

Militants patronised to cling to power

Former army chief tells Rangpur rally

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Former chief of army staff and Awami League Advisory Council member Mostafizur Rahman yesterday alleged that the BNP-Jamaat government is acting on a 'blueprint' to cling to power by eliminating pro-liberation force.

The government is patronising militants who are killing leaders and activists of progressive political parties. "Their aim is to cling to power at the cost of the country and its people".

They even do not care when Bangladesh is going to be branded as a country of terrorists and fundamentalists abroad, he told a rally

organised in the town to protest alleged inaction by law enforcers in nabbing activists of JMB (Jama'atul Mujahideen, Bangladesh) and other Islamist militants.

Organised by the local unit of 14-party opposition alliance, the rally held at the court square was followed by a procession in the town.

Mostafiz said the August 17 serial bomb blasts across the country was unprecedented in the world but the government was unmoved. A ruling party lawmaker was expelled from his party for protesting governments inaction in arresting militants responsible for the blasts, he said.

This proves that a section in the ruling alliance is protecting the

Islamist militants who are behind the August 17 blasts and such incidents earlier.

Mostafiz also alleged that certain quarters are trying to destroy documents recovered from a JMB den in Noorpur in Rangpur town last week so that the culprits can not be arrested.

The rally, presided over by Gonorantri Party central leader Mohammad Afzal, was addressed by, among others, AL central leader Sharfuddin Ahmed Jhontu, JSD (Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal) central leader Dr. Ekramul Hoque Swapan and Rangpur Awami League secretary Elias Ahmed.

Mostafiz said it is unbelievable that the chiefs of JMB and JMB can not be arrested while newspapers at times

run stories on their whereabouts. The militant kingpins are under the protection of some ruling party men, he claimed.

Dr. Ekramul Swapan alleged that police are inactive in arresting JMB militants despite recovery of important documents from the house in Noorpur.

He said BNP leaders should realise that militant activities done allegedly under the sheltered of a partner in the ruling coalition is hastening its downfall. It is losing public support.

The leaders called upon the people to participate in opposition agitation programmes in a massive way to hasten fall of the government.

Diarrhoea kills 7 in Netrakona

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Diarrhoea claimed seven lives while 500 others were attacked with the disease in Kendua upazila in last one week, according to sources in Netrakona Civil Surgeon's office.

The victims are Hazara Begum, 50, and Salma, 2, of Siader village, Harula, 8, and Chhaya Rani, 35, of Bashati village, Moisha Rani, 42, of Noapara village, Abdul Jabbar, 45, of Baikorhati village and Babul Mia, 5, of Konapara village in the upazila.

The worst affected villages are Siader, Bashati and Noapara.

Netrakona Civil Surgeon Dr Siddikur Rahman told this correspondent there is sufficient stock of oral saline and other necessary medicine. Working medical teams are trying their best to control the situation, he said.

When contacted, Kendua Upazila Health Officer (UHO) Dr Mohammad Iliash termed the disease as seasonal one occurring every year. The situation is under control as 18 medical teams are working in the affected areas, he said. He said at least 35 patients are taking treatment at the health complex every day.

However, local people alleged the medical teams lack adequate medicine and saline packets. As a result treatment of patients is being hampered, they said.

2 journalists arrested for seeking toll

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A correspondent and a photojournalist of a regional daily were arrested Sunday night allegedly for demanding toll from villagers at Dhulihar in the Sadar upazila.

The arrested are Nazmul Hossain, Satkhira correspondent of The Probahat, a Khulna based daily, and its photojournalist Joyanta Saha.

Quoting local people police said, the two identifying them as journalists went to the house of Nitai Shaha at the village at about 11 pm and demanded Tk one lakh as toll. They said to him the Sadar Police Station officer-in-charge (OC) Shahjahan has sent them to take the money as they are going to India. They also threatened to publish a story against them for non-compliance.

Local people caught them and handed over to police.

Listed 'bombers' evade arrest in Khulna

Installation of close circuit cameras in city begins tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

None of the 24 'listed potential bombers' in Khulna city could be arrested yet despite launching of a combing operation.

"All of them have gone into hiding", said Khulna thana Officer-in-Charge Mohammad Iqbal. Two persons -- Alamgir and Anwarwere arrested last week but they are not among the 24 'listed potential bombers', the OC said.

Talking to this correspondent, high officials of Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) however said all out efforts are being made to net terrorists.

Besides political leaders and journalists, 14 policemen were killed in bomb attacks in Khulna division since 2003 but none of the bombers in any of the incidents could be arrested yet.

