

JMB military commander

FROM PAGE 1

one of the biggest caches of JMB explosives, grenades, arms, ammunition, and bomb and bullet making paraphernalia from a Sabujbagh den in the city.

Earlier, on Tuesday night, Rab arrested Fariduzzaman Swapan, a close associate of Sunny, raiding his house at Kalabagan. Swapan reportedly helped the JMB in channelling funds through bank accounts.

In the port city, besides arresting Mohammad, Rab yesterday also held his associate Jafar and seized a huge quantity of explosives, bomb-making materials, books, pamphlets and audiocassettes at a JMB den at Kattali.

The Chittagong haul includes a blender bomb, seven flask bombs, 28 containers each containing 750gram ammonium nitrate, 29kg white and 3kg black gun powder, 500gram aluminium powder, 700gram potash, 200gram lead azide, 3.50kg sulphur, 69 pieces of powder gel explosives, 8kg chemical explosives, 20 hand grenades, two light guns, two dummy AK-47 rifles, one revolver and 38 electronic detonators.

Although the news that a big shot of JMB was caught at Teigaon got around in the city on Tuesday, Rab officials kept mum about it. The silence and denial continued even after yesterday's Sabujbagh den busting.

Finally, at 4:00pm yesterday, the elite police force suddenly called a press conference at its headquarters and disclosed the arrest.

The Rab officials met the journalists at a hall room at 4:30pm and asked them not to ask any question to the arrestees. They brought Swapan and Sunny in front of the press at 4:47pm and asked them to identify themselves.

Sunny said, "My name is Ataur Rahman Sunny. I am a brother of Shaekh Abdur Rahman and my father's name is Ibne Fazle."

Swapan also identified himself. But at one point he broke into tears, saying he is innocent and not involved in any of the JMB activities.

ARREST OF SUNNY

Tipped off that Sunny would visit someone important at Latif dormitory of the Polytechnic Institute in Teigaon, a team of the intelligence wing of intelligence wing of Rab headquarters took position inside the building at around Tuesday noon.

Sunny was arrested as soon as he entered the hostel, Rab told yesterday's press conference. Rab also seized Tk 44,982 in cash, a wrist-watch and eight SIM cards from his possession.

Rab said Sunny, a member of JMB Majlish-e-Sura, used to run and coordinate all militant and terrorist operations, including the bomb attacks, of the banned organisation.

After the arrest, Sunny identified himself as commander Masuq Hassan Ahmed, director of JMB's legal and media wing, Rab told the press. But, Rab members became certain of his true identity by comparing his appearance with his photographs and varying some other information. And Sunny also owned up his real identity.

RAB RAIDS IN DHAKA

Based on the information extracted from Sunny, Rab on Tuesday night went out with him on a hunt for JMB militants and explosives. Rab teams made several raids in Tongi, Savar, Kalabagan and Manda areas.

A team first raided a house in Tongi and recovered some materials used to make suicide bombs and a huge quantity of partisan literature and combat training books, a Rab press release said yesterday.

Two youths rented the Tongi house two months ago, one identifying himself as a student of the Tongi College and the other as a madrasa student, Rab said quoting some locals, other tenants and the landlord.

Rab then raided another JMB den at Radly Colony in Savar and came across some ore bomb making materials and manuals. The tenants have been living there for a month, Rab said, adding the law enforcers also found some secret documents, diaries and papers of the MB.

A Rab team arrested Swapan, raiding his Kalabagan house.

Rab then raided several houses at Manda in Sabujbagh and finally, at about 6:00am yesterday, reached the Chhata Masjid Road den, from where it recovered the huge cache of explosives, arms and ammunition. The house was owned by an Abul Khair.

MANDA RECOVERY

The seizure in Dhaka was made at a rented house used as a JMB hideout in South Manda in Sabujbagh. The identity of the JMB cadre who rented the house could not be known immediately.

