

# BOMB THREATS IN JHENIDAH UNOs keep indoors, cops get scared

HOSSAIN SERAJ, back from Jhenidah

MAGURA : JMB (Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh) bomb threats have forced most officials including two upazila nirbahi officers (UNO) in Jhenidah to confine themselves to their residences and offices.

Two police stations also tightened security with officials advised to take extra care during movement.

The outlawed militant outfit sent a letter to the Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Harinakundu Police Station on December 8 threatening to blow up the police station within next seven days if police continue to harass its cadres. The OC filed a general diary (GD) after getting the letter.

In the hand-written letter sent to the Kaliganj UNO on November 29, JMB operatives asked him to stop all 'anti-Islamic' activities. Otherwise they threatened to blow up the UNO office, local police station and cinema halls. The letter also asked to introduce Islamic education in schools and colleges. UNO Moazzem Hossain filed a case with local police station.

During a visit to the Harinakundu Police Station, this correspondent found all police officers working in a gloomy atmosphere in their rooms while four policemen guarding the entrance.

"I am scared to sit in my office. I cannot move freely. But to perform my duties, I have to go outside," said a panic-stricken police official at Harinakundu Police Station.

OC Shafiqul Islam, however, denied limiting movement and said, "As we are police we must ensure security and safety of people. So, we are bound to take risks."

At Kaliganj Police Station this correspondent experienced a similar situation.

"The bomb threat has made the policemen here too frightened to carry out normal functioning," said an official.

Superintendent of Police (SP) in Jhenidah Akram Hossain, however, said, "We are never afraid of any threat. But we asked police of 6 thanas and 34 outposts to be more cautious."

Most of other UNOs of six upazilas in the district also confined themselves to their offices and residences following JMB bomb threat to Kaliganj UNO, sources

said. A panicked UNO who agreed to talk to this correspondent only on condition of anonymity said, 'I have already restricted my movement as my family members are scared. The nature of my job requires us to travel a lot throughout the upazila. But I asked my staff also to curtail their movement.'

He said, 'The bomb threat and recent killings have forced my family to keep within four walls. Not only that, I have also suggested my children not to go outside their schools.'

"I think the ruling and opposition parties should sit together to find a way for an end to the situation," the UNO said.

A first class contractor in Kaliganj Sadaruddin Ahmed said 'I could not meet the UNO as he is avoiding visitors for the last few days.'

Kaliganj UNO Moazzem Hossain, however, denied curtailing his movement and said, 'I have no scope to confine myself to my office and residence. But I have tightened security measures and directed the officials concerned to keep the madrasa and mosques under surveillance.'



PHOTO: STAR  
Mahila Jubo League in Dinajpur formed a human chain demanding trial of the killers of intellectuals in 1971 (top) while cultural activists in Barisal brought out a procession on the occasion of Martyred Intellectuals Day yesterday.

# Pirates rule Meghna

## Coast Guard official says information about drives are leaked out

MORSHED ALI KHAN, back from Char Majari (Shariatpur)

A gang allegedly led by one Badal Gazi of Char Majari under Ghoshairhat thana in Shariatpur has unleashed a reign of terror on fishermen in Meghna river, regularly looting their catches.

Those resisting the Gazi bahini face violent retaliation. Complaint to the Goshairhat police station by local Union Paishad chairman and members yielded no result.

Hundreds of fishermen on the Meghna, one of the main sources of fishes in the city, are now facing uncertain days with their livelihood.

The acting Officer-in-Charge of Goshairhat police station, Sub-inspector Qurban Ali, told The Daily Star that he was aware of "a problem" in Char Majari area but is yet to receive any written complaint from anyone.

He said Badal Gazi is now 'on bail' in a rape and murder case.

"I shall reinforce river patrol and also issue a warning to Badal Gazi," Qurban Ali said.

According to Monir Howladar, a fisherman from Char Maindara, about ten men in an engine boat waylaid his fishing boat recently when he and his men were returning from a two-day fishing trip in the Meghna and Arial Kha rivers.

"They beat us so badly before taking our catches worth at least Tk 10,000," Monir Hossain said. He

said, everyday Gazi bahini is looting fishes from fishermen in the area.

According to Abul Munshi, Chairman of Kuchaipatti Union Parishad, Badal Gazi and his gang have long been involved in extortion from fishermen and wholesale fish suppliers in the area.

