

ANOTHER YOUTH HELD IN B'BARIA

JMB cadres confess to Aug 17 involvement

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

The four Jamaatul Mujahideen, Bangladesh (JMB) cadres arrested in Brahmanbaria on Thursday confessed to police that they were involved in the August 17 bomb blasts in the district town.

Arrested Alamgir, 28; Sohail, 25; Arafat, 26; and Shaikh Muhammad Suman, 25 were being interrogated on the second day of their five-day remand yesterday.

Police said they got some important information from the JMB cadres but declined to disclose those for the shake of investigation.

The four were arrested following information given by JMB cadre Sabbir Ahmed Dulal, arrested in Dhaka on March 8.

Police picked up another youth Shafiqul Islam, 28, -- from Kautoli in the town yesterday. Police said Shafiqul Islam has not been arrested. He has been taken into custody for interrogation in connection militancy. Police declined to say when newsmen asked whether he was a JMB suspect. "We will tell you later", a policeman said at the Sadar police station.

Earlier on Wednesday, police picked

up four others but released them after interrogation. They were Sukumer Roy, 60; Alamgir, 35; Zilani Abdul Ashique, 30; and Hossain Al Mamun, 35, on Wednesday for asking some-thing. They are under watch, the Officer-in-Charge of Brahmanbaria Sadar police station said.

He said JMB cadre Sabbir Ahmed Dulal arrested in Dhaka on March 8 and sent to Brahmanbaria, has been sent to Sylhet for interrogation in a case filed against JMB kingpin Abdur Rahman there.

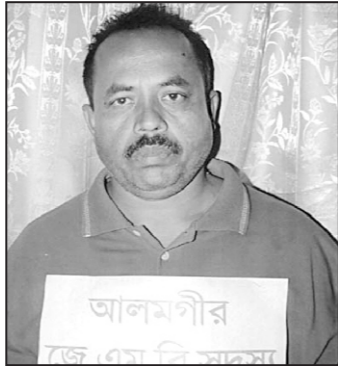
Sabbir was arrested from a saloon in Paltan area in Dhaka city after his cheque book (No. 11674) of Janata Bank branch in Brahmanbaria was found during the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) operation at Surajadigal Bari in Sylhet city from where JMB chief Abdur Rahman was arrested.

It is learnt that arrested Sheikh Muhammad Suman was JMB 'commander' of an area in Brahmanbaria town.

Brahmanbaria police and Detective Branch (DB) personnel raided at least 18 place in the town in the last few days in their hunt for Islamist militants, sources said.

Some sources claimed that JMB Sura member Salah Uddin was hiding in Brahmanbaria.

Additional Police



Superintendent Abdul Kuddus Amin told newsmen at his office yesterday that raids were launched following information that Salah Uddin was hiding in

the town. "We have launched a massive hunt for him", he said.

Mechanised stone extraction protested in Panchagarh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Hundreds of people at a meeting held at Bhanpur in Panchagarh district on Thursday protested rock extraction by banned dredging machine.

Rock and Sand Traders and Suppliers Association of Panchagarh organised the meeting chaired by its president Amanullah Bachchu. Five rock trading organisations extended support to the association.

Speakers threatened to paralyse the entire Panchagarh district if the concerned authorities failed to curb illogical rock extraction in Tentulia upazila with immediate effect.

They urged the traders and workers not to do loading and unloading of rock as well as resisting plying of rock-laden trucks to other parts of the country from Panchagarh.

In the meeting, association secretary Anwar Hossain said that cinema villain Dipzol had come to

Tentulia to take lease of a rock quarry in the name of one Khandker Obaidur Rahman on February 9. At that time Dipzol claimed to possess documents of the Ministry of Mineral Resources. In face of local people's resistance, Dipzol and his men retreated although they threatened to stage a comeback in near future, he said.

