

JMB threat continues

FROM PAGE 1
 Their links to the banned outfit.
SATKHIRA
 JMB sent separate letters to the local press club and to the office of Assistant Commissioner (AC-Land) of Satkhira Nayeb Ali yesterday threatening to kill the AC, reports our correspondent.

The letter sent to the press club reads, "We are establishing Islamic rule and what we are doing is for the betterment of Islam, so no one should interfere." It also threatened to blast bombs at nine points in Satkhira town by today.

The letter sent to the AC's office reads, "From now on corrupt officials will be our target and AC Land (Sadar) Nayeb Ali will be executed." **BARISAL**
 The local press club received a letter from JMB sent by mail and addressed to the club president and general secretary at about 10:45am on Sunday which threatened to kill local journalists who speak against 'Jihad', reports BDNNEWS.

Termining the hand-written letter 'an emergency news' for the journalists it mentioned that JMB has been carrying out 'Jihad' in the country to establish the law of Allah.

All the politicians, journalists, bureaucrats and intellectuals, who are speaking against the implementation of laws of Allah will also be killed later, it said.

BARISAL
 The banned outfit sent letters to twelve eminent personalities including journalists, cultural activists, social workers and political leaders, saying that they will be killed within December 14, this year, our correspondent reports.

The letters reached the Daily Aiker Baria office yesterday by post. Abul Kalam Azad, Commander-in-charge of zone 6 and unit 10f Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh, is the sender of the letter.

Nazrul Islam Rajan, general secretary of Barisal unit of the BNP, Kajol Gosh, president of Cultural Organisations' Coordination Forum, SM Iqbal, chief editor of Aiker Baria, Nikhil Sen, cultural worker, Enayet peer Khan and Mintu Bosa, president and secretary of Barisal Nagarik Parishad, Taufik Maruf, staff reporter of the daily Parothom Alo, Akhter Farukh Shaheen, correspondent of The Daily Star, Pulok Chatterjee, bureau chief of the daily Samakal, Syed Dulal, editor of the Aiker Poribartan, Saifur Rahman Miron, correspondent of Amader Somoy, and Advocate Nazrul Islam Khan Rajan are some of the people whose names are on the hit list of JMB, the letter said.

Earlier on Saturday night, Barisal Kotwali police arrested six persons including an Indian citizen from some residential hotels and bus stand yesterday in suspicion of their links with JMB cadres.

KURIGRAM
 Kurigram police recovered an unexploded bomb from the Bazar mosque yesterday morning, reports our correspondent in Kurigram.

The police said a person found the bomb wrapped in scotch tape and lying in a drain at the mosque. He got scared and started to shout. Hearing his scream people nearby approached the scene and informed the police.

The police recovered the bomb from the drain and kept it in water at the Kurigram Police Line.

RAJSHAHI
 Our staff correspondent in Rajshahi reports: A private Arts College yesterday received a bomb threat letter that claimed the meaning of JMB to be Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh.

At the end of the threat letter, it reads -- 'Jamat-e-Islami Bangladesh JMB'.

The letter addressed to eminent artist SH Azad, principal of Rajshahi Arts College said the college will be bombed if Islamic education is not introduced instead of arts that 'is not condoned in Islam'.

The letter also threatened to kill the principal if the 'teaching of the letter' is ignored.

Meanwhile, police arrested a suspected JMB militant from Rajshahi bus terminal yesterday.

The arrestee is Abu Bakar, 35, son of Entaj Ali of village Godagari in Rajshahi.

KHULNA
 Detective police arrested Moulana Muniruddin, 34, Khatib of Darus Salam Ahle Hadith Jame Mosque at Pabla under Daulatpur Police Station in Khulna city, Saturday midnight from his house.

The police said Muniruddin, one of the 17 listed Islamic extremists, is one of the active organisers for JMB in Khulna.

The police said Muniruddin used to train newly recruited youths in the Pabla Ahle Hadith Mosque on how to operate arms and detonate bombs.

Meanwhile, six strong teams of policemen launched combing operations from Saturday midnight to arrest members of suicide squads and 16 other notorious cadres of JMB still at large.

TANGAIL
 Police arrested five suspected JMB members in Tangail on Saturday night, reports our correspondent.

The arrestees are Hafez Abdul Aziz, 30, Imam of Paharkanchanpur Ahle Hadith Mosque, Haji Mohammed Rafique Uddin, 55, Faisal Hossain, 21, Saiful Islam, 18 and Abdul Matin.

The Tangail police have been quizzing the five showing them arrested in separate cases.

JESSORE
 Jessore police arrested three suspected JMB members in Jessore town and Sharsua upazila Saturday night, our correspondent in Jessore adds.

The detainees are Maulana Abdul Rahman, imam of Backchar Ahle

Hadith Mosque in Jessore town, Hafez Maulana Abdul Kudus, imam of Chanchra Colony Mosque in Jessore town and Hafez Nizamuddin, Imam of Banmader Mosque under Sharsua upazila in Jessore.

PABNA
 Pabna sadar police arrested three suspected JMB cadres from the Pabna Deputy Commissioner's Office square yesterday, reports our correspondent.

The arrested are Moazzem Hossain, 30, Abdus Sabur, 29, and Touhidul Islam alias Mamun, 28. They came to Pabna to petition for bail for their eight associates including four women, the police said.

TONGI
 Turag thana police yesterday arrested three suspected JMB members -- Anwarul Haque, 20, Mahbubur Rahman, 25, and Abdul Mannan, 20-- from Ranabhola village under Harirampur union near Tongi.

GAIBANDBA
 Police arrested seven JMB suspects on Saturday night, reports our correspondent.

Investigators said all the arrestees are students of a madrassa in Rangpur and came to visit a friend's house at Sunderganj in Gaibandha.

Meanwhile, our correspondents in Bogra and Noakhali reports 11 suspected JMB members were arrested in Noakhali and Bogra.

CHITTAGONG
 Police arrested four suspected JMB activists from different parts of Chittagong district yesterday and Saturday, reports UNB.

They are Abdul Mannan, Akash and Mithu from Station Road, and Joyal Abedin who was arrested with explosives Saturday night from Satkania.

BANDARBAN
 Our Bandarban correspondent reports, security has been beefed up in Bandarban suddenly from Saturday night.

Members of the army, BDR and police have been performing body searches on everyone they pass by. A responsible source said security has been tightened there as the joint forces have started combing operations in Chittagong and Cox's Bazar to arrest Islamist extremists.

RANGPUR
 Jamat-e-Islami leader Ekramul Hoque and his employee Faruque were not shown arrested even after 24 hours after Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) picked him from his station road bookstore with a number of unauthorised Islamic revolutionary books in his possession.

Rab extracted much important information about JMB and its militant network in the northern districts from Ekramul Hoque who was being quizzed at the battalion's temporary office.

A Rab captain said, we must not make the information public until the investigation is over.

A Rab team along with Ekramul Hoque raided several places in Rangpur to catch JMB militants but failed to arrest any.

A source of Rab preferring anonymity said Ekramul himself is a local Jamat-e-Islami leader also both in-law of Abul Kalam who is a member of the party's top forum, Majlis-e-Sura.

Police sources said, Ekramul had formed Touhidul Janata in Rangpur in 1991 and led its members in vandalising a statue on Charchimchal College campus at the end of the year. Later the same organisation under his leadership attacked a rally of Ghatok Dal Nirmul Committee in 1995. Eminent poet of the country Shamsur Rahman was narrowly saved from the attack.

Gazipur militant admits role in August 17 blasts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
 A JMB cadre yesterday gave statement before a magistrate in Gazipur, admitting that he had been involved in the August 17 countrywide blasts.

