

Trial of JMB men faces obstacles

Jail authorities reluctant to produce accused in court

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER and SHARIFUL ISLAM

Trials of several cases filed against leaders and activists of outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) hit a snag as the authorities concerned are showing utter reluctance to produce the charge-sheeted accused before different courts in the capital, legal experts noted.

Sources said the courts concerned could not frame charges against the detained militants or start trials of at least a dozen cases as the jail authorities and law enforcement agencies did not produce the JMB leaders and activists before the court on scheduled dates.

Mystery shrouds the activities of the jail authorities and law enforcement agencies as they repeatedly failed to produce the accused militants including top JMB leaders Ataur Rahman Sunny and

Enayetullah Jewel despite the court directives to produce them. In some cases, 10 to 12 consecutive dates already passed without hearing as the accused militants were not produced before the courts.

Court sources said the courts repeatedly directed the jail authorities and law enforcement agencies to produce the accused, but the orders were not heeded. "The courts cannot frame charges or begin trials of the cases as the jail authorities or other law enforcement agencies do not heed the courts' orders to produce the accused on scheduled dates for hearings," an assistant public prosecutor (APP) told The Daily Star seeking anonymity.

CHARGES AGAINST SUNNY COULD NOT BE FRAMED Judge Mohammad Monzurul Bachhid of the Fourth Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court could not frame charges

against JMB military commander Ataur Rahman Sunny and six others in two cases, as the authorities concerned did not produce Sunny before the court on five consecutive dates.

The cases -- one under the Arms Act and the other under the Explosive Substances Act -- were filed with Sabujbagh police station on September 8 last year. Although Sunny was not produced before the court for trial of the cases, investigation officers (IOs) of other cases were quite able to take him on remand for interrogation before or after the scheduled dates for hearings of the two cases.

On January 30, Detective Branch (DB) of police produced Sunny before a court and took him on a seven-day remand in a case filed in connection with an explosion near Jatrabari foot over bridge on August 17 last year.

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14-party plans grand rally late this month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL)-led 14-party opposition combine has chalked up its next course of anti-government agitations including a grand rally in the capital, marches towards the capital, and upazila and district headquarters this month to compel the BNP-Jamaat alliance government to implement the electoral reforms.

The action plan made at a meeting at opposition combine's coordinator Abdul Jalil's residence in the capital yesterday will be finalised after getting approval of the AL President Sheikh Hasina within a couple of days.

The opposition combine's grand rally in the capital will be held in the last week of this month or early next month, meeting sources said.

The opposition has no plan of declaring tough agitation programmes like hartal, laying siege to Election Commission (EC) secretariat or Prime Minister's Office or blockade of road, rail and river ways until mid August, meeting sources said.

The meeting, however, expressed deep concern over the alliance government's move to amend the constitution and said if

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HSC admission seekers queue in front of Holy Cross College in the city to submit their forms yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

DEPZ workers abstain from work for higher pay

JU CORRESPONDENT

Several thousand workers of three factories inside and outside Dhaka Export Processing Zone (DEPZ) observed work abstention yesterday for realisation of demands including higher overtime bill, timely payment of salary and cancellation of termination of 35 workers.

Protesting termination of 35 workers of Honorway Textile, a plant in DEPZ (Old), other workers

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6,000 RMG workers sued for violence

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

About 6,000 garment workers have been sued in connection with Sunday's violence that left 30 people, including six policemen, injured.

The violence erupted over rumours of death of three garment workers who were injured in a road accident on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway at Signboard Bus Stand under Gazipur Sadar

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Japan mulls strike against N Korea

AP, Tokyo

Japan said yesterday it was considering whether a pre-emptive strike on the North's missile bases would violate its constitution, signalling a hardening stance ahead of a possible UN Security Council vote on Tokyo's proposal for sanctions against the regime.

Japan was badly rattled by North Korea's missile tests last week and several government officials openly discussed whether the country ought to take steps to better defend itself, including setting up the legal framework to allow Tokyo to launch a pre-emptive strike against Northern missile sites.

"If we accept that there is no other option to prevent an attack... there is the view that attacking the launch base of the guided missiles is within the constitutional right of self-defence. We need to deepen discussion," Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe said.

Japan's constitution currently bars the use of military force in settling international disputes and prohibits Japan from maintaining a military for warfare. Tokyo has interpreted that to mean it can have armed troops to protect itself, allowing the existence of its 240,000-

strong Self-Defence Forces.

A Defence Agency spokeswoman, however, said Japan has no attacking weapons such as ballistic missiles that could reach North Korea. Its forces only have ground-to-air missiles and ground-to-vessel missiles, she said on condition of anonymity due to official policy.

Despite resistance from China and Russia, Japan has pushed for a UN Security Council resolution that would prohibit nations from procuring missiles or missile-related "items, materials goods and technology" from North Korea. A vote was possible in New York later Monday, but Japan said it would not insist on one.

"It's important for the international community to express a strong will in response to the North Korean missile launches," Abe said. "This resolution is an effective way of expressing that."

China and Russia, both nations with veto power on the council, have voiced opposition to the measure. Kyodo News agency reported Monday, citing unnamed Chinese diplomatic sources, that China may use its veto on the Security Council to block the resolution.

