

Bombs, mortar

FROM PAGE 1
from home and abroad have made their strong bases in the unprotected border area.

According to an estimation of the government, 17 large and small terrorist groups are active in Naikonghongchari, Alikadam, Lama and Thanchi areas in Bandarban.

In Chaitapinawabganj the BDR seized 75 powerful explosives weighing eight kilograms from a truck carrying imported Indian wheat at Kansat border Thursday night.

The explosives of different sizes found in 10 packets are powerful enough to blow up large buses or houses if primed with detonators, BDR officials said.

The truck, released from Sona Mosque land port at Shibganj upazila, was loaded with 16 tonnes of wheat from Venus Traders in India, imported by Hasan Traders in Bogra through a clearance and forwarding (C&F) agent Prime Enterprise in Chaitapinawabganj, sources said.

BDR arrested Masud and Shamim, employees of Hasan Traders, Asir Uddin, the truck driver, and his helper Shamsur Rahman.

Masud told BDR that he was bringing the explosives for Jewel, the owner of Hasan Traders, who intended to use them as firecrackers during his (Jewel's) wedding ceremony.

An Indian citizen gave him the explosives describing them as mild firecrackers and asked him to get them to Jewel, Masud added.

The consignment consisted of 20 ice cream cone shaped explosives, 30 stick shaped explosives, six 1.5" x 10" explosives, six 0.75" x 6" explosives, 13 other explosives of different sizes and many in a container.

The C&F agent and the wheat trader went into hiding after the news of the seizure spread.

The explosives were sent to Dhaka for chemical tests and a case was filed under the Explosives Act.

Meanwhile, Chaitapinawabganj police recovered a shutter gun and two bullets from a cowshed at Bholabhat upazila Friday night and arrested a police source Babul and his accomplices Muktar and Abdur Razzak in this connection.

In Chaitapinawabganj, a powerful bomb was recovered yesterday morning from a water drain in front of a Kindergarten School in the city's West Madarbari area under Doublemooring Police Station. Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) later defused it.

Police could not identify the origin of the bomb or the persons who planted it.

Police sources said two Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) sweepers, Parimal Das and Monjur Alam, found the bomb while they were cleaning a drain in front of MA Baten KG School on an alley at Mogulnagar in West Madarbari at about 11:30am.

Being informed, a team of police led by Assistant Commissioner (port zone) Ziaul Kabir and Officer-in-Charge of Doublemooring PS Miah Kutubur Rahman went there, cordoned off the area and informed Rab officials of the matter.

A bomb disposal unit of Rab arrived at the scene, recovered the bomb, submerged it in water, took it to an open field and defused it at about 2:00pm.

Sergeant Shahid, a bomb expert of Rab, told journalists that the powerful bomb was made of high-capacity

explosives and it was timed with a clock for detonation.

"Fortunately, the bomb did not explode as there was no battery in the clock," he said.

The Assistant Commissioner (port) Ziaul Kabir could not identify the origin of the bomb. He said they would seek help from bomb experts of the army to know more about it.

Some local people however, believed that the bomb might have been planted by JMB activists for carrying out sabotage after Eid festivities.

A case was filed in this connection with the Doublemooring PS.

Traffic control

FROM PAGE 1
November 7-11, and Nakhalpara Road during November 12.

Only the vehicles with Saarc sticker will be allowed to ply the road from Sheraton crossing to Minto Road-Hare Road crossing from 8:00am of November 10 to 2:00pm of November 14.

The heads of state and government of the Saarc countries and their entourage will land at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) on November 11. During the time of their movement, both sides of the street from ZIA to Sheraton Hotel will remain off-limits to regular traffic.

"In fact, the road will remain off-limits to vehicles almost all day long as the delegates will be arriving at different times that day," Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Traffic (North Zone) Firoz Ali Mujahid told The Daily Star last night.

The DMP has asked people to avoid the ZIA-Sheraton Hotel road and use the Gabtoli Embankment Road, Ashulia-Tongi Diversion Road, Progoti Sarani, Biswa Road and Rampura Road during the time. The DMP has also requested motorcyclists to keep away from using the road.

The DMP has also asked people to avoid the Gabtoli-Savar National Mausoleum road and use the Abduljalil-Ashulia-Bypail-Nabinagar road or the Abdullapur-Gazipur Intersection-Kaliakoir road from 6:00am to 11:00am on November 12 as the Saarc leaders will visit the National Mausoleum in the morning.

Vehicles will be off-limits from Agargaon-Zia Udyan Crossing-Lake Road from 8:00am to 2:00pm and from 5:00pm to 11:00pm on the same day as the Saarc leaders will visit the grave of former president Ziaur Rahman.

The DMP has requested people to use Agargaon IDB Bhaban-Shamoli Shishu Mela-Manik Mia Avenue-Farmgate road.

For programmes at the state guest-house Padma, no vehicles except for those with Saarc sticker will be allowed to off-limits from Minto Road, Hare Road and part of Bailey Road from 8:00am to 1:30pm (until the end of the function) on November 12.

For programmes at the state guest-house Jamuna the next day, traffic will be off-limits from Minto Road, Hare Road and part of Bailey Road from 8:00am to 2:00pm (until the end of the function).

All vehicles except for those with Saarc sticker will be off-limits from the Nakhalpara Road during 1:00am-7:00pm for programme at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre on November 13.

4 held for Aug 21

FROM PAGE 1
The three arrestees and Nure Alam were caught in separate police drives in Dhaka and Narayanganj. Shafiq and Hashem were named along with 12 others in the confession statement of George Miah, who is also an accused in the case.

The CID claimed Shafiq and Hashem admitted their involvement in the August 21 attack apparently carried out to kill ALC core command including party president Sheikh Hasina.