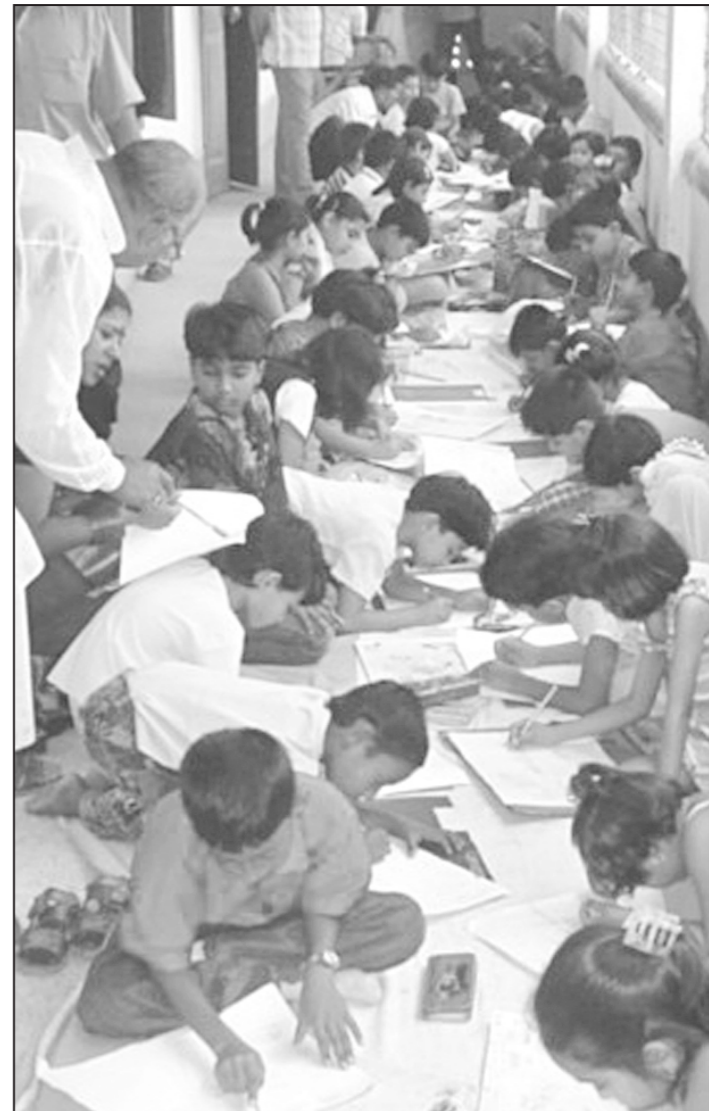
While addressing, association president Amanullah Bachchu expressed his dissatisfaction saying how could anybody obtain permission of the concerned ministry for extraction of rocks in spite of an official ban.

The association members also staged a demonstration at Shalbahar village in Tentulia.

Local rock traders alleged that, at least 2,000 metric tons of rock are extracted with 15 dredging machines in a day which may cause landslide on the spot.

When contacted, Panchagarh Deputy Commissioner (DC) Md Azhar Ali said the district administration banned usage of dredger machine at rock extraction sites. A few machines were also seized, he said.

Sources said, the ban on extraction of rock by dredging machine in Panchagarh was issued in 1994. After conducting an environmental assessment, a committee recommended the ban.



Children at a painting competition organised by Bangabandhu Shishu Kishore Mela in Satkhira yesterday marking the 87th birthday of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Hartal called to protest Mujaheed's visit

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Muktijuddah Sangsad in Phulbaria upazila in Mymensingh has called hartal there on March 18 protesting a planned visit by Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General and Social Welfare Minister Ali Ahsan Mohammed Majaheed on that day.

Mujahid is scheduled to address a public meeting at Phulbaria Degree College ground.

The local unit of 14-party alliance has extended its support to the hartal call, party leaders said.

Addressing a press conference at the local press club, leaders of the Sangsad said they will resist Mujaheed's visit because of his anti-liberation role.