The seizure includes 27 locally made grenades, 24 pistols, 34 pieces of power gel, 19 pieces of water gel, 50 pieces of electric detonators, 20 bomb-making circuits, 25 cartridge cases, 2kg of aluminium powder, 20kg of aluminium nitrate, about 70kg of other chemicals and 50 dry-cell batteries.

Rab also recovered bullet-making dies, bullets of rifle, revolver and pistol, a huge quantity of other bomb-making materials and over one thousand books and booklets on Islam, militancy and jihad.

The law enforcers without informing the local police broke into the room and found the hauls inside.

On information, the police rushed to the spot around 10:30am. Rab men did not disclose the names of any of the arrestees except Sunny and Swapan.

Rab picked up Suraiya Begum, wife of Abul Khair Bakhs, but could not hold her husband, who was missing since morning.

His family sources said he went out of the house to say Fajr prayers and was supposed to go to a bazaar for business purpose.

Suraiya, a diabetic patient, went on a walk and ran into the raiding Rab men. The elite forces asked her about the owner of the house and picked her up.

'MYSTERIOUS' TENANT

Suraiya told reporters a youth had come to rent the house two months ago. "He introduced himself as a cosmetics trader and wanted to rent a single room. We did not want him to rent the room, which needed some

repairs."

"But the youth insisted on taking it saying he would make the repairs by himself and would live there with his wife," she added.

The youth, who claimed to run cosmetics business at Baitul Mukarram Market, rented the eight-foot by 10-foot tin-shed room at Tk 1,100 a month.

Khair lives in a nearby two-storey building with his four children -- Momena Sharmin Zinia, 22, Mahmudul Haq Sampad, 18, Shaheda Sharmin Laxmi, 9, and Bahaul Haq Alaiya, 7, -- and his wife.

Locals said Khair is a tablig activist and the house is his only source of income, but his family claimed he is a contractor.

Suraiya, her family, tenants, neighbours and locals termed the youth 'mysterious' as they hardly saw him in the last two months.

"As he did not bring his wife to live with him even after a month, my sister [Suraiya] asked him about it," Selina Akhter Urmil told The Daily Star.

"In reply, he said his wife, who was at his village, was expecting and will come to him after the child is born."

The Bakhs family however could not give the name and address of the youth.

Nazma, Jebunnessa and Anwara, three tenants who live next and opposite to the room, told reporters they hardly saw the youth as his room remained locked most of the time.

"He hardly showed up, and on a rare meeting I asked him what he does for his living. He said he sells agarbati [incense sticks]," said local shopkeeper Selim.

But the tenant's neighbours said they have never seen or smelt any kind of such sticks in the youth's room.

BOOKS & BOOKLETS

Among the books, a voluminous SSC test paper was found with a hole inside so that bombs or small arms can be hidden there.

The bomb attack on the Chittagong courtroom was launched using such a thick book on October 3.

The books are mostly on Islam, jihad, Afghan wars and Islamic revolution in Bangladesh.

Some of the books were published by Simum Publications and Ahle Hadith. The publishers usually publish the books of Islamic Chhatra Shibir, student wing of BNP's ruling partner Jamaat-e-Islami.

Simum Publications books are "Gulbagh theke Twin Tower" by Abul Asad, "Salatul Tarabin ba Muhahter Azan", "Surigamer Sangkate" by Abul Asad and "Mafiar Parinaam".

The huge recovery of books also include "Sashastra Jihad" by Ibnu Abdul Matin of Al Jihad, "Paper Fall" by Asad Bin Hafiz of Crusade Publications, "Kabir: Mullah Omorer Afghanistan Bangladesh Taliban" by Maolana Ubaidur Rahman Khan Nakvi of Kitab Kendra, "Shathik Akida Bidati Amoler Porichoy" by Engineer Samsuddin Ahmed of Ahle Hadith, "Bibhrantir Berajale" by Khalid Saifulah of Jannat Prashani, and "Deen Kayamer Shathik Akida".

CTG HAUL

Rab arrested suspected Chittagong Division Chief of JMB Mohammad alias Aman Ullah and his associate Jafar from a house in the city's Kattali area Tuesday night.

