

November-15-2005

Bomber says he is member of suicide squad

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Mamun Ali, who hurled a bomb which killed two judges in Jhalakathi yesterday, confessed before a magistrate that he is a member of the suicide squad of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB).

The assassin in his early 30s said he had reached the scene early in the morning and walked up to the microbus immediately after it went there to pick up the judges. He hurled a bomb at the vehicle at 9:05am.

Mamun, son of Kamruzzaman who is a security guard of a private building owned by BNP lawmaker Nadim Mostafa at Binodpur near Rajshahi University, said he carried

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Bomber linked to Jamaat

Family members held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Detectives have found the Jhalakathi bomber and his family's links to Jamaat-e-Islami as they picked up two family members and seized huge publications of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) yesterday.

Detective Branch of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police picked up Kamruzzaman Lal Chand and Sagar, father and brother of the bomber, at their house in Jamaat-dominated Dasmari area in the city.

Locals said all of the family are supporters of Jamaat, a partner of ruling coalition. The family also approved it and said Iftakhar Hasan Al Mamun, 21, the Jhalakathi bomber, was an activist of Islami Chhatra Shibir, Jamaat's

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JMB suicide bomber kills 2 judges

Wounded assassin held with bomb strapped to his thigh; leaflets seek Islamic judicial system

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Outlawed Islamist outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) has struck again, this time killing two senior assistant judges and wounding three people in a suicide bomb attack in Jhalakathi yesterday.

The JMB operatives launched two attacks on judges and courts last month and vowed no respite in their attempt to force the judges to deliver judgements based on Islamic laws and until Islamic rule is established in the country.

Police arrested the bomber, JMB cadre Mamun Ali, 28, who claimed to be a member of the JMB suicide squad,

and seized an unexploded bomb strapped to one of his thighs along with 24 leaflets of the banned organisation.

The slain judges are Shaheed Sohel Ahmed, 35, senior assistant judge of Nalchhiti upazila, and Jagannath Pandey, 38, senior assistant judge of the Sadar upazila.

The injured are Badsha Miah, 45, a milk trader, Abdul Mannan, 40, a peon of Jhalakathi Judge's Court, and Lokman, 13, a school-goer.

The judges and the peon were driving to the court by an official microbus from the government staff quarters, some 400 yards off their office. Driver Sultan parked the vehicle on way to pick up Judge Abdul Awal

and Judge Pandey asked Mannan to bring a file from his quarters.

The JMB man appeared from nowhere at 9:00am and tried to hand some leaflets over to the judges, who refused to oblige him.

The assassin hurled a bag at the microbus and it exploded inside on impact with a big bang. The explosion shook two to three kilometres area around and blew up the roof of the microbus, reducing it to metal rubble.

Judge Sohel Ahmed was killed on the spot while Judge Pandey died on way to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College and Hospital.

A nearby wall collapsed in the blast, which a witness described as similar to

"the car bomb explosions in Iraq seen on TV".

Locals held Mamun immediately after the attack and turned him in to police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab).

The critically injured assassin and Badsha are receiving treatment at the hospital, while the other wounded were admitted to Jhalakathi General Hospital.

The JMB suicide bomber tried to detonate another bomb strapped to one of his thighs on way to the hospital, but the Rab and police foiled the attempt.

Mamun gave a confessional statement at the hospital before First Class

Magistrate Munim Hossain in presence of police, Rab and journalists.

He hailed from Bashmari under Motihar Police Station in Rajshahi. He said his father Kamruzzaman is a night guard of a multi-storey house belonging to BNP lawmaker Nadim Mostafa in the city's Binodpur area.

The bomber said he joined the JMB in 2000 and was subsequently promoted as a member of the suicidal squad.

He was sent to Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC) in Dhaka by road for further interrogation.

The seized handwritten leaflets say, "We don't want Taguta [non-Islamic] law, let Qur'anic law be introduced.

Law framed by humans cannot continue and only the laws of Allah will prevail."

Mamun further said he was under the supervision of Rajshahi JMB leader Mustafa and Abdur Rahman is their commander-in-chief.

He came to Jhalakathi from Rajshahi about two weeks ago and was received at the bus stand by local JMB leaders Newaz, Rahim, Karim and others.

They took him to Krishnakathi and showed him the spots of the planned bomb attack. Mamun said

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Moudud, Babar manhandled

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed and State Minister for Home Lutfozzaman Babar were manhandled by agitated family members, relatives and others when they visited the city residence of in-laws of one of the two judges killed in a bomb attack in Jhalakathi yesterday.

Witnesses said an agitated man pulled Moudud by the collar while a relative of slain senior assistant judge Jagannath Pandey attempted to hit Babar with his waist belt for their 'failure' to maintain law and order.

Inspector General of Police Abdul Quayum, Director General of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) MAAziz Sarkar and several lawmakers from the region, who accompanied

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Ministers promise charge sheet in 7 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Police have been directed to submit a chargesheet in the case filed in connection with the bomb attack on Jhalakathi judges within seven days and the trial is set to be completed in a month or a month and a half.

State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar directed the police administration yesterday regarding submission of the chargesheet while he was in Barisal with the law minister, Moudud Ahmed, to meet the in-laws of the slain Senior Assistant Judge Jagannath Pandey.

Moudud said, "Persons involved in the killing will be punished through a trial which will be completed in a month or a month and a half."

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Pictures: 1. The mangled microbus after attack. 2. Two slain judges Jagannath Pandey and Sohel Ahmed. 3. Injured suicide bomber Mamun. 4. An unexploded bomb found strapped to the attacker. 5. JMB leaflet.

Islamist outfit threatens to kill all Noakhali judges, DC

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

An unknown Islamist outfit has threatened to kill all the judges in Noakhali including Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shahadat Hossain Majumadar.

