abdul Hai told The Daily Star.

The sources claimed that unknown faces are seen at different mosque and madrasa complexes in Chaklapara, Chhoto-Kamarkundu, Shikarpur, Upashaharpara,

Kanchanpur, Pabahati, Hamdah, Adarshapara, Boro-Kamarkundu and Baparipara in Jhenidah municipal areas.

"When asked they introduce themselves as either Islamic scholars or teachers," a ward commissioner in Jhenidah municipality said seeking anonymity.

Islamist militants have also strongholds in Balidapara Quami madrasa in Kaliganj upazila, Bhabanipur area in Harinakundu upazila, Madhupur and Kangsha villages in the Sadar and Borodah, Gagaganj, Kashimpur and Bakshipur in Shailakupa upazila, intelligence agencies said.

Although police have listed 45 suspected militants, they arrested 15 of them including Huji trainer Abul Kalam Azad alias Bulbul. Top five militant cadres who recruited and trained militants in the district are yet to be arrested, according to Jhenidah police.

Only seven out of 14 chargesheeted accused in the August 17 incident accused could be arrested so far, four and a half months after the serial bombing in the district. Locals are quite skeptic about the police drive to nab them.

The rest of the chargesheeted

accused including Matin Mehdi alias Matinul, one of the two chiefs of 'Allahr Dal' (an alleged offshoot of JMB), are yet to be nabbed.

Matin Mehdi, son of Enamul Haque of Bridge Road in Gaibandha town, was arrested earlier by Jhenidah police on October 20, 2003 along with 10 other suspected militants during a raid on a training camp in Pabahati area. But they were released on bail after a few days.

When asked, Jhenidah Police Superintendent A Kram Hossain denied allegation of lax vigilance. Fifteen suspected militants have already been arrested and police hunt is on to nab the rest five top militants and chargesheeted accused in the August 17 case, he said.

Meanwhile, a sense of panic is fraying nerves of teachers, guardians, students and government officials in the face JMB death threats through letters and to blow up educational institutions and key installations.

In their latest letter issued on December 27, JMB threatened Koatchandpur Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Mohammad Ishak Mian with death. In the hand-

written letter, JMB operatives also threatened to blow up the local police station.

Earlier, in another letter sent to the Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Harinakundu police station on December 8, JMB operatives asked policemen to stop harassing their cadres and threatened to blow up the police station for non-compliance.

They also threatened the Kaliganj UNO with death through a letter. The UNO, Moazzem Hossain, on November 29 got the letter posted from Jhenidah post office, he told this correspondent earlier.

The letters created panic among policemen and officials at the upazila.

The Jhenidah SP however said that police were never afraid of any threat. Policemen at six police stations and 34 outposts have been asked to be more cautious only, he said.

Talking to this correspondent Koatchandpur UNO Mohammad Ishak Mian also said he is not scared. Security has been tightened in the upazila headquarters and officials have been suggested to move carefully, he said.

Human chain in Nabiganj for gas supply

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Local people joined by political and local government leaders formed a big human chain and held a rally at the Kibria Square at Aushkandi on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway yesterday to press their five-point demand including gas supply to Nabiganj from Bibiyana gas field and setting up of gas-based industries in Habiganj district.

The programmes were organised by the Nabiganj Nagorik Forum. The rally was chaired by the Forum's chief Abdus Shahid Golap, also a Senior Vice-President of Nabiganj upazila BNP.

The programme followed a seven-day deadline given to the government by the Forum to fulfil the demands. The deadline expired yesterday.

A tougher agitation programme will be announced at a rally at the same venue today, speakers at yesterday's rally said.

It was addressed by, among others, former upazila chairman Dewan Golam Sarwar alias Hadi Gazil, Upazila BNP President Khaled Ahmed Pathan, Nabiganj

Pourashava Chairman Prof Tofozzul Islam Chowdhury, Nabiganj Upazila UP Chairmen Association President AKM Fokhrul Islam, Forum's Vice-president Alamgir Hossain, UP Chairman Abdur Rouf and Habiganj district BNP leader Manzar Uddin Ahmed Shahin. It was conducted by Upazila Muktiyoddha Commander and General Secretary of the Forum Nur Uddin Birprotik.

They said tougher agitation programmes like seizure and hartal would be observed to realise the demands.

Gun recovered, 2 PCJSS men held in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Security forces on Sunday night recovered another unauthorised Belgium-made gun from Natun Chakma Para in Guimara upazila in Khagrachhari district during their anti-crime operation.

Acting on a tip-off, an army team from Shindukchhari camp led by Maj. Mostafiz raided the area and recovered the gun but the possessor of the illegal firearm fled away sensing presence of the law enforcers. Maj. Mostafiz told this correspondent that the drive to recover illegal arms and arrest criminals will continue.