The battalion also recovered a large quantity of explosive materials, different types of bombs, books, pamphlets, bomb-making paraphernalia and some audiocassettes from the house.

Mohammad, 25, son of Maulana Abdul Awal of Khurshukul in Cox's Bazar, is suspected to be the organiser-in-charge of JMB activities in the entire Chittagong division including the city, Cox's Bazar and the three hill districts. He is also the suspected main planner of the recent bombings in the city, sources said.

Based on a tip-off, three special teams of Rab took position on Tuesday night at Pahartali, Kattali and their adjoining areas. At about 9:00pm they entered a tin-shed house at Kattali, owned by Didarul Alam, and arrested suspected JMB cadre Naimuzzaman alias Jafar alias Sohag.

After searching the five-room residence the Rab team found a large number of explosives, bombs, books and other materials in two of the rooms. The cache includes a blender turned into a bomb, seven flask bombs, 28 containers each containing 750 gram ammonium nitrate, 29 kg white and 3 kg black gun powder, 500 gram aluminium powder, 700 gram potash, 200 gram lead azide, 3.50 kg sulphur, 69 pieces of powder gel explosives, 8 kg chemical explosives, 20 hand grenades, two light guns, two dummy AK-47 rifles, one revolver and 38 electronic detonators.

Rab officials said the explosives materials seized from Kattali could be used to manufacture a few hundred bombs.

At about 11:45pm, Mohammad alias Aman Ullah came to the house to meet his associates, totally unaware of the presence of Rab members. As soon as he knocked on the door a Rab officer in disguise opened it while the others caught him instantly and called in additional forces to encircle the area.

The arrested two were brought to Rab-7 headquarters at Patenga. After preliminary interrogations the Rab team set out yesterday morning with the two to several places in the city in search of more JMB men and weapons.

Rab officials said Mohammad, a former student of Dhaka Alia Madrasa also a student of the Arabic department in Dhaka University, had joined the JMB three to four years ago.

"His certificate name is Javed Iqbal but he used to use few aliases like Mohammad, Aman Ullah and Abu Hurrab," Rab Deputy Director Osman Gani said.

He said Mohammad had his training in unarmed combat at Bagmara and later he concentrated his expertise as a planner of bomb attacks. For his skills, competence and success as a planner he was given the charge of leading JMB activities in the entire Chittagong division.

"Mohammad was the planner of all the bomb attacks on August 17, October 3 and November 29 in Chittagong while JMB bomb expert Mizan manufactured the bombs," the

Rab official said.

Mohammad rented the Kattali residence about five to six months ago and used it as a safe warehouse for manufacturing bombs and keeping explosives and other materials. The bombs were usually supplied from this den for detonation, Rab officials said.

"Mohammad was in Dhaka until Tuesday morning, had meetings with his mentor JMB leader Ataur Rahman Sunny also brother of JMB Chief Shaekh Abdur Rahman, and then returned to Chittagong the same night before his arrest," said a Rab official.

Presenting a personal diary of Mohammad, Rab officials said he went to Kolkata on March 3, 2004 and returned home on March 12 the same year and obtained a nationality certificate from 24 Pargana district under an alias, Abu Hurrab.

Mohammad told Rab during interrogation that they used to fix targets in consultation with Shaekh Abdur Rahman.

Jamaat shaken

FROM PAGE 16

The top leaders of Jamaat expressed their determination to keep the four-party alliance intact on which they believe rests their chances of winning seats in the parliament in the coming elections.

In 2001 elections Jamaat fielded candidates in 30 constituencies as a partner in the four-party alliance. They won 17 seats in the parliament. In the four-party alliance government Jamaat has two ministers, Matiur Rahman Nizami and Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid.

A number of senior Jamaat leaders have expressed their worries over the possibility of their expulsion from the alliance government in which case they may face a debacle in the elections.

A Jamaat leader, who did not want to be named, said the party has never been under such a pressure since the immediate aftermath of the country's independence. He also said the militant issue has not perturbed the party as much as the possibility of being an outcast in the field of politics.

