

March 6, 2006

6 held with AK47 after gunfight in CHT

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Khagrachhari

Army personnel yesterday arrested six people after a half-an-hour gunfight with a gang of armed criminals in Kala Pahar area of Mahalchhari in the district.

After the shootout the troops seized one AK47 rifle, a sawed-off rifle, a magazine of AK47 rifle with five bullets and some subscription books.

The arrestees are Banshi Chakma, 32, Pritijiban Chakma, 35, Kamalpanjam Chakma, 45, Sushikanti Banamali, 48, Kala Marma, 35, and Aongka Marma, 20.

Army sources claimed that the arrestees belong to United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), an anti-SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Rahman had training on arms in Afghanistan

He taught top JMB men in bomb making

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK and
SHAMIM ASHRAF

Abdur Rahman had his arms training and mastered the art of bomb-making in Afghanistan and a few other countries and himself trained up the top-level leaders of outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB).

The militant kingpin yesterday also admitted before interrogators that his men smuggled the explosives they used in bomb attacks across the country from neighbouring India.

Fourth day into his arrest at East Shaplabagh in Sylhet, the infamous

militant supremo was undergoing interrogation by the Task Force Intelligence (TIF) at Rab-1 office in Uttara.

Meantime, Rahman's younger brother Ataur Rahman Sunny, military commander of JMB, and son-in-law Abdul Awal were brought face to face with him before the TFI interrogators yesterday.

Although the interrogators are quizzing Rahman, Sunny and Awal in separate rooms, they brought the three in the same room when they gave contradictory replies to a question.

"Everyone is being asked the same set of questions. When the

answer is contradictory or different, they are put together and being asked again to clear the enigma," said a source.

Earlier on Saturday night, law enforcers brought Sunny and Awal, both members of JMB's Majlish-e-Shura, to the capital from Barisal jail amidst tight security.

Detectives yesterday took them to a court seeking seven days' remand in a case filed in connection with a blast near Dhaka Sheraton Hotel on August 17 last year.

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Garment workers demand stern punishment to owners

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Garment workers yesterday laid siege to the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) office at Karwan Bazar in the capital, demanding stern punishment against the owners of the collapsed Phoenix garment in Dhaka and blazed KTS Textile Factory in Chittagong for violating the laws.

Around one thousand garment workers organised by Garments Sramik O Shilpa Rakha Jatiya Mancha, Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad, National Garments Workers Federation and Garments Sramik Oikya Forum placed their ten-point demand that include

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PHOTO: STAR

Garment workers take out a procession in the city with an empty coffin yesterday in a symbolic protest. They demanded safe workplace and compensation for the victims of Chittagong factory fire and Dhaka building collapse.

Ex-Jamaat leader's chequebooks found in Rahman's hideout

STAR REPORT

Two of the four bank chequebooks found in JMB chief Abdur Rahman's hideout at East Shaplabagh in Sylhet after his arrest belongs to former Jamaat-e-Islami ameer of Habiganj district Saidur Rahman.

Detectives yesterday arrested Abu Walid Chowdhury, manager of Bishwanath Branch of Islami Bank in Sylhet, for assisting Saidur to open the account with Islami Bank's Laidighirpar branch in 1999.

The name of one Sabir Ahmed was written on the four bank chequebooks seized from the

house.

The chequebooks — two of Islami Bank, Laidighirpar branch, Sylhet (account No 02006789); and one each of Janata Bank, Brahmanbaria branch (account No 11674) and Rupali Bank, Pallabi Branch, Dhaka (account No 8207) — were found along with a copy of Shabbir Ahmed's bio data, reports our staff correspondent from Sylhet.

The chequebooks of Islami Bank belong to Saidur Rahman,

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JMB CHIEF, OTHERS Babar for pressing sedition charges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfuzzaman Babar yesterday said sedition charge will be brought against militant kingpin Abdur Rahman and all his associates soon.

But the govt wants to make sure that there are no loopholes in the charges that are to be pressed separately.

"Since there is no instance of punishment in sedition charges, we'll have to make all necessary preparations before pressing the charge," Babar told reporters at his office in the afternoon yesterday.

"We want to ensure that there is no loopholes and punishment is awarded."

Steps are on to conduct the investigation and press charge sheet in proper way, and the cases will be filed only after examining all probe reports, the minister said hours into his return from a weeklong tour to Singapore.

However, Babar's statement came in a direct contradiction to LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan's media briefing where he said Abdur Rahman, who was arrested in

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EC to wait for publication of voter list as appeal pending

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) will have to wait for some more time to schedule publication of the draft and final voter rolls as its appeal against the High Court's (HC) January 4 directives is still pending.

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday deferred for the fifth time the hearing on the appeal against the HC directives for revising the existing electoral roll.

It fixed March 12 as the date for hearing. Work of preparing the draft voter list that began on February 21 too is scheduled for

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Donors want to shovel huge funds into railway

Govt hesitant about harsh conditions

RAFIQ HASAN

Development partners offered the government assistance for undertaking a massive restructuring programme for improving the worn out railway system in Bangladesh, but the government is hesitating thinking of the 'difficult' pre-conditions.

The amount of soft loan to be provided in phases for a three-year-long restructuring programme could be around \$1 billion if the government agrees to bring necessary reforms in the railway sector, said a communications ministry source referring to the indications made by donors on several occasions.

A high official in the Ministry of Communications, however, said the

amount of help would be around \$400-500 million.