The outfit Islami Ranajoddha in a letter sent to the DC office on the Sunday night stated it would terminate judges and magistrates in Noakhali including a former first class magistrate the district with grenade.

The outfit denied its link with outlawed Islamist organisation JMB but claimed its operations commander Bangla Bhai stayed in the locality.

It vowed to fight unto death to

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Judges give 7-day ultimatum, threaten continuous strike

Courts come to a halt as SC Bar boycotts bench

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Judges and lawyers yesterday abstained from work across the country, suspending court proceedings to protest the killing of two judges in a suicide bomb attack in Jhalakathi.

The Bangladesh Judicial Service Association (BJSa), an organisation of judges, gave a seven-day ultimatum to the government to ensure security for all the judges, otherwise they will boycott courts for an indefinite period.

The ultimatum came soon after the killing of two senior assistant judges, Sohel Ahmed and Jagannath Pandey of Jhalakathi District Judge's

Court yesterday morning. The proceedings of all the courts across the country were suspended after the incident.

The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) also boycotted courts in Dhaka yesterday, protesting the killing. The SC lawyers will boycott the courts, wear black badges and hoist black flags across the country on November 17.

The BJSa at an emergency meeting expressed deep concern over the "heinous and cowardice" killing of the two judges. It urged the government to give Tk 50 lakh as compensation to the families of each victim.

"We shall go on a strong move-

ment, including court boycott for an indefinite period, if the government fails to ensure our security," said Rezaul Karim Khan, Dhaka divisional special judge, also the secretary general of BJSa.

As soon as the news of the death of two judges came at 9:30am, all judges of the Dhaka courts suspended their proceedings and held an emergency meeting to protest the gruesome killings by the Islamist militants.

Judges and magistrates at the courts of district and sessions judge, metropolitan sessions judge, district magistrate and chief

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Delhi seeks no edge at Dhaka's cost

Manmohan tells The Daily Star, Prothom Alo

STAR REPORT

Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh said his country wants to see a "strong and prosperous Bangladesh" to be "in India's best interests."

Full text of the interview on page-11

In an exclusive joint interview with Mahfuz Anam, editor of The Daily Star, and Matiur Rahman, editor of Prothom Alo, during his stay in Dhaka for the 13th Saarc Summit, Manmohan stated that

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Why judiciary target of Islamists?

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

Islamic militants have chosen to attack the judiciary first as it is the easiest target among the three organs of the state, as well as for the militants' own belief that the existing judiciary stands in the way of establishing Islamic rule, eminent lawyers and intelligence sources said.

Yesterday's deadly attack on Jhalakathi judges was the fourth in a row in which the judiciary has been the common target of the Islamic militants since the series of bomb blasts across the country on August 17, when they also threatened through a leaflet that they would continue such attacks.

Investigators so far have no clear findings as to why the militants have

chosen the members of the judiciary and the court premises as their targets of attack in pursuit of their goal of establishing Islamic rule.

A highly placed intelligence official said although they do not have any concrete findings they do have some analyses to offer. The judiciary is the most sensitive of the three state organs and courts are the place where the rule of law is exercised. The impact is highest when courts or the members of the judiciary are attacked. People have easy access to the lower courts that are spread all over the country, making it easy for the attackers to target it, he added.

Another intelligence source, examining the pattern of the bomb

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Govt turns to holy verses to counter militancy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dismayed at the repeated failure of the intelligence and law enforcement agencies to thwart bomb attacks, the government in desperation has started preaching Islam's teachings to the public to counter Islamist militancy.

In the wake of yesterday's killing of two judges in Jhalakathi by outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) operatives, the government circulated a compilation of four verses from the Holy Quran and the Hadith to the media offices. Press Information Department sent the compilation crediting the Mosque Council with the circulation.

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Dhaka's law and order best in S Asia: Saifur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman said law and order situation in Bangladesh is the best among the South Asian countries and the recent bomb attacks are merely isolated incidents.

Replying to a question on the Jhalakathi bombing that killed two judges yesterday, Saifur made the remarks to the press after a meeting with the World Bank (WB) country director.

He said what happened in

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Plane fare for non-ballottee pilgrims hiked to \$1150

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The government has fixed the plane fare for the non-ballottee Hajj pilgrims at \$1150 per head.

The decision was taken at a meeting of Biman Managing Council with State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin in the chair at the conference room of the ministry yesterday.

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Donors talk graft, governance, militancy today

PM to open meet on PRSP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Corruption, rise of militancy, procurement law and governance will come up in the meeting between the donors and the government on poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSP) beginning today.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is expected to address the inaugural session at Hotel Sonargaon. The meeting staggered over a number of working sessions will run till November 17.

Donors will emphasise on immediate passage of procurement law and its implementation, as they fear in absence of the law the government expenditure might balloon in the build-up to the next general election. Besides, they feel the law, if enacted, will help prevent misuse of the development fund.

They will also review the outcomes of the Saarc summit and matters relating to the implementation of Safta as they consider regional trade and investment cooperation as one of the most significant factors in poverty alleviation.

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PM condemns killing of judges

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has expressed profound shock at the death of two judges in a bomb attack in Jhalakathi yesterday morning.

In a condolence message, she prayed for eternal peace of the departed souls and conveyed her sympathies to the bereaved families.

The prime minister said some of the culprits involved in the killings

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Enayetullah laid to rest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent journalist Enayetullah Khan was laid to eternal rest at the Banani graveyard after he was given state honour at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

He died while undergoing treatment for cancer at the Princess Margaret Cancer Hospital in Canada on November 10. He was 66.

His qulkhani will be held on Friday after the Asar prayers at his residence House no 22, Road no 113, Gulshan.

Enayetullah Khan's mortal

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