While they are not afraid about the opposition's demand they are nevertheless anxious over the fact that a section of BNP leaders are also demanding their ouster, he said.

Families

FROM PAGE 16

the families the public now want a ban on fundamental politics.

She said a list of Razakars, Al Badars and those who helped Pakistani forces should be made in every village.

The AL chief said the BNP-Jamaat alliance is distorting and trying to destroy the history of the Liberation War and all the symbols of it.

She accused late president Ziaur Rahman of allowing the fundamental and anti-Liberation War forces in politics.

Hasina urged people of all walks to unite to end 'misrule' of the government, save the country from the evil grip of militancy and uphold democracy and the spirit of the Liberation War.

Anal Ranan, son of eminent filmmaker and journalist Zahir Raihan, said they may depart the country if Jamaat is not banned.

Jahid Reza Noor, son of martyred journalist Sirajuddin Hossain, said the war criminals are now using the national flag in their vehicles. He suggested setting up a white plaque in every village with the names of every freedom fighter.

Dr MA Hasan, brother of martyr Lt Monim, said they must identify the anti-Liberation War forces to win the battle against them.

Salma Haque, wife of martyr Dr Azharul Haque, Shyamoli Nasrin Chowdhury, wife of martyr Dr Alim Chowdhury, and Zebunnessa Hashem, wife of martyr Prof Abul Hashem Miah, demanded a ban on Jamaat politics and punishment of the war criminals.

Thirty family members of martyred intellectuals attended the view exchange meeting with Hasina.

AL leaders Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Zillur Rahman, Motia Chowdhury, Tofail Ahmed, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Suranjit Sengupta, Obaidul Quader, Asaduzzaman Noor, among others, were present.

Rejoinder

FROM PAGE 1

The JP placed a nine-point proposal to the prime minister during the talks, the chairman said.

He also said no presidium meeting of the party was held on Tuesday and no decision was taken to propose for Jamaat's expulsion as reported in The Daily Star.

Our Reply

We further checked our information yesterday after receiving the rejoinder. A number of senior party leaders confirmed the information, which we reported.

They said a meeting was held at party's Banani office on December 12 (Monday) with available presidium members. Ershad chaired the meeting, which finalised a set of proposals including the demand for axing Jamaat-e-Islami from the government and the ruling alliance.

But the information was leaked to the government and the Prime Minister's Office asked the JP to drop the proposal for purging Jamaat from the government on allegation of harbouring militants.

Kazi Firoz Rashid, political adviser to the JP chairman, who was included in the delegation to meet the prime minister, did not join the dialogue in protest against the last-minute change in the proposals.

The JP chairman held another meeting with the presidium members available on Tuesday at the party office before joining the dialogue. The meeting finalised the revised proposals, party sources confirmed.

Sunny met Rahman

FROM PAGE 1

elder brother regularly at different places.

Meanwhile, sources said JMB chief Rahman was staying at a hideout in Teigaon a short while before the Rab arrested Ataur Rahman left the house belonging to one of his JMB aides where Sunny met him Monday, they added.

Another source said Rahman was staying in the house of a JMB activist at Mohammadpur and that Sunny met him there two-three days ago. The Rab also raided the house but did not find him there.

Sunny, one of the seven members of Majlish-e-Shura, the top tier of the JMB that supervised the August 17 countrywide bomb blasts, was caught from the gate of Latif Dormitory of the Polytechnic Institute at Teigaon at around 3:00pm Tuesday as he came to meet a JMB operative there.

The JMB chief was the key man to collect funds for the organisation. "He told me money was no problem," Sunny told interrogators, when asked about source of funding.

"So far I know, our local fund comes from subscriptions collected for mosques and madrasas, monthly collections from activists and a big fund from the zakat collected during Ramadan," he said.

On the supply of explosives, he said they collect explosives through different ways but mostly by road from India.