CID sources said they had employed a woman informant to hunt down Shafiq of Gopalganj and Hashem of Brahmanbaria after George Miah named them in his confession statement on June 26.

"Tapping mobile phone conversations of Shafiq and Hashem, who are brothers-in-law, we came to know they were staying at the house of one of their drivers Arman at Mahikul of Rupganj in Narayanganj," Superintendent of Police (SP) Ruhul Amin of CID told The Daily Star. The police hemmed in the house around 3:00am and arrested them.

On their information police arrested Nure Alam with two German-made revolvers and 40 bullets. The CID said Shafiq and Hashem kept their firearms with Nure Alam who was a charge-sheeted member of the Kuril firearms and grenade haul case. The court due to flawed investigation acquitted him.

In a press release yesterday, the CID said Shafiq and Nure Alam are charged in the case accusing them of the killing of Rahman at a hospital in Mohakhal on November 21, 2003.

In a separate drive CID arrested Shah Alam at Mahakhal in the capital for providing them shelter.

CID sources said Shafiq went to Kolkata, India with a passport under the false name of Kairul Islam on October 9 and met three other accused of the August 21 grenade attack case -- Mukul, Joy and Robin.

"Before returning on October 28, Shafiq discussed the latest development of the case and took some money," the SP said.

The SP yesterday briefed a group of reporters on the arrest but did not allow the journalists to talk to the arrestees.

Investigation officer (IO) of the case

CID Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Abdur Rashid produced them before the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka with a 10-day remand prayer yesterday.

The IO, in the remand prayer, said the primary investigation revealed their links with the August 21 grenade attack.

The IO petitioned that the detainees need to be further quizzed during remand to find out the vital clues to the case and the whereabouts of their accomplices.

Twenty-one people have been arrested in the case so far, among them Saibal Saha Partha and 11 others were granted bail by the High Court.

The August 21 grenade attack left 22 leaders and workers of AL dead, including Ivy Rahman, and 200 others injured. Hasina narrowly escaped the attack.

Fire burns

FROM PAGE 16

They claimed there were 82 shops in the market, but the fire service numbered them at 70. Abdur Razzak, president of the market committee, claimed the fire burnt all his 13 shops, damaging around Tk 2.5 crore.

The state minister for food and disaster management visited the spot yesterday and assured the most affected traders of giving Tk 25,000 each as compensation from the ministry.

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Five killed

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Mirpur police, from Manipur on Friday evening.

The body bore cut marks on the neck, said DMCH morgue sources.

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Huji kingpins

FROM PAGE 1

1991 from Kishoreganj-3.

In an interview a few years back, Habibur Rahman disclosed those names, with whom he had travelled to Afghanistan via Pakistan in 1988, visited some Taliban militant camps and also met Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.

But, a top-ranking police official argued not every one in Huji was involved in militant activities and said if they receive any specific charge of terrorist act against any Huji member, they will take steps accordingly.

The government banned Huji on October 17, with a home ministry note stating, "Harkat-ul Jihad Al Islami is a self-proclaimed terrorist organisation. Its activities are very sensitive and it is identified as a terrorist organisation..."

The government is declaring Harkat-ul Jihad Al Islami and all its activities banned on the basis of information received so far."

It may have some significance for the apparent government reluctance to go tough on Huji members that on October 6, eleven days before the ban came, Shaikhul Hadith and Habibur Rahman had met Prime Minister Khaleda Zia posing as "Islamic scholars". The two were accompanied by Moulana Obaidul Haq, IOJ lawmaker Mufti Shahidul Islam, Ashraf Ali, Abdur Rab Yusufi, Yusuf Ashrafi, Nezamuddin, Mohammad Humayun Kabir and Tafazzul Haq Aziz.

REVEALING INTERVIEW

OF HABIBUR RAHMAN

The names of the prominent Huji-linked people can be found in a bulletin titled "Islamli Biplob" (Islamic revolution), published on August 20, 1998 from Sylhet with the express purpose to celebrate the total victory of Taliban and establishment of an Islamic state in Afghanistan.

The bulletin in its front page ran an interview of Habibur Rahman, in which he gave a detailed account of his visit to Afghanistan in 1988. He said, "An invitation from Harkat-ul Jihad Al Islami made it possible for me to make the fortunate trip to Afghanistan... Those of us who visited the Afghan war-fields during that trip were Shaikhul Hadith... Ataur Rahman Khan... Sultan Jaak... Abdul Mannan... Habibullah... and myself - in total nine people."

In Pakistan, leaders of the local chapter of Huji greeted the nine members of the Bangladeshis team and took them to the Huji Karachi office. Habibur said Huji Pakistan chief Saifullah Akhtar and a Bangladeshi Mujahed Abdur Rahman Shahid drove them to an Afghan Mohajir (literally, refugee) camp on the Pak-Afghan border. He is now under police investigation.

Habibur was reportedly trained in Peshawar in Pakistan and went to Afghanistan to fight the Soviet occupation forces. A diary of Habibur's brother recovered by law enforcers also indicates Huji having links with Pakistan.

There are four cases filed in 2000 against Mufti Hannan -- two with Gopalganj Police Station (PS) and two with Kotalpara. He was convicted for life-term imprisonment in one of the cases filed with Gopalganj PS under the Arms Act. He is also the prime accused for the plot to assassinate the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina by launching a bomb attack on her meeting at Kotalpara.

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Having made hectic preparations, Dhaka keenly waits for the twice-postponed event to take place.

The 13th Saarc summit was originally scheduled for January 9-11, which was cancelled after last December's tsunami disaster that battered three Asian nations, India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Rescheduled for February 6-7, it was postponed again at the last minute after India pulled out citing security concerns in Bangladesh and the Royal coup in Nepal.

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