Local Awami League leaders were also present at the press conference.

9 fishing trawlers looted in Bay 50 fishermen injured by pirates

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Pirates looted fish worth over Tk one lakh from nine fishing trawlers in the Bay of Bengal near Kuakata coast, police said.

A notorious gang of pirates led by Jalal of Fatrarbans in Taltali upazila of Barguna district looted fuel, fish and food from the trawlers which were returning to Mohipur bazaar after fishing in the Bay on Tuesday, police said yesterday.

Fifty fishermen were injured in attack by pirates. After committing the crime, they fled away towards Fatrarbans, 50 kilometre (KM) west of Kuakata sea beach, according to police. Police said they could not

arrest them due to lack of speed boat.

Police further said, the same gang attacked five fishing boats in the Andharmanik River last week.

Meanwhile, pirates introduced token system and are collecting illegal toll ranging Tk 5,000 to 10,000 from each boat in the Bay since the first week of January.

Fishermen in the coastal belt of Kuakata, Gongamoti, Khajura, Alipur and Mohipur in Patuakhali, Patharghata and Parerhat in Barguna and other parts of Pirojpur, Khulna and Bagherhat are now forced to take tokens in exchange of a big amount of money, according to fishermen in Kuakata area.

Pirates allegedly set a target to collect Tk 3 crore from 5,000 fishing

boats till May this year, fishermen said. They are not allowing any fishing boat to ply in the Bay if the fishermen fail to show token containing picture of Royal Bengal Tiger with symbolic name of the gang, 'Laban Chora'.

Ten fishermen of a fishing boat owned by Md Farid in Gongamoti area of Noakhali district complained to Patuakhali police recently that fish worth Tk 40,000 was looted from their boat in February for their failure to show tokens.

Because of frequent attack of pirates, lives of fishermen have become miserable in Kuakata coast.

Top outlaw held in Jhenidah

A CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Kotchandpur police yesterday arrested a regional leader of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (ML-Janajuddah).

Shamsul Islam Sumon, 42, was arrested at around 11 am from a house of Jakaria Hossain at Chandpara village in Chowgacha upazila. Sumon is an accused in 50 criminal cases including murder, extortion and armed robbery lodged with different police stations in Jhenidah, Chuadanga, Jessore, Kushtia, Meherpur and Magura.

Later, Sumon was handed over to the Detective Branch (DB) of police for interrogation.

'Govt out to snatch right to franchise'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Awami Sechhasebak League central General Secretary Pankaj Debnath has alleged that BNP-Jamat led four party alliance government is conspiring to snatch people's right to vote by not accepting opposition's proposals for reforms of the Election Commission (EC) and care taker system.

As part of its conspiracy, the government has already politicised the EC and now trying to make a person of their choice head of the care taker government for holding the next general election, he said.

He was addressing the triennial council of Satkhira Sadar and pourasava units of Sechhasebak League, held at the pourasava auditorium on Thursday.

With Sheikh Nazmul Haque Roni in the chair, the conference was also addressed by Nazrul Islam, Monsur Ahmed, Mahidul Haque, Sheikh Abu Nasim, A Ahmed, Sheikh Mosharrif Hossain, Tapas Pal, SM Shawkat Hossain

and Sheikh Nurul Haque.

Reiterating 14-party alliance demands, he said there will be no election till the government accepts the opposition demands.

He called upon the people, particularly the youths, to unite to build resistance in every village to foil the ruling alliance's conspiracy to cling to power.

He also came down heavily on the government for its failure to ensure smooth supply of fertiliser, fuel and power during the peak season of IRRRI-Boro cultivation.

The Sechhasebak League leader also alleged that the alliance government is harbouring militants to use them during election to snatch people's mandate in the next election.

The council formed two separate committees of Satkhira Sadar upazila and Pourasava units of Sechhasebak League headed by Abdul Wahab Bulbul and Nazmul Haque Roni respectively.

9x3

13X3