

Drive in Khulna to flush JMB cadres from hideouts

QUAZI AMANULLAH, Khulna

The Rapid Action Battalion along with police have launched joint operations in Khulna including the city to arrest members of JMB suicide squad following intelligence reports that 25 of its cadres have fanned out to carry out destructive activities including murder in the region.

High level sources in Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) said jobless youths residing in slum areas, IWTA terminal ghat, railway platform and abandoned houses are under watch as it is very easy to hire them on payment to carry out subversive activities.

JMB cadre Shahidullah alias Lokman, now in Khulna district jail, said Mamun is one of the members of the suicide squads. Mamun is killer of two senior Assistant Judges of Jhalakati district. Shahidullah hailing from Mollahat upazila of Bagerhat and arrested in Dhaka on September 8 told police that Mamun is operation commander of JMB squad in south western

region.

KMP Commissioner Khan Saeed Hasan has sent letters to leaders of all political parties requesting them not to hold any rally or bring out procession after dusk to help avoid lawlessness and subversive activities.

The letters were sent through special messengers on Tuesday last to leaders of BNP, Awami League, Jamaat-e-Islami and Jatiya Party.

When asked, police commissioner told The Daily Star that terrorists find it easy to flee after carrying out destructive mission after dusk. It is very easy for police to maintain law and order and ensure security of rallies and processions during day time, he said. We have no ill motive behind writing this letter to political leaders, he said.

When contacted, Khulna city AL President Talukder Abdul Khaleque MP termed such move by police commissioner as 'highly objectionable move.'

"It is a conspiracy to suppress opposition movement. He has no right

to write such letter to political leaders", he said.

Intelligence sources also said that, the Janajuddho faction of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) have joined hands with the Islamist zealots in the destructive activities.

Together, they are taking preparation to implement their 'killing missions through gun and bomb attacks now'.

The sources also claimed that JMB suicide squad members are also in the south western region to carry out bomb attacks on important installations 'at opportune moments'.

The DIG of Khulna Range and the KMP Commissioner said law enforcers have been put on high alert after JMB last week threatened to blow up Khulna district jail where two of its cadres --Shahidullah alias Lokman and Mahbubur Rahman alias Palash -- have been lodged.

Unconfirmed sources said authorities of Khulna district jail received a

hand-written letter last week, sent by post, threatening of bomb attack for freeing the two JMB cadres. But Jail Super Farhad Mia, when asked on Sunday, said he did not receive any letter from JMB.

He said security has been tightened in and outside the jail.

On Monday last, Janajuddho circulated leaflets in Jhenaidah threatening to take revenge against killing in crossfire incidents.

JMB also threatened to blow up important installations in the south-western region.

There are 62 police stations in the ten south-western districts and five in Khulna metropolitan city.

Apart from 4, 197 police camps and over 100 outposts, there are 791 permanent camps in the entire south western zone.

But the force is not adequate to face attacks by Islamist outfits of banned JMB and armed cadres of outlawed PBCP and ensure security of over two crore people in the area, said a senior police officer at Khulna DIG office.

2 Ahale Hadith cadres get 25 years RI each

A CORRESPONDENT, Gopalganj

A court here on Sunday sentenced two armed cadres of Ahale Hadith to 25 years rigorous imprisonment (RI) each.

Convicts Raihan alias Sayem hailed from Mymensingh while Belal hailed from Madaripur. Both were students of Dakkhin Khan Jameya Rashedia Enayetul Ulum Madrasa.

The convicts were arrested from Bedgram in Gopalganj town on May 12. They were going to Kotalipara on foot along with other militants. All were carrying arms and ammunition.

Fog disrupts ferry service

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Dense fog disrupted ferry and launch services on Daulatdia-Paturia-Nagarbari routes on the Padma for five hours on Sunday.

Four ferries, Shah Ali, Shah Keramat Ali, Khanjahan Ali and Shah Paran, with a large number of passengers and other transport could not move from mid-river for several hours, according to Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) officials at Paturia.

Besides, more than 1,000 vehicles with about 40,000 passengers including women and children remained stranded on both sides of the Padma.

About 400 vehicles coming from Dhaka were stuck at Paturia in Manikganj and 500 vehicles queued up at Daulatdia in Rajbari.

American Corner opens in Jessore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

The 3rd American Corner was inaugurated in Jessore Institute jointly by Environment and Forest minister Tariqul Islam and Charge d' Affaires of US Embassy in Dhaka Judith A Chammas.

The inaugural function was chaired by Jessore Deputy Commissioner Abdul Wazed and addressed by, among others, Dr Michelle Jones, Deputy Director, American Centre; Sheikh Rabiul Alam, General Secretary, Jessore Institute and its Library Secretary Mahbub Alam Bachchu.



Patients being treated for food poisoning on the floor of Gaibandha Sadar Hospital.

