

Police stations in Khulna division on 'high alert'

Attack by Islamist militants, outlaws apprehended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

Sixty-nine police stations in Khulna division including the five in Khulna city are on 'high alert' since Thursday night following intelligence reports of reprisal by Islamist extremists and outlaws.

According to police sources, outlaws are preparing for reprisal following the crossfire death of Shoiab alias Ripon Ahmed, 'operation commander' of Janajuddho faction of outlawed PBCP (Purba Banglar Communist Party).

The sources did not rule out the possibility of attacks also by Islamist extremists on key installations, police stations, journalists and political leaders to avenge the arrest of Dr Masud bin Ishaque, Farhad

Hossain Bulbul, Abdur Rahim Safai and 16 others in the recent crackdown in Khulna and Bagerhat districts.

These arrestees identified themselves to police as leaders and activists of JMB (Jamaatul Mujahidin, Bangladesh), JMJB (Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh), Jamaatul Moslem and Ahle Hadith Andolan, Bangladesh.

Most of them confessed to police, but not to court, why and how they carried out the serial bomb blasts on August 17.

Quoting from their confessional statements, Khulna Range DIG Noor Mohammad said that operatives of PBCP Janajuddho had connivance with Islamist extremists

in the August 17 bomb blasts in the south Western region.

Security blanket has also been thrown in some particular places in Khulna division and in the city to nab PBCP (Janajuddho) founder Dada Tapan, Shoiab's younger brother Shumon and leader of Harkatul Jihad Mufti Abdul Hannan who are reportedly moving in guise, police sources said.

Meanwhile, neither police nor Rab could detect the owner of the private car which carried Shoiab and his two associates, reportedly from Dhaka Sunday night. The law enforcers have launched a manhunt for the two associates of Shoiab.

Besides, there has not been any progress in investigation in the case filed with Rupsha thana on Monday

under the Arms Act against Kamrul and Shumon, elder and younger brothers respectively of Shoiab.

According to another source, search is also on to identify those who used to pay toll to Shoiab every month.

"From Shoiab's SIM cards we have identified the persons who maintained contact with him," said a highly placed source in Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP).

Sources also claimed that many armed cadres of Janajuddho have entered Khulna city and upazilas of Khulna district to find out the persons who accompanied Shoiab in the private car as PBCP leaders believe that one of the two 'missing cadres' acted as Rab source to help them arrest Shoiab.



PHOTO: STAR

Human rights activists, joined by women, brought out a procession in Jhenidah town on Thursday demanding trial of the killers of housewife Farzana Ahmed Nila. She was strangled at her husband's house on Wednesday and the body was hung from a ceiling fan.

Housewife 'murder' sparks protests in Jhenidah

AMANUR AMAN, *Back From Jhenidah*

Farzana Ahmed Nila, wife of Tariqul Islam Palash in Jhenidah town, was killed in their house, according to autopsy report.

A four-member medical team of Jhenidah Sadar Hospital performed autopsy of her body and submitted the report on Wednesday.

The report says she was strangled and then hung from a ceiling fan.

Police are looking for Nila's husband but he is absconding.

The incident sparked protests by different organisations including Bangladesh Society for Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR). It brought out a procession and held a rally in Jhenidah town on Thursday demanding arrest of the killers. The rally was addressed by, among others, BSEHR Executive Director Elina Khan, Abdus Sobhan Jehadi, Masud Ahmed Sanju.

"Now we are sure that it is a murder and we will know everything after arrest and interrogation of Palsah," Jhenidah Sadar thana OC Azizul Haq told this correspondent during a visit to the spot yesterday. Nila's family also demanded arrest of Palash and his accomplices who helped him hang the body after murder.

"We have seen marks of shoes on the chair behind the hanging body. The chair was used to hang the body with the ceiling fan," a member of Nila's family said seeking anonymity.

"Palash was wearing a lungi and a ganzi, and no shoes."

"We saw two persons with Palash when we went to the spot within ten minutes of the phone call from Palash," the family member added.

According to police, Palsah was accused in a drug case several years ago. Nila's family sources said Palash was a friend of Nila's brother Nehal Ahmed Soheli. He used to visit Nila's

house. They were married in 1997.

They claimed that Palash used to torture Nila as she protested his 'extra-marital affairs'. The couple had an eight year-old son Angon. Palash organised an NGO named Action in Development (AID). He was its executive director.

Recently, Palash rented a house in the town and lived there with his family.

This correspondent tried to contact members of Palash's family but no one agreed to talk.

Police have locked the house rented by Palash where the incident took place. They will pray to court for attachment of the property.

After the killing, Nila's brother Nehal Ahmed Soheli filed a General Dairy (GD) with the Sadar thana. Now the GD will be turned into a murder case, police said.

"Investigation is going on and charge sheet will be submitted soon", said SI Matiar Rahman, investigation officer (IO) of the case.

Transport strike in Sirajganj

A CORRESPONDENT, *Sirajganj*

An indefinite transport strike began in Sirajganj yesterday protesting illegal toll collection at two bus terminals here.

The strike was jointly called by two associations of bus, minibus and coach owners and workers.

All types of vehicles remained off the roads on the first day of strike.

Transport owners' association president Munshi Kamal Uddin told this correspondent, the decision was taken in protest against toll collection from bus drivers by some workers led by Altaf Hossain, an executive of transport owners' association and Abdul Malek, an association member. They also ransacked some vehicles. "We have already removed them from the association," Altaf said.

However, a rival group of workers brought out a procession against the strike at 8 in the morning.

Scouts confce held at Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

The triennial conference of Sadar upazila Scouts was held here yesterday.

Held at Sadar upazila auditorium, the conference was presided over by Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer SM Ashrafuzzaman while it was attended by Satkhira Deputy Commissioner Md Ilias as chief guest.

Speakers underscored the need for scouting to turn the new generation into efficient and self-dependent citizens.

Among others, it was addressed by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC Rev) Humayun Kabir, Satkhira Poursava chairman Sheikh Ashraf Haque, Upazila Primary Education Officer Samsunnahar, Principal Yunus Ali and headmasters of different high schools Alhaj Noor Mohammad, Mahfuzur Rahman Khan, Mozammel Haque, Shafiquddin and headmistress of Government Girls' High School Asmiara Begum.

Later on, a committee was formed headed by Sadar UNO SM Ashrafuzzaman and Kazi Afzal Bari as its president and secretary.



PHOTO: STAR

Rotten sweets found at a sweetmeat shop in Sadar Road in Barisal city being poured into a nearby pond during drive by a mobile court on Thursday against sale of adulterated food.

Satkhira JP protests fuel price hike

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

Jatiya Party held a rally and brought out a procession in Satkhira town yesterday protesting the August 17 bomb blasts and price hike of fuel and essentials.

The processionists gathered at Satkhira Government High School ground and held a rally. They then paraded streets in the town, carrying banners and chanting slogans the town.

With Saikhira Jatiya Party Convenor Abdur Rahim in the chair, the rally was addressed by, among others, JP central Vice Chairmen S M Golam Reza, former MP Salah Uddin, Abdur Jabbar, Abdur Rouf, Juba Sanghati central President Liakat Hossain Khoka and general secretary Aminul Islam, Ashrafuzzaman Ashu, Sheikh Azhar Hossain, Abdul Mazid and Anwar Zahid Tapan.

The speakers protested the August 17 bomb blasts across the country and demanded arrest and punishment to the culprits. They also demanded withdrawal of the enhanced price of fuel and immediate government steps to check price spiral of essentials.

RU 'CONTROVERSIAL' RECRUITMENT Appointees protest PRO statement

RU CORRESPONDENT

The 'controversially appointed' 544 employees of Rajshahi University yesterday held a rally in front of the administrative building and protested the remarks made by the university authorities about their appointment.

The RU Public Relations Office (PRO) in a press release Monday night said the 'vice-chancellor has not accepted the demand of 544 employees for confirmation of their jobs because their appointments are under legal process'.

Protesting the statement, speakers at the rally said they postponed their agitation programme on Sunday for confirmation of jobs on assurance of the VC.

The VC had assured them that there would not be any fresh appointment before confirmation of their jobs, they said and threatened of tougher agitation if their jobs are not confirmed within a month.

Mentionably, the RU authorities in April last year appointed 544 third and fourth class employees against 255 vacant posts without advertisement and allegedly violating rules. The High Court stayed the recruitment following filing of a case by a lawyer, Abu Aslam.

Oust govt to restore peace, Matia tells B'baria rally

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *B'baria*

Awami League Presidium member Matia Chowdhury has called upon the people to intensify agitation to 'oust the government to end terrorism and bring back peace in society'.

The ruling four-party alliance harbours terrorists and criminals. So long they are in power, violence in the name of religion and crimes will continue, the front ranking leader of opposition AL told a public rally at Brahmanbaria Poura Mukta Manch Thursday evening.

Brahmanbaria unit of the 14-party opposition alliance organised the meeting as part of its country-wide protests against bomb blasts and other crimes, price hike of fuel and essentials and corruption by ruling party men.

Matia alleged that people are passing sleepless nights since takeover by the alliance government. They have become wary of crimes and violence.

Mentioning the August 17 serial bomb blasts, she said such acts of violence, murder and rape are now a common feature. Law enforcers can not make out any clue to such incidents as they are influenced by ruling parties, she alleged.

"If any terrorist belonging to BNP

or Jamaat is nabbed, they (BNP or Jamaat) say the nabbed person is no more belongs to them".

The former agriculture minister also urged the government to accept the opposition's proposals for reform of the caretaker system and the Election Commission for holding the next parliamentary election in a free and fair manner.

With district AL president Lutful Hi-Satchchu in the chair, the meeting was addressed by, among others, JSD (Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal) central joint secretary Iqbal Hussain Khan, central AL leader Mustafa Jalal Mohiuddin, Workers Party leader Hazera Sultana, CPB (Communist Party of Bangladesh) Afruz Ali, AL district secretary Md Humam Kabir, joint secretary Amanul Hoque Chento, organising secretary Mamun Sarker, former municipal chairman Md Helal Uddin, Major (Retd) Johirul Haque Khan, Md Ferdous, Md Jahirul Haque Khokhon, Ashraful Islam Jiban, Md. Abdul Zilil Mia and Mojibur Rahman Babul.

Matia said the ruling alliance is not accepting the proposals for caretaker and Election Commission reforms because they are thinking to retain power by taking scope of the loopholes in the present systems.

2 killed in Sirajganj road accidents

A CORRESPONDENT, *Sirajganj*

At least two people were killed and 15 others injured in two separate road accidents here in two days.

Police sources said, an accident occurred when the driver of a Naogaon-bound bus coming from Dhaka lost control over steering on Dhaka-Bogra highway at Chandaikona in Raiganj upazila. It hit a rickshaw and skidded off the road at about 5 am. The rickshaw-puller, Hedayetul Islam died on the spot.

At least 15 bus passengers were injured, five of them were admitted to Raiganj Upazila Health Complex in a critical condition.

In another incident, an unidentified passer-by was crushed under the wheels of a bus in front of the Roads and Highways office here at 10 pm on Thursday.

Tk 50,000 fish looted by pirates in Tatulia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

Fishes worth about Tk 50,000 were looted from 8 fishing boats on the Tatulia river on Friday allegedly by members of notorious Alauddin and Bachchu groups.

The same gang attacked five boats carrying merchandise in the river on Thursday, police said.

They looted goods worth Tk one lakh from the boats. The boats were returning from Kalaiya bazaar. Eight businessmen were injured by the attackers. After committing the crime, the pirates fled away towards Lalmonoh upazila in Bhola. Baufal police confirmed the report.

People's lives have become miserable in 10 shoals of Baufal

upazila due to frequent attack of the pirates. The notorious group is named after its ringleader Alauddin and Bachchu of Gajaria village in Lalmonoh.

Police fail to catch them due to lack of speed-boats.

Most frequently pirates raid the boats of fishermen and traders and loot their cash and valuables. They also attack villagers of different shoals in the river and loot their crops and cattle including cash and valuables. The groups loot aman paddy from villagers' fields located in border areas of Bhola and Patuakhali districts during harvesting season every year, according to local people.

People have demanded joint patrol by police of the two districts.