Increasing attacks on journalists,

judges and law enforcers have also worried political leaders about their security. Talking to this correspondent, Khulna district Awami League President Shaikh Harun-or-Rashid said political leaders are feeling insecure in the face of frequent bomb attacks in the city. "How can we feel secure when police are coming under bomb attacks one after another", he said.

Khulna district BNP Secretary said bomb attacks are being made by criminals as per a blueprint designed to destabilise the government.

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Mian Golam Parwar MP said the law and order situation is quite alarming and the does not feel secure to move openly.

A senior police official of KMP said

there is no reason for political leaders to feel insecure if they believe in transparent politics. Yet, we are very much conscious about their security. But at the same time they must stop protecting terrorists with political motives, he said.

Deputy Commissioner (HQ) Akbar Ali of KMP said measures have been taken to contain terrorism and arrest terrorists. These include installation of close circuit cameras at some vulnerable points in the city.

Besides, all the five police stations have been provided with telescopes and charger torchlights.

DC Akbar Ali further said installation of close circuit cameras will begin tomorrow (Wednesday).



PHOTO: STAR

Gano Unnayan Kendro and Oxfam, two NGOs, brought out a motor cycle rally in Gaibandha on Sunday to campaign against domestic violence.

KILLING OF FARMER IN POLICE FIRING

Eight cops among 50 sued in Thakurgaon

A CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

At least 50 people including Thakurgaon Police Station officer-in-charge (OC) and seven policemen were sued on Sunday following killing of a farmer in a police firing in Thakurgaon on November 22.

Nadan Chandra Barman was killed in a police-villagers clash over paddy harvesting at a disputed land at Sharali village in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila.

The accused policemen are Thakurgaon Police Station OC Md Rawshan Mostaque, Havildar Abul Hossain and constables Anwar Hossain,

Ataur Rahman, Jewel Rana, Hafizur Rahman, Rezaul Karim and Zabeed Ali.

Victim's son Jabad Chandra Barman lodged the case with a first class magistrate's court in Thakurgaon. He complained that the OC went to the field along with his force at the instigation of a local influential person, Fazle Rabbi to oversee paddy harvesting. When local people tried to resist it, police opened fire on them killing his father, he said. Afterwards, people, equipped with lethal weapons, attacked police resulting in injuries to nine, he said.

However, police sources said the force went there according to a resolution of a meeting held at Thakurgaon on November 16.

When contacted, the Assistant Commissioner of Land, Manzurul Alam told this correspondent he along with the Sadar thana police went to the spot as per resolution of the meeting. About 500 people attacked them with lethal weapons and some attackers attempted to snatch rifles when police opened fire in self-defence, he said.

'Flood' in dry season

A sluice gate keeps 9000 acres uncultivable in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Over 9000 acres of land in Fingri, Dhulihar and Brahmmarajpur unions in Satkhira Sadar upazila are fallow even during the present dry season due to water-logging.

The water that accumulates in 15 large waterbodies in the area covering 21 villages can not be drained out as the lone sluice gate at Balitha is inoperative because the canal has been choked, local people said. The sluice gate was built in early 70s to allow rainwater to flow into the Marichchap river.

Life of over one lakh farmers in the area have become miserable as they can not grow any crop, even in the wet season. In most of the years, Aman crop is damaged due to flooding as the rainwater can not pass.

The Marichchap river is also losing navigability due to massive deposit of silt because of less flow of water.

Neither local people's representatives nor the administration took any initiative to remove the stagnant water despite repeated appeals, the farmers said during a visit by this correspondent on Saturday.

"After the loss of Aman crop, we hoped to cultivate IRRI-Boro, wheat and winter vegetables this year, but that seems to be a far cry as the lands will not be dry until the Bangla month of Falgoun", said farmer Abdur Razzak of Fingri village.

Abul Khair, a freedom fighter and former chairman of Fingri Union Parishad, said officials of Water Development Board (WDB) and the local administration were approached several times to take steps to remove the stagnant water, but to no effect.

On contact, Belayet Hossain, Deputy Director of Satkhira Agriculture Extension Department, admitted the grave situation in the area and said the authorities concerned were urged to take steps but nothing has been done.

While talking to this correspondent, Satkhira Water Development Board Executive Engineer Mosharraf Hossain said the sluice gate is now inoperative as the riverbed has risen due to deposit of silt. "The problem will not be removed until dredging of the river".

He however said steps will be taken to remove the stagnant water.



PHOTO: STAR

The inoperative sluice gate at Balitha that keeps 9000 acres of land uncultivable even in dry season.



PHOTO: STAR

People formed a human chain in Kishoreganj yesterday for re-excavation of Naroshonda river flowing through the town.

5.50X3

5.50X3