FOOD POISONING IN GAIBANDHA 2 die, over 300 fall sick

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Two children died and 312 people fell sick after taking food at a Quikhwani held at Uttar Dhanghara village in Gaibandha Sadar upazila Friday night.

The dead are Shamim Mia, 8, of Ballamjhar village and Merija Khatun, 12, of Raghunathpur village. They died at their homes.

Till yesterday, 124 people were admitted to Gaibandha Sadar Hospital with acute intestinal problem. All of them were showing signs of vomiting and loose motion. Many of the patients were seen taking treatment on the hospital floor due to death of bed.

Police and other sources said over 1,500 people of Uttar Dhanghara, Khamar Raghunathpur, Narayanpur and Kholabari villages in Ballamjhar union attended the Quikhwani of one Sayed Ali of Uttar Dhanghara Friday night.

After taking food, over 200 people fell sick within a short time. All complained of severe stomach pain. Initially, they took treatment at their homes but the situation soon went out of control.

On Saturday night, 75 of them were rushed to Gaibandha Sadar Hospital. Thirty of them were in critical condition, hospital sources said. Their number rose to 124 yesterday.

The district health department

deployed two medical teams in the affected areas, who are treating over 150 patients at their homes, sources said.

The food they took must have been highly adulterated and cooked in an unhygienic place, the doctors said.

"I don't know what really happened after taking food. I felt severe pain in my stomach", said Abdul Hye, a patient at the hospital.

Mozammel Hoq, Chairman of Ballamjhar Union Parishad, said he has arranged 600 bags of 1000 cc IV saline for patients at homes and sent critical ones to Gaibandha Sadar Hospital.

The district health department

ATTACK ON RAB IN CHUADANGA

6 JCD, Jubo Dal men arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Chuadanga police and Rab (Raid Action Battalion) in a joint drive Saturday night arrested six activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal (JJD), front organisations of ruling BNP, for their alleged involvement in bomb attack on a Rab team in Chuadanga on August 11.

The arrested persons are JCD leader Sagar alias Asad of Farm Para; Jubo Dal leader Babul of Cinema Hall Para; JCD leader Tutul of Hospital Para, Humayan Kabir of Palash Para and Maruf, son of Khaled Masud Master, vice-president of Chuadanga district BNP and JCD activist Badsha

of Santipara of the town. Badsha was arrested Thursday night and the rest five were arrested following his confession, police said.

Of the accused, Tutul, Maruf and Babul yesterday confessed to their involvement in the bomb attack on Rab.

Police said they also named two other men involved with them. A total of eight men took part in the bombing. Police and Rab are looking for the rest two.

The culprits charged two powerful bombs on a Rab team when it was patrolling the court area in Chuadanga at about noon on August 11. There was no causality but transport used by Rab was damaged.

REMOVING POSTERS IN SYLHET

Move for sedition case against 12

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The authorities have sought permission from the home ministry to file sedition cases against the 12 madrasa students arrested in Sylhet city Saturday midnight for removing posters.

The students were sent to the jail hajat on Sunday when they were produced before court. The magistrate rejected their bail prayers.

Sylhet Kotwali police caught the 12 students from Bandarbaraz area when they were removing posters that called to help nab JMJB leader Siddiqur Rahman alias Bangla Bhai and JMB leader Alhaj moulana Abdur Rahman alias Shaikh Abdur

Rahman.

The posters were pasted on city walls by police earlier.

Among the arrestees, 11 are students of Kazirbazar Jamea

Madania in the city and the other is the son of the manager of an NGO housed on the madrasa premises. He is also a former student of the same madrasa.

After their arrest, teachers of the madrasa and leaders of Khelafat Majlish, Islami Chhatra Majlish went to Kotwali police for releasing the students, but failed.

Police sent them to court showing them arrested under Section 54 of BPC.



Journalists staged a token hunger strike in Rangpur (left) and submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister through Tangail DC yesterday protesting murder of colleague Goutam Das in Faridpur.



PHOTO: STAR

Top Magura Huji, JMJB leaders still evade arrest

HOSSAIN SERAJ, Magura

Two top leaders of Harkat-ul-Jihad (Huji) and Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) in Magura allegedly involved in August 17 blasts in the district are still evading arrest even after over three months of the incident.

Police said, they are hunting for the two militants including Huji leader Abu Sufian of Khamarpara village in Sreepur upazila, who was arrested earlier along with 39 other militants in 1999 by army.

Abu Sufian, 45, was arrested when he was training militants at a camp in a jungle in Rangamati. He was released on bail in the case following an order from higher court.

Police are also hunting for JMJB top cadre Yousuf of Madhabpur village in Magura Sadar upazila for his suspected

involvement in the August 17 blasts in the district town.

According to the different intelligence agencies and locals, Abu Sufian fought Soviet soldiers in Afghanistan as a 'Mujahid'.

Villagers in Khanarpara are also aware of Abu Sufian's activities as a 'mujahid' in Afghanistan.

"On several occasions I heard stories about Afghan war from Abu Sufian. It was exciting when Sufian would describe how he fought Soviet soldiers in Afghanistan", a villager seeking anonymity told this correspondent during a recent visit to the village.

Intelligence sources said, Sufian was also arrested by BDR (Bangladesh Rifles) when he tried to cross the border to go to Afghanistan illegally after US soldiers attacked Afghanistan. He was released after about two months.

Sufian is absconding since August 17, police said.

Son of Hazi Hasan Ali, Sufian studied at a madrasa in Faridpur district.

After his marriage with Rebeke of adjoining Tafsirpur village, he used to stay at his father-in-law's house.

Yousuf, 23, son of Dabir Munshi of Madhabpur village, is absconding since the August 17 blasts.

"Yousuf used to stay in the village before the bomb blasts and people even from Chittagong, Rajshahi and Jhenidah came to meet him", a villager said.

According to the intelligence sources, Yousuf went to Rajshahi about six months back and took training at a JMJB camp on how to operate arms and use bombs.

Protests on against killing of journalist

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Reports of protest against killing of Dainik Samakal Staff Reporter Goutam Das in Faridpur continued to pour in from districts yesterday.

Our Netrakona Correspondent reports: Netrakona unit of Bangladesh Sangbadik Samity and Netrakona Press Club jointly organised a protest rally at Netrakona Press Club on Sunday.

The meeting was presided over by Netrakona unit president of Bangladesh Sangbadik Samity, Haider Jahan Chowdhury.

Among others, Netrakona Press Club general secretary Al-Asad, The Ittefaq district correspondent Samolendu Paul, The Samakal district correspondent Sheikh Khalilur Rahaman, The Jugantar district correspondent Yasirur Rahman and The Bangladesh Observer district correspondent Abdul Hannan Ranjan addressed the rally.

Earlier, a joint procession was brought out in the district town. Wearing black badges, the processionists paraded the main roads of the town.

Our RU Correspondent reports: A rally was held at Shaheb Bazar Zero Point. It was presided over by the Rajshahi Union of Journalists (RUJ) president Mustafizur Rahman.

Speakers criticised the government for failure to protect the lives of journalists.

They also demanded removal of State Minister for Housing and Public

Works Alamgir Kabir who assaulted The Janakantha Staff Correspondent Tapan Biswas at his Secretariat office while doing professional duty on Sunday.

They stressed on greater unity of journalists to resist occurrence of such incident in future.

Among others, Rajshahi Metropolitan Press Club general secretary Annisuzzaman, Rajshahi Photojournalists Association general secretary Javed Apu, Shaiful Islam, Tanjumul Haque, Meheub Alam, Adil Shariar and Mahtab Chowdhury addressed the rally.

Earlier, a protest procession was brought out in the city. Processionists paraded the city streets and chanted slogans against killers of Goutam and the state minister.

Our Rangpur Correspondent reports: Rangpur Reporters' Club staged a one-hour hunger strike in front of Rangpur Collectorate building.

This was followed by a rally which was presided over by The Daily Star correspondent Rafique Sarker.

Among others, Reporters' Club secretary Halim Ansari, The Din Kal correspondent Salekuzzaman, Channel 1 district correspondent Merina Lovely, BSS staff Manun Islam, The Samokal bureau chief Aminul Hoque, The Naya Diganta bureau chief Sarker Majharul Mannan, The Desh Bangla correspondent Touhidul Islam Babla and The Bhorer Dak district correspondent Bablu Nag addressed the rally.

'Defeated forces out to undo '71 gains'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

'Kaligonj liberation day' was observed for the first time in the upazila yesterday in a befitting manner.

Kaligonj units of Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangasad and Amra Muktiyoddharer Santan (sons and daughters of freedom fighters) took up various programmes on the occasion. Beginning with hoisting of the National Flag the programmes included procession, sports and cultural functions and discussion

meetings.

A discussion meeting was arranged on Shilpakala Academy premises with upazila Muktiyoddha Sangasad leader Abdul Hakim in the chair.

Speakers at the meeting said fundamentalist forces defeated in 1971 have raised their heads again and are hatching conspiracy to undo achievements of the Liberation War. They are killing judges, freedom fighters, journalists, politicians and intellectuals and blasting bombs

one after another but no action is being taken against them as a party in the ruling coalition is harboring them, the speakers said without mentioning the name of the party.

They protested the killings of two judges in Jhalakati and journalist Gautam Das in Faridpur and immediate arrest and punishment to killers.

Kaligonj upazila was liberated on December 20 from Pakistani occupation forces.