"Recently an ADB delegation met me and made such an offer," said Communications Minister Nazmul Huda. He, however, could not tell the size of the loan offer.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will coordinate the programme with the participation of World Bank and Japan Bank of International Cooperation (JBIC) and other development partners, sources said.

But the donors' conditions will be difficult to meet and the tenure of the present government will end by the time the development work begins after formalising the

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Frantic farmers loot fertiliser

Blockade roads, Jamuna plant still out of operation



PHOTO: STAR

Hundreds of farmers stand in queue in front of a dealer's outlet in Dinajpur yesterday with the hope that they would get fertiliser.

REAZ AHMAD

The country's biggest urea producer, Jamuna Fertiliser Factory, has remained out of operation for the last two weeks with farmers continuing to blockade roads and incidents of looting of fertiliser going on unabated due to a supply dearth. The suspension cost the factory 20,800 tons of urea in lost production.

Failing to ensure sufficient supply of urea on time to all the farm-reach pockets in the country, even after forming a centralised monitoring committee on February 19 and deputising 20 bureaucrats to various districts on February 23, the government has at last directed its deputy commissioners (DCs) to allow movement of urea among Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation's

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A party unhappy with Rahman's capture: PM

BSS, Nandail, Mymensingh

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday alleged that an opposition political party is unhappy over the arrest of terrorist kingpin Shaekh Abdur Rahman as it wants terrorism to continue and innocent people killed by the terrorists.

"All quarters, including political parties and religious leaders, have congratulated the government on its success in capturing Rahman, but they [opposition] are unhappy," she said addressing a public meeting at Shaheed Smriti Model School ground.

None of the terrorists would be spared, the prime minister said and expressed firm optimism that the remaining members of the terrorist gang would be arrested and brought to book soon.

Khaleda said the main opposition party cannot tolerate welfare of the people. While in power, they established a reign of terror and they want it to continue.

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Pak govt should try perpetrators of 1971 genocide

Air Marshal Asghar Khan says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Pakistan government should bring to justice the perpetrators of the genocide in Bangladesh in 1971, said Air Marshal (retired) M Asghar Khan of Pakistan yesterday.

"The Pakistan army who had committed the crime in '71 can still be condemned and brought to trial," he said, addressing the launching ceremony of his book 'We've Learnt Nothing From History' at Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) auditorium.

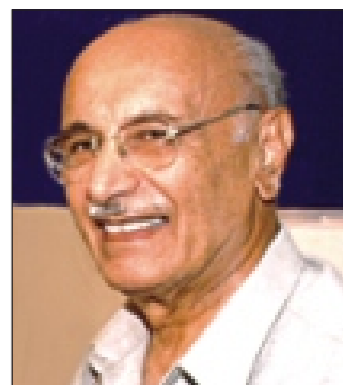
"Facts are always facts. We must face them," he said referring to the massacre during the Liberation War.

Khan said he never feels like a stranger in Bangladesh. "I feel this is my country."

Criticising the military power in

Pakistan and the use of religion for political gains, he said the army in many countries takes over easily, but it is always difficult for them to leave it.

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Air Marshal Asghar Khan

Lit up Sirajganj envy of dark north

STAR REPORT

The small northern town of Sirajganj, the electoral constituency of the state minister for power, is blessed when all other 15 northern districts are experiencing an average of 400MW load-shedding everyday.

Meanwhile, the ongoing power crisis took a turn for the worse in the southwestern zone yesterday as it suffered 350MW of load-shedding against the daily demand of 525MW.

Sirajganj gets 100 percent of its daily demand of 33MW power apparently following a verbal order of State Minister for Power Iqbal Hasan Mahmood, said PDB sources, reports our staff correspondent in Rajshahi.

On the other hand, Rajshahi divisional headquarters and the prime minister's parliamentary seat Bogra, which house major industries and businesses, are getting 8MW to 10MW, one eighth of the daily demand.

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PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

Upendra and Gafur, mentioned in the report, are residents of an Indian enclave and they govern themselves. They made their own local government, Panchayet, inside a two-room building.

The invisible people

INAM AHMED

It seems that we are going through a gorge, although there was no reason to think so, the feeling just hangs around us. On one side of the road are paddy fields frilled by distant trees and on the other are high home yards fenced off with shrubs. The lazy winter afternoon lends a kind of solitariness to the landscape.

"We are entering India," someone mutters. "It starts from here." The statements make no difference to the scene. Then the car veers into an open space, overshadowed by a huge banyan tree, and stops. Small tin-shed shops stand around the yard, a tailoring shop, two eateries and a few grocery stores.

On the branch of a tree a signboard proclaims: Kalirhat, Thana Dinahata, Kochbihar, 150 No Chhit, Dashiarchhara.



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Mir Nasir critically injured, wife dead in Makkah

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former state minister for civil aviation and tourism Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin was critically injured while his wife Dalia Nasir, 45, was killed in a road accident in Saudi Arabia last night.

His two daughters—Nusrat Nazneen, 18, and Israt Nazneen, 14—and elder sister Samsun Nahar, 50, were also injured in the accident.

The accident happened at about 8:00pm when the former state minister along with his family was heading for Medina from Makkah, said family sources.

Nasir and the other injured were rushed to King Fahd Hospital at Makkah. Doctors stated their condition to be critical.

Mir Nasir went to Saudi Arabia to perform Umrah on February 26 and was supposed to return on March 9, said his personal assistant Nizamuddin Zia.

He resigned from the cabinet on November 17 last year in the wake of a crisis over carrying Hajj pilgrims.