Mahbubur Rahman, 32, of Kashempur, however, denied having played any role in the blasts on Gazipur court premises and in front of DC office on Tuesday and Thursday.

Police arrested him in district's Konabari area on Friday night along with two others. Leaflets, books and some training materials were recovered from his possession.

Mahbub said he is a first-year student of Hatimara College in the town and an operative of JMB.

Gabtoli bomb found fake

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
 The so-called time bomb recovered from under a bus at city's Gabtoli Bus Terminal on Saturday night was in fact a bomb-like object, says a Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) press release.

Different national dailies and TV channels ran reports describing the bomb-like object as a powerful time bomb and said it blasted it would have caused extensive damage and loss of life. But after detailed examination, explosives experts of Rab have concluded that it was a dud bomb. It did not contain any gunpowder, neither had it a proper connection between the filament and batteries. Besides, its timer circuit was too faulty to work, added the release.

SM Ali's

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 He was the nephew of famous writers Syed Mujtaba Ali and Syed Murtaja Ali.

SM Ali made his way up from a cub reporter to one of the country's most brilliant editors in a career spanning 44 years. He was also the chairman of the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB).

Educated in Calcutta, Dhaka and London SM Ali was one of the few Asian journalists who enriched regional journalism.

He started as a reporter with the Pakistan Observer during his student days at Dhaka University. He went on to hold important positions in various regional publications in Pakistan, Hong Kong, Thailand and Singapore.

He joined the Press Foundation of Asia as its executive director in the 70s. In 1981, he became United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (Unesco) regional communication advisor for Asia and the Pacific which was based in the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur.

Ali returned to Bangladesh in 1989 and had a brief stint with The Bangladesh Observer as its editor. He launched The Daily Star in 1991 and worked tirelessly to establish this newspaper as a leading independent national daily till the day he flew to Bangkok for treatment. He died there in 1993 at the age of 65.

Terrorism
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 The Awami League boycotting the Parliament sessions."

ADB Senior Economist Rezaul Karim Khan presented the details of the update.

Although the knitwear exports continued to register a strong growth after the MEA quota phase-out, the exports of woven garments have fallen, pointed out the report.

The bank said, "There are several domestic policy measures including setting up central bonded warehouses and endorsing SAARC cumulation which are needed for boosting the external competitiveness of the garment industry."

Due to the global petroleum price hike, pressures on the country's balance of payments heightened in the first quarter of FY06, said the report. However, the balance of payments did not face any serious crisis mainly thanks to a robust growth in workers' remittances.

The ADB yesterday also unveiled its Country Strategy and Programme for Bangladesh for 2006-2010, pledging a total aid of \$1.8 billion.

Rab asked
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 December 1 said officials giving media interviews and publishing or airing speeches made by militants in police custody is illegal unless the court orders to do so.

Following a home ministry directive the police headquarters sent copies of the order to all offices of Rab, police commissioners of six metropolitan cities, deputy inspector general of police (DIG) of five divisions and superintendents of police of 64 districts.

Copies of the order were also distributed among policemen at police stations across the country yesterday.

The order asked the law enforcers to remain alert so that no militants can give interviews to media. The letter also said 'administrative actions' would be taken against the persons failing to follow the order.

Govt mulls
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 arrested. We're working on it round the clock. In fact, they're being demoralised by day," Babar told reporters.

He, however, refused to accept the notion that Rab intelligence failed to find whereabouts of top JMB leaders. "They're doing very good...they're making arrests."

Asked whether a new law is necessary to combat militancy, Babar said: "Of course. We've many limitations in existing laws. We need new law to fight militancy."

Rab Director General Abdul Aziz Sarker, Home Secretary Safar Raj Hossain and all commanding officers were present at the meeting.

8 plants
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 The builders of the plants will be given 90 to 120 days to set up skid or trailer mount plants and 150 days to 180 days for barge-mounted plants.

"These plants will cripple the PDB as the power price will be very costly," a PDB source said. "We do not know who advises the government to go for such plans. We can have one or two skid or trailer mount plants as temporary solution. But the government is going for eight such plants with 15 years of power sales contract. It can never be a solution to the power crisis," he added.

Locals said people from outside have been frequenting the mosques and holding meetings there for the last three years. The Taktarchala Dakshin Bazar Mosque is one of the widely used meeting venues.

A number of meetings in Taktarchala Dakshin Bazar recently told The Daily Star that an unknown person introducing himself as a scholar from Medina University visited the mosque last year. He held several meetings inside the mosque with some other people.

They stopped the meetings as their activities raised suspicions among the villagers. Imam of the

Govt okays release of fund

FROM PAGE 1
 for just about anyone bearing the cheques to withdraw money from the bank. Observers fear that the process of disbursement may make it easier for the militants to channel fund for their activities.

Among the contractors are some associates of the arrested militant leader Asadullah Al Galib and his second-in-command Abdus Samad Salafi, said a reliable source.

The fund was released after RIHS' regional director general for Asia, Abu Khaled Falah Al Mutairee and its country director general, Abdul Aziz Khalaf Maalullah, both Kuwaiti citizens, lobbied the government till November 25 during their six-day visit to Bangladesh, said sources.

Staying in a Banani guesthouse and maintaining secrecy, they met high-ranking leaders of the ruling alliance, leaders of Ahab, and some officials of the Kuwait Embassy, NGO bureau, and of several other Middle Eastern NGOs.

NGO bureau sources said the Kuwaiti officials visited the country with the government's consent and they wanted to know the government's stance on the RIHS.

They convinced the government to release the fund that had been remitted from Kuwait as the RIHS supposedly has to pay its unpaid bills of Tk 12 crore accrued since 2003 for training Imams, constructing mosques and madrasas, and for installing tubewells in the country.

The government never even conducted any spot-investigation of these projects, said a source.

Release of RIHS funds was

suspended after the arrests of Galib, and Samad Salafi in February following investigation reports revealing links among escalating Islamic militant violence in the country, RIHS constructed mosques, and the Imams trained by the NGO.

The Dayee and Imam (Daa) division of the RIHS and the Higher Islamic Education Institute run by it at Uttara in Dhaka were also shut down by the government three months ago.

In July however, funds for different orphanages under the organisation were released on humanitarian grounds.

Several days ago the NGO bureau following government's nod sent its clearance to the Rajlaxmi Market branch of IBBL at Uttara to release the fund of Tk 2 crore against RIHS' savings account.

However, NGO bureau Director General CQK Mustak Ahmed told The Daily Star on Thursday that the government never stopped funds of any NGO on allegations of terror financing. He also said he did not have information about any NGO funding militant activities.

But bank sources told The Daily Star over phone that about Tk 15 lakh from the fund has already been disbursed through a large number of bearer cheques since November 29. "Large number of cheques for small amounts are coming in everyday", said an IBBL official.

Regarding the contractors of the RIHS, sources said among over 30 listed contractors, most did not get contracts while a few chosen by Galib and Samad Salafi used to get

contracts involving large amounts of money.

If the ones without blessings from the top two Ahab bosses would get any contract at all, it would never be for more than Tk 1 lakh while Galib's man Nurul Islam, general secretary of Ahab, got the contract for construction of Gazipur Ahab School near the Ahab orphanage involving Tk 90 lakh. He was arrested along with Galib, but his cheques will be given to a person authorised by him, said sources.

Galib also used to get RIHS contracts through his nephew (sister's son) Badrul Alam of Satkhira. Badrul's elder brother Sadrul Alam was arrested in connection with the August 17 blasts in Chittagong.

For Samad Salafi, his son-in-law Azizul Bari Mintu, chairman of Nashipur Union Parishad under Gaptali upazila in Bogra, Akmal Hussain of Chapainawabganj and Ahab leader Mofakker Hossain used to get RIHS contracts.

Sources said Mintu used to lobby the BNP high-ups for Ahab and RIHS as he had developed relations with them because of his chairmanship of Nashipur, the home union of BNP's founder also former president of the country late Ziaur Rahman.

The RIHS and Muslim Aid however, in two separate rejoinders to The Daily Star report dated November 26 and headlined "Terror Financing NGOs Remain Unscathed", denied allegations of their links with Islamist militants. The rejoinder termed the report as false, baseless and motivated.

Lawyer hurt
FROM PAGE 16
 at the ICU (intensive care unit) of Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) at 9:20am, hospital sources said. He received splinters in the legs, stomach and suffered from critical burn injuries.

Hundreds of people gathered at his namaz-e-janaza held at about 4:15pm in Rajbari to pay their last respect to the dead amid tension and fear of more attacks.

Lawmaker Jahid Ahsan Russell, former minister MA Mannan, Municipality Chairman AKM Mozammel Haq, leader of the bar association, fellow lawyers and government officials also attended the janaza.

He was later buried at the family graveyard at Chhattar Bazar at Joydebpur. He left behind his parents, four brothers and one sister.

Meanwhile, Advocate Anwarul Azim, also injured in the November 29 blast was admitted to the ICU at the DMCH.

The lawyers yesterday once again urged the government to take strong initiatives to resist the militants and bring them to justice immediately.

Meanwhile, police, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and other law enforcement agencies have been frisking and picking up commuters in the town since the blast in November 29. They are mostly released after primary quizzing.

One Moniruzzaman was arrested yesterday morning as a JMB suspect from a madrasa at Salna area. Police produced eight persons in court praying for remand yesterday.

Locals yesterday noon held two youths, Akil and Alamgir, suspecting them to be the members of the banned Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), when they were circulating leaflets in a mosque.

Jatiya Party held a rally and brought out a procession protesting the bomb attacks at the Mukhtamacha area in the town yesterday evening.

Bill Gates
FROM PAGE 1
 communication technology (ICT) minister, post and telecommunications minister, experts of ICT and businessmen during his short visit.

A new vista is expected to open in the information technology (IT) sector of the country during his short visit.

Gates, accompanied by his wife, will be welcomed at Zia International Airport by Minister of Science & ICT Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan.

A discussion is likely to be held at a hotel in the city on how Bangladesh can work with Microsoft in bridging the digital divide in the country.

The Microsoft chief will give a 55-minute presentation on "Innovation and Partnership". The presentation will be attended by senior government officials, academics and IT industry leaders.

Business leaders will need clearance from the home minister to meet Gates in the discussion.

Gates will assess Microsoft's activities in Bangladesh and announce some expansion plans during the discussion, a source said.

"His visit is very important in the national interest of Bangladesh as it will give a new impetus to Bangladesh's nascent IT industry," the source added.

Microsoft has officially started its operation in Bangladesh this year in cooperation with their market development partner, Square Informatics. Microsoft has focused on building good relationships with their certified partners locally during the past few months.

Microsoft launched their 'Unlimited Potential' programme on June 13, one of many projects planned for Bangladesh.

Trade leaders

FROM PAGE 1
 will be enacted soon," Khaleda Zia confirmed. She urged the AL to join parliament and present its opinions on the new law.

The prime minister listed her government's steps to curb militancy and said they have already taken initiatives to track down members and kingpins of the outlawed JMB.

Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain Choudhury, Adviser to Commerce Ministry Barkatullah Buli and Political Secretary to Prime Minister Harris Choudhury were also present at the meeting.

Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Kutubuddin Ahmed, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association President Tipu Munshi, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Sayeeful Islam, Bangladesh Chamber of Industries President AK Azad, Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters Association President Maqsoodur Rahman and Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Saifuzzaman Choudhury, among others, were members of the business delegation.

BUSINESS BODIES' PROPOSALS
 FBCCI President Mir Nasir Hossain told The Daily Star yesterday, "Among the short-term measures, we urged the prime minister to take tough actions against any lack in the administration, so that identified criminals like Khamaru, who was arrested but released, do not go free any more."