The United States, Britain and

France have expressed support for the proposal, while Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso has said there is a possibility that Russia will abstain.

South Korea, not a council member, has not publicly taken a position on the resolution, but on Sunday Seoul rebuked Japan for its outspoken criticism of the tests.

"There is no reason to fuss over this from the break of dawn like Japan, but every reason to do the opposite," a statement from President Roh Moo-hyun's office said, suggesting that Tokyo was contributing to tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

Abe said Monday it was "regrettable" that South Korea had accused Japan of overreacting.

"There is no mistake that the missile launch... is a threat to Japan and the region. It is only natural for Japan to take measures of risk management against such a threat," Abe said.

Meanwhile, a Chinese delegation including the country's top nuclear envoy Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei arrived in North Korea on Monday, officially to attend celebrations marking the 45th anniversary of a friendship

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EC to seek help from govt officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) is planning to dive with full force into the task of updating the voter list since a lot of time has already been wasted in dealing with the controversies surrounding its methods of preparing the list.

To implement the latest method of updating the voter list by going from door to door, which will begin after July 20, the EC on Sunday decided to hold a high level meeting with the government's field level and central administration seeking their cooperation, sources said.

Following the decision, the EC Secretariat yesterday sent letters to eight secretaries, divisional commissioners, deputy commissioners (DC) and field level senior election officials requesting them to attend

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10kg heroin seized in Dhaka, Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel recovered heroin worth around Tk 10 crore and arrested three people in two separate raids in Rajshahi and the capital in last two days.

In Rajshahi, the BDR members seized seven kilograms of heroin from a passenger bus yesterday, reports our Rajshahi correspondent.

Acting on a tip-off, the paramilitary border guards of 10 Rifles Battalion intercepted a Rajshahi-bound bus of Chapainawabganj at noon in Haragram under Rajpara

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BB 'apathy' delays probe into shady transactions

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Sluggish move by the central bank is holding up the investigation into financial transactions of the 12 business houses including BD Foods Limited and its nine sister concerns accused of smuggling heroin to the UK, said sources.

At the beginning of June, the CID-led team investigating the drug smuggling to the UK sent the dossier on banking affairs of the 12 companies back to the Bangladesh Bank (BB) and requested it to find out whether any suspicious transaction was made. But the BB has yet to examine the reports, delaying the probe, said a source in the CID.

"We have reminded Bangladesh Bank several times to complete the checking as soon as possible, but the section concerned of the bank has not been responsive at all," a top official of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) yesterday told The Daily Star, seeking anonymity.

A BB official preferring not to be named said checking such huge information alongside regular duties is very time consuming.

Following a request of the CID-led team, the BB on May 3 asked all commercial banks to furnish it with detailed banking information of those 12 business houses within a week.

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Teachers' strike enters day five

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The teachers and employees of the non-government high schools, colleges and madrasas continued their strike for the fifth consecutive day yesterday while the government is yet to decide about their demands due to disagreements between the education and finance ministries.

On strike since July 6, the teachers and employees of non-government educational institutions held rallies, brought out processions and sent letters to the legislators yesterday.

Their main demand is 100 per cent basic salary from the government exchequer.

Meanwhile, Education Minister Osman Farruk agreed to increase the basic salary to 95 per cent from the existing 90 per cent, but Finance Minister Saifur Rahman

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Israel to press ahead with Gaza raids

Olmert won't talk with Hamas for soldier's release

REUTERS, Jerusalem

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert rejected yesterday international criticism of Israel's offensive in Gaza, saying operations to press militants to free an abducted soldier and end rocket fire would go on indefinitely.

Olmert, speaking to foreign media, also reaffirmed his commitment to his plan to redraw the Jewish settlement map in the occupied West Bank, but acknowl-

edged "this will be difficult."

He said in forceful tones that he would not negotiate with the governing Hamas movement for the release of the young corporal, taken to Gaza in a cross-border raid on June 25.

Militant groups that kidnapped the 19-year-old tank gunner have demanded Israel free more than 1,000 Palestinian prisoners.

"I will not release prisoners for the trade of Corporal Gilad Shalit to Hamas," Olmert said.

In Gaza, senior Hamas legislator Mushir al-Masri said failure to meet the militants' demands would only put the soldier more at risk.

"The Zionist enemy should not dream that the Palestinian people will ever accept releasing the captured Israeli soldier for free," Masri said.

Lashing out at the European Union, which has been outspoken in its criticism of Israel's ground

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PHOTO: STAR

The road near Fakirapool Bazar in the capital goes under water even in light rain, causing trouble for pedestrians and vehicular movement.

Match factory gutted in fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Chemicals including sulphur worth about Tk 1 crore and three important machines worth over Tk 1.5 crore were damaged in a fire incident in the automatic chemical mixture machine room of Dada Match Factory at Rupsha Strand Road at 10:30am yesterday.

Fire originating from sparks in the machine room continued for about an hour before four fire brigade units brought it under

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Prayer Timing		
July 11		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-10	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-55	7-00
Esha	8-17	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation