

JMB activists regrouping

Some of them sighted in remote Jamuna shoals

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Activists of banned Islamist outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen, Bangladesh (JMB) are regrouping in remote shoal areas in Shaghat upazila, taking the advantage of lax police surveillance.

Many of the suspected militants who fled the area after the August 17 serial bomb blasts have reappeared with their beards shaved. Dressed in trouser and shirt instead of pajama, panjabi and cap earlier, they are moving freely now. But their movement is suspicious, local people told newsmen.

Akanderpara in Shaghata upazila and remote Nalsia and Guabari shoals in Jamuna basin were dens of JMB activities before the August 17 blasts. The house of the father-in-law of Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai, operations commander of Jangrta Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMB), is in Akanderpara.

Local people said Bangla Bhai and

Asadullah al Galib, chief of Ahle Hadith, Bangladesh (Ahab), occasionally visited the areas and held meetings with their followers before the August 17 blasts.

Taking the advantage of poverty, the Islamist outfits recruited youths and trained them in the remote shoal areas. After training, they were sent to different areas including Dinajpur, Thakurgaon, Joypurhat and Naogaon with special assignments to stop what they called anti-Islamic cultural activities.

Barokona Kowmi Madrasha in Shaghata was one of the centres for JMB activities last year. Militants were assigned to blast bombs targeting open stage drama, cultural functions, BRAC and Gramreen Bank offices in northern districts.

This came to light after recovery of 24 pieces of powerful gelatin explosive bars and 124 electric detonators from a compartment of Santaher bound train

at Bornaipara railway station on December 12 last year. Three explosive carriers Anisur Rahman, Habibur Rahman alias Zubeyar and Amjad Hossain were arrested. During investigation it was revealed Amjad and Habibur were JMB commanders. Joypurhat police also confirmed their involvement with JMB. Anisur and Habibur are in jail while Amjad, freed on bail, is untraced by police now.

After the August 17 incident, Gaibandha police in series of drives arrested 14 JMB suspects from the areas. During a recent visit to the area, local people told a group of newsmen that taking the advantage of police inaction, militants including Shahidul Islam and Sujauddowla of Dghuridaha village in Shaghata are now moving freely, locals said.

It was gathered that Bangla Bhai recruited about 150 militants from Shaghata upazila during last year.

Mufti Hannan's neighbours feel relieved

A CORRESPONDENT, Gopalganj

Most of the residents of Harkatul Zihad leader Mufti Hannan's native village Hiron in Kotalipara now feel relaxed following his arrest.

Mufti Abdul Hannan is the main accused in the case for attempting to kill the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina in 2000 by planting a powerful bomb at her public meeting venue in Kotalipara. He was hiding till he was arrested by Rab in Dhaka on Saturday.

This correspondent visited Hiron on Monday and talked to some villagers.

Octogenarian Sonam Uddin Munshi, a relative of Mufti Hannan, said he heard about Hannan's arrest by Rab in Dhaka.

"Several times I heard stories about Afghan war against Soviet soldiers during speeches by Mufti Hannan in Waj Mahfils (discussion on religion) at different Madrasas. It was exciting when Hannan described how he fought against the Soviet soldiers in Afghanistan", he said while talking to this correspondent at a tea stall in the village.

Hannan's elder brother Alimuzzaman Nannu used to introduce himself as a Mujahid from Afghan war during discussions at different Madrasas in Kotalipara, he said.

Mufti Hannan's father Noor

Mohammad Munshi was chairman of Peace Committee in Kotalipara during the Liberation War. He was killed by the freedom fighters soon after independence, Sonam Uddin Munshi said.

"What Almighty does is always good. Every sin has a limit", Sonam Uddin Munshi commented.

Jalil Munshi, a farmer, said, "It is a shame for us that we are the residents of Hiron".

Haseeb Sheikh, a businessman said, "We are very happy with the arrest of Mufti Hannan. He has brought only bad name for the village".

Mufti Abdul Hannan Munshi is the second of 10 children of late Noor Mohammad Munshi. His elder brother Alimuzzaman Nannu is the principal of Adarsha Cadet Madrasa at Ghaghorkanda village, established by Mufti Hannan in 1998.

Kamruzzaman Matin Munshi, another brother of Mufti Hannan, is a businessman at Ghaghor bazaar in Kotalipara. It was alleged that Munshi Kamruzzaman Matin, under the alleged protection of BNP, was also engaged with Harkatul Zihad. He contested for the post of commissioner of Kotalipara Pourasava but failed.

On September 20, Kotalipara police arrested Kamruzzaman Matin, his brother former BCL leader Anisul Islam Munshi, suspecting their involvement



STAR FILE PHOTO

Mufti Hannan being taken to court in Dhaka Sunday.

in the August 17 serial bomb blasts.

After interrogation, Matin was released from police station but Anisul Islam Munshi was sent to jail.

Mufti Hannan's brothers Mohibullah alias Mofiz Munshi and Iqbal Munshi, a Krishak Dal leader, are also engaged in business. His four sisters -- Habiba, Chaina, Nasima and Hashiare housewives.

The case (no. 5/2000, G.R. no. 57/2000 of Kotalipara) filed against Mufti Hannan and others for planting

the 76 kg bomb at Sheikh Hasina's meeting venue is pending with the court of District and Session Judge, Gopalganj.

Others accused in the case are Mohibullah alias Mofiz Munshi (younger brother of Mufti Hannan), Munshi Ibrahim, Mahmud Azahar alias Mamun-ur-Rashid, Rashed (driver of Hannan's car), Md. Shah Newaz, Md. Hasan alias Abdul Wadud, Wasim, Kamal Uddin Shaker, Anisul Islam Munshi (another younger brother of

Another staff of swindler company held in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Another employee of the illegal company that allegedly swindled about Tk nine crore from depositors in the city was arrested yesterday. The arrested person is Mashur Rahman Rana, 22, 'accounts officer' of the company.

Police foiled a human chain program by depositors in the city to press for refund of their money while a court again rejected bail prayer of three staff of the company, arrested on Monday.

The office of the company Bangalee Sachetan Samaj--was seen closed yesterday while its employees accused of forgery were absconding to avoid arrest.

Meanwhile investigation by an

official probe committee and bank sources said BLS has only Tk 22,58,230 deposits in two accounts with Premier Bank and one account with Janata Bank in Barisal city.

It has a balance of Tk 1,65,305 in account NO. 118-1110000395-6 and Tk 5,92,925 in account NO. 118-1110000428-8 with Premier Bank. It has a balance of Tk 15,00,000 in account NO. 001062326 with Janata Bank's Corporate Branch.

Abul Kalam Azad, one of the arrested staff of the company, has two personal accounts. He has deposits of Tk 5,75,000 in account NO. 001062337 with Janata Bank's Corporate Branch and Tk 85,86,000 in account NO. CD-4021 with Pubali Bank in the city.

Managers of Premier, Pubali and Janata banks, when contacted, failed to give satisfactory reply when asked about operation system of the accounts and sources of the money.

Md Shawkatul Alam, Deputy Director of Bangladesh Bank in Barisal, also acknowledged that the banks concerned violated the central bank's instruction against money laundering.

The BLS authorities in their statement before the inquiry committee on September 22 said that they had collected Tk 8,60,85,000 from 24,985 clients on a promise to triple their deposits in 57 days.



PHOTO: STAR

Finishing touches being given to images of goddess Durga in Barisal ahead of the puja beginning on Saturday.

Steps to hold peaceful puja in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Preparations are afoot to celebrate Durga Puja, the greatest religious festival of the Hindu community, here with due religious fervour and festivity.

As Durga Puja falls in the holy month of Ramadan, special arrangements have been taken to maintain peaceful atmosphere during the period, Barisal superintendent of police (SP) Mainur Rahman Chowdhury told this correspondent.

This year, 390 puja mandops (altars) are likely to be erected throughout the district. Of those, 27 mandops will be set up in Barisal city and 363 in other areas of the district.

Sculptors are now busy in giving final touches to the goddess.

When contacted, District Puja Udjapon Parishad secretary Manik Mukharjee told this correspondent the number of mandops will increase this year.

Jhenidah AL holds council on Oct 10 after 8 years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

The triennial council of Jhenidah district Awami League (AL) will be held on October 10, about five years after expiry of its committee. The last council was held in 1997.

The council is going to be held following a directive from AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil, who will open the council. AL Presidium member Abdur Razzak will attend the inaugural session as chief guest, party sources said.

Despite repeated initiative by central AL Organizing Secretary Abdul Mannan, the council could not be held earlier due to internal feud, they said.

Talking to this correspondent yesterday, Jhenidah AL Convener Abdul Hai MP however denied any intra-party feud in the party. "Such rivalry for leadership is not unusual in a big party like AL", he said. Hai is also a probable candidate for the post of district AL president.

In the 1997 council, a committee was formed with advocate Ayub Hossain and Abdul Hai MP as president and general secretary.

As this committee failed to hold the overdue council, a convening committee was formed with Abdul Hai in December 2002 to hold the council within three months. But it could not be held even after 33 months of formation of the convening committee due to alleged internal feud.

Party insiders said leaders and activist are divided into two groups, one backed by Abdul Hai and the other by former organising secretary Tayeb Ali Joarder. Both want their men on the new district committee to be formed.

The internal feud surfaced last year

when two rival factions clashed during several party councils at upazila and union levels.

Although the party is dogged by internal conflict, the decision to hold the council has created enthusiasm among dedicated leaders and activists, the insiders said.

Ahead of the council, district level leaders are now lobbying with party stalwarts for posts in the new committee.

Party workers and mid-level leaders want a 'strong committee' through councilors' direct vote, the insiders said. "We wanted a strong and dynamic leadership to run the organisation boldly, which is possible only through

direct election", a top leader of the Sadar thana unit said seeking anonymity.

Aspirant candidates are now keeping close contact with 300 councilors who will attend the council from six upazilas.

Party sources said, convener Abdul Hai, former president of district AL Advocate Ayub Hossain and former vice-president Wahed Joarder may contest for the post of president.

Central joint-convenor of Shechchasebak League Saidul Karim Mintu, former organising secretary of district AL Tayeb Ali Joarder and joint-convenor of the same unit Shafiqul Islam Opu are now in the race for the post of general secretary.

DEATH OF NEWBORN IN RANGAMATI Hospital ransacked

OUR CORRESPONDENT Rangamati

Some angry people beat the Emergency Medical Officer (EMO) at Rangamati General Hospital, ransacked the female ward and looted medicines following the death of a new-born girl child hours after her birth through a Caesarean operation.

Hospital sources said Zina Choudhury, wife of Nasiruddin of North Kalindipur in the town, was admitted to the hospital on September 29 with acute pain. She was advised by doctors to undergo Caesarean operation for a child birth.

She gave birth to a baby yesterday morning though operation. As the baby was too weak, she was admitted to the female ward. The baby died in the evening, said Residential Medical Officer (RMO) Saiful Islam.

"The death of the baby angered her father. He went out of the hospital and

after some time returned with some agitated people. They beat up the EMO, assaulted nurses, ransacked the female ward and looted medicines, the RMO said.

Being informed, army personnel rushed to the hospital and quelled the violence the mob.

EMO Rakesh Kumar Das is now being treated at the hospital for injury in the head, back and neck, the RMO said.

Nasiruddin, however, blamed doctors for negligence in giving treatment to his ailing child. "They (Doctors) were not cordial enough to provide proper treatment and suggestion that caused my child death", he said.

The RMO said he was preparing to file a case with the Kotwali thana.

Meanwhile, doctors held a meeting at the hospital and threaten of an indefinite strike if Nasiruddin and his men are not arrested by 24 hours.

4 to die, 6 get life for killing Ishwardi BNP man

BSS, Rajshahi

A court here yesterday sentenced four persons to death and six others to life imprisonment for killing a BNP leader in Ishwardi upazila in Pabna district.

The convicts who were awarded death penalty are Shariful Islam Tuhin, 34, Bacchu, 35, Aminul Islam, 48, and Abdul Hannan, 38.

The life-term convicts are Yahiya, 37, Mostaque Ahmed, 36, Sulak, 35,

Saiful Islam, 38, Nazrul Islam, 37, and Aynul Haque, 39.

They court also ordered each of them to pay a fine of Tk 5000, in default, to suffer six months more rigorous imprisonment.

Of the convicts, Tuhin and Nazrul Islam are absconding.

The convicts swooped on BNP leader Abdul Khaleque, 30, son of Abdur Rahim of Joutgaji village under Ishwardi upazila in Pabna on the

premises of Pabna Sugar Mills on August 9, 2003. They sprayed bullets on him.

He was immediately rushed to Pabna Sadar Hospital with critical injuries where doctors declared him dead after a few minutes of admission.

The Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal Judge AFM Aminul Islam handed down the verdict in a crowded courtroom.



PHOTO: STAR

BRIGHT FACES... GPA-5 scorers at a reception accorded by Chhatra League in Dinajpur on Monday (left) and Principal of Moulvibazar College pose for photograph with his brilliant students.

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