"We can't accept such administrative negligence," he said referring to the release of Khamaru, a JMB linchpin.

The 9-point proposal signed by Nasir Hossain remarks, "There is no alternative but to unite to face the tough time the country is going through." It also says, "Bangladesh's image is under question again at abroad due to the bomb terrorism."

The FBCCI president requested the PM to allow duty-free import of

security equipment so that the businesses can make their own security arrangements.

The investigations into the financing of terrorism should be intensified and the process of enacting the new anti-terrorism law expedited, he said.

Referring to a newspaper report a number of business leaders said that a section of government high-ups are encouraging and patronising the militants. In response, the prime minister questioned the credibility of the newspaper and the report, sources said.

The business bodies led by the FBCCI met the prime minister in a bid to persuade the government and the opposition parties to sit in a dialogue on fighting terrorism. They sent letters to the prime minister and the leader of the opposition seeking appointments on Thursday.

But, a source quoted the prime minister as telling yesterday's meeting, "A national dialogue has begun today and will continue."

Some business magnates expressed frustration after the meeting, as the PM virtually accused the main opposition parties of involving in terrorism.

Bangladesh Textile Mills Association Chairman MA Awar said, "We think militant activities is a national problem and will hit the economy first. So, we urged the prime minister to take steps to reach a national consensus on this issue."

It is not a problem of a particular political party or group, he said, adding, "The government earlier did not hesitate to form the Rapid Action Battalion or deploy the army in Operation Clean Heart. Despite some criticisms, the nation has benefited from those moves. So, why not now?"

Awar however explained that a few leaders felt that deploying the army may be one of the ways to address the issue, but it was not the view of all.

Woman's body
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 be in her thirties, were found packed in four bags, which were kept in a big polythene sack wrapped in a bedsheet.

Police said they recovered the sack from near the main gate of the kindergarten on Iqbal Road at about 7:45am after locals, on suspicion, informed the police about it.

The severed body pieces, believed to have been refrigerated for some time, were sent to the morgue of Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Morgue sources said the limbs of the murdered woman were cut into 11 pieces. The head, chest and abdomen were found in separate pieces. The intestines, stomach, liver, chest cavity and the esophagus were not found.

They also said the face of the woman was mutilated in a bid to hide her identity.

Police suspect that the woman might have been murdered a day or two ago.

Imams asked
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 all our differences and get united against the bomb terrorism," he said.

The Baitul Mukarram Khatib said Islam does not allow militancy and bombing. Militancy has now become a national problem and it can be resolved only through national unity.

He asked all imams of the country to deliver their sermons against terrorism and militancy and bring out processions in their areas after the Juma prayers next Friday as part of a campaign against terrorism in the name of Islam.

Obaidul Haque also urged the government to organise a dialogue with all madrasa principals within a week to discuss the problem of militancy.

If the madrasa education needs any reform, the government should discuss it openly, he said, adding, "Wholesale harassment of madrasa students and teachers is creating resentment against the government."

Moulana Kamaluddin Jafri, principal of Jamia Kaddemia Madrasa of Narsingdi, said the government's response to militancy came too late.

"Those who have trained these militants are half-educated. There might also be Jewish involvement in these attacks," he said. "Reasons of suicide attacks in Iraq and Palestine are justified but there is no way to justify the suicide attacks in Bangladesh," he added.

Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, chairman of the Masjid Council, said the situation at present is worse than any time in the past. "The veil, beard and tupi [prayer cap] are now considered the crisis of the country," he said.

Moulana Akramuzzaman said the real interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith needs to be reached to the common people.

State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharrar Hossain Shahjahan, Jatiya Shariah Council Secretary General Mufti Sayeed Ahmed Mojaddedi, and Moulana Abdul Latif of the Ahle Hadith Andolon of Bangladesh also spoke at the seminar.