"We have complained to Goshairhat police station but nothing has been done," he said.

Officials of Coast Guard which patrol vast areas on the Meghna and the coast said they had also heard of pirates operating in those areas.

Sources in the Coast Guard said that they captured dozens of pirates from Noakhali char areas recently. Some others were killed in encounters.

"The biggest problem facing the country's waterways is involvement of police in crimes centring the pirates," said a Coast Guard official requesting anonymity.

"There are several hundred river police outposts equipped with mobile phones and during many operations we found that police realised shares of the pirates' booties," he said.

Whenever Coast Guard launches joint operation with police, the pirates get advance information, he claimed.

# 4 JMB militants arrested in Khulna, Bagerhat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Four members of the banned Islamist militant outfit, Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) were arrested in Khulna and Bagerhat districts on Tuesday.

Law enforcers recovered bomb-making materials, booklets on militancy and leaflets during the frives.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) Tuesday night arrested JMB cadre from Deana Dakkhinpara under Daulatpur thana of Khulna city.

According to a press release issued by Rab yesterday, Md Ashrafuzzaman alias Babu, 30, son of Md Afsar Ali confessed to his involvement in the August 17 serial bomb explosions. He disclosed names of other cadres of JMB hiding in Khulna city. He also gave important information about underground activities of the Islamist extremist groups, the press release said.

Rab, on the same night, also arrested the militant outfit's Bagerhat district coordinator from Purbo-Bashabati area under Bagerhat Sadar thana. He was identified as Mohammad

Solaiman, 22, son of Abdus Samad of the same area. Rab arrested Solaiman from his shop at Darhatana intersection and recovered from there many books written on militancy and leaflets meant from inspiring youths to join JMB.

Rab quoted the arrestee as saying that his shop was so long used for keeping bomb-making materials, leaflets, faxed messages sent by JMB kingpin and written instructions and programmes of the outlawed militant organisation. He also disclosed names of other cadres hiding in Bagerhat district.

Twenty copies of monthly 'At-Tahrik' magazine, 29 copies of leaflets and a copy of the book 'Ekti Shatyanishtha Daler Proyojon' were recovered from his possession, Rab said.

Bagerhat police on Tuesday arrested two more Islamist militants including a member of JMB suicide squad from Swarankhola upazila.

The arrestees were identified as Habibullah, 22, and Masum Billah alias Belal, 17.

Police said Habibullah is an active member of JMB suicide squad and youngest brother of ATM

Hemayetuddin, central joint secretary general of Islami Shasantantra Andolon.

He was arrested from a house of a retired police officer.

Habibullah confessed to police during interrogation that he took training as a member of suicide squad in a JMB camp in Dhaka. Police quoting him said yesterday that there are two more members of suicide squads in Bagerhat who are planning to go into action any time.

JMB cadre Belal alias Masum Billah, 17, was arrested on Tuesday from Khortakata village under Swarankhola upazila of Bagerhat. He is son of Ibrahim Mir of the same village.

Police said Masum was earlier arrested from a mosque in Barguna district two years ago along with 36 others while taking training on militancy. But all of them were freed a day after arrest.

# Satkhira 'regional leader' of JMB rounded up

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A 'regional commander' of the banned Islamist outfit, Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) was arrested yesterday morning at Jhhapa village in Kalaroa upazila.

The arrestee is Ruhul Quddus, 25 son of Nasir Uddin of village Taluigachha in Sadar upazila. He is an activist of Islami Chhatra Shibir.

Kalaroa thana said Quddus is one of the charge sheeted accused in the August 17 bomb blast case.

Police, quoting local people said, he took part in the Afghan War and is the regional leader of JMB. He went into hiding soon after the August 17 incident.

During interrogation he confessed that he is an active member of JMB and blasted bombs in Khulna University area in Batiaghata on August 17. He told police and the local journalists that he is also an activist of Islami Chhatra Shibir, student front of the Jamaat, a key coalition partner of ruling four-party alliance.

Meanwhile, two suspected JMB cadres who were arrested on Sunday from Bhomra land port area, were placed on a four day remand yesterday. Police arrested JMB cadres Mamun and Ilias while they were fleeing to India through Bhomra port using fake passport.

5X3

3X2

9X3

8X3