On Saturday night, army arrested two PCJSS activists- Rangchuyo Chakma, 25 and Sanjit Kumar Chakma, 30,-- along with a Bengium-made revolver from Mohalchhari area.

After arrest, the two admitted that they were members of PCJSS (Parbattya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity), an armed group supporting tribal leader Jotirindriya Bodhipriya Larma alias Santoo Larma, and were collecting toll from the area.

BNP musclemen oust RHD staff from quarters

Bid to grab land alleged

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

Three Roads and Highways Department (RHD) employees and their families were forced out of their official quarters recently allegedly by the musclemen of four local BNP leaders.

At least 70 musclemen of the BNP leaders attacked and ransacked houses of Abdul Matin, Hanif Miah and another unidentified staff at Kachari Bazar on Station Road of the town at midnight on January 9, sources said. The BNP leaders are Al-haj Abu Taher Miah, also chairman of Kishoreganj Poursabha, his nephew Kamrul Hasan, Oshim Sarkar Badhon, general secretary of Kishoreganj Art Academy and Khaled Saifullah Soheli.

Abdul Matin's wife Zakia Sultana prayed for time at least for a day to shift their belongings but the musclemen forced them to take shelter at nearby houses.

Victims complained that police did not come to their aid although a police station is situated only 100 yards of the spot. Hundreds of people watched the incident silently for about three hours but none dared to resist it for fear of reprisal by the BNP leaders, they said.

When contacted, Poursabha chairman Al-Haj Abu Taher Miah told this correspondent he along with five others purchased 11 decimals of land worth about Tk 2 crore. 'As we have valid docu-

ments, we took possession of it,' he said.

BNP leader Khaled Saifullah Shohel said, 'We shall build a modern business centre on our land.' RHD has many vacant quarters to shelter the ousted RHD employees, he said.

On contact, RHD executive engineer Md Joynal Abedin who took over only 10 days ago told journalists he informed the matter to the Deputy Commissioner (DC) and the Superintendent of Police (SP).

Kishoreganj DC CM Yusuf Hossain told journalists he had advised the executive engineer to inform the issue to the authorities when the RHD staff were asked to quit their quarters a day before the attack.

Kishoreganj SP Mallik Fakrul Islam said the Poura chairman informed him that he would take possession of the land. 'The employees agreed to leave the place, the chairman told', the SP said.

RHD Section Officer Mujibur Rahman Khan said the employees were living there since 1960. He filed a general diary (GD) with Kishoreganj Police Station immediately after the threat of BNP leaders.

A case was filed with Kishoreganj Police Station without naming the attackers, police said. Additional police forces have been deployed on the spot.

AUGUST 17 SERIAL BLASTS IN GAIBANDHA

2 'regional commanders' of JMB chargesheeted, names of 15 dropped

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Police have submitted charge sheet against two JMB 'regional commanders' for their involvement in the August 17 serial bomb blasts in Gaibandha and dropped names of 15 others from the list of accused.

The charge sheet was submitted to a Magistrate court on Sunday against Matin Mehdi alias Motiul Islam, son of Enamul Huq of Bridge Road in Gaibandha and Abdul Aziz, son of late Kalimuddin of Fulchari upazila.

Police said their investigation proved that the Matin Mehdi and Abdul Aziz were 'regional commanders' of JMB (Jamaat

Mujahideen, Bangladesh). They said Matin Mehdi has also chargesheeted by Jhenidah police for involvement with JMB there. Both are absconding since the incident.

Those relieved from charges are Mofazzal Hossain, ATM Taibur Rahman Proddhan, Rafiqul Islam, Jaharul Huq Sarker, Jahid Raihan Simul, Sanowarul Islam, Khalilullah Jewel, Abdul Jalil, Atiqur Rahman, Azizul, Piyeer Alam, Sohorab, Mosharaf Hossain, Delwer Hossain and Rashedul Islam Naju.

Police said names the 15 were dropped from the list of accused as they could not collect 'adequate evidence' regarding their involve-

ment with JMB and in the August 17 blasts.

The charge sheet was submitted under the Explosive Act 1908 and the Special Powers Act.

After the serial bomb blasts, police on at different times arrested 17 people from different areas of Gaibandha district.

Police during drives recovered four live bombs, batteries, electric wire and bomb making materials, JMB leaflets and books and letters to militants from their leaders.

In the charge sheet, police mentioned 26 witnesses to the August 17 bomb blasts in the district. The witnesses testified before a Magistrate under Section 164.



PHOTO: STAR

Ordeal after recreation... People scramble to board a Dhaka bound steamer at Barisal IWTA terminal yesterday.

8X3

10X3