Abdul Awal, Rahman's son-in-law and another Majlish-e-Shura member whom the police arrested in Thakurgaon last month, was responsible for smuggling the explosives through Rajshahi region.

Niko got Tengratila

FROM PAGE 1

to energy ministry sources.

"Niko is so sure about the Tengratila resources that it has illegally installed a gas pipeline in that area when the gas field was still burning. It is now trying to strike a gas sales agreement, bypassing the government, with Lafarge Cement factory to which it intends to sell Tengratila gas in future," said one source.

Petrobangla's Hydrocarbon Habitat Study was conducted by an international surveyor to map out oil and gas exploration blocks on the basis of geological structures and potential resources for the second round block bidding in 1997. As per the study, the government owned 15 blocks for exploration and 21 companies submitted offers.

At that time, Niko also submitted bid but it was brushed aside as the company did not qualify financially or technically.

The company with no experience however had the then energy secretary Tofiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury push ahead an unsolicited and most unfavourable deal for Bangladesh.

As part of this bid, Niko was tagged with Bapex to conduct a study of three so-called 'marginal gas fields' -- Feni, Kamta and Chhatak west. The study showed the probable reserves of each of these fields below 400 bcf. Accordingly, these fields were awarded to the Niko-Bapex joint venture.

In addition, Niko was illegally given the unexplored Chhatak west gas field due to Niko's close links with the 'alternative centre of power' of the present government.

WTO meet faces

FROM PAGE 1

subsidies paid to farmers in the developed world, especially in the United States, were a major factor in the collapse of the 2003 WTO meeting in Cancun, Mexico.

Mallou said he did not want to see a repeat in Hong Kong but "if we don't get a concrete result, Africa will not be able to go along with a consensus."

The cotton issue comes up for discussion later Wednesday.

"It's a very sensitive issue and there is a lot of emotion," an Australian trade official noted.

The cotton issue came up as 149 World Trade Organisation delegates were trying to find a way to bridge long-standing disputes on trade in farm products, industrial goods and services.

The likelihood of any major breakthrough was already slim because of deep-seated differences between the European Union and the United States, and between developed and developing countries, over farm trade and market access.

Speaking Wednesday, the United States said it was looking ahead to a new WTO meeting to break the deadlock in the Doha Round of trade talks, which were launched in Qatar in 2001 and are due to be completed by the end of 2006.

"We should not leave without setting a date -- early next year -- to come together again to break the deadlock so our negotiators can complete the work by the end of 2006," said US Trade Representative Robert Portman.

EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson reiterated that Europe would offer no bigger concessions on agriculture subsidies and tariffs, putting pressure on its trading partners to move first.

"We need much, much more on the table," he said, seeking reciprocal proposals to open up market access for the developed world's industrial goods and services to match the EU's offer on farm products.

The EU and US also exchanged barbs over another irritant -- food aid reform, with an EU official telling reporters: "Food aid policies are being exploited for commercial interest."

The US was quick to reply.

"The fact of the matter is that the European Union does some very good work in development but in

Admitting that he was responsible for the coordination in Dhaka region, Sunny said he had trained four-five activists in bomb making in Dhaka.

After the law enforcers raided Rahman's Banasree den in Dhaka last month in search of Abdur Rahman, the JMB operatives staying in the area scattered.

"We began to stay at different houses but nowhere for long," Sunny told the investigators, adding that they have 10-12 trusted JMB men who provide them with shelter.

Sunny did not provide any specific information on the number of the suicide squad members, giving contradictory figures.

"But he said the JMB is continuing to recruit members for the suicide squad. After they target someone, they keep watch on him and preach about Islam ultimately to move towards Jihad. They make one believe that he will be considered 'shaheed' and will go to heaven if he sacrifices life 'for the cause of Islam'," said an interrogator.

Asked about the JMB's next target, Sunny did not give any details but said the Rab was their next target. "They also had plan to carry out car-bomb attack," the sources said.

Sunny also did not explain their reason behind the bomb attacks, saying only they did it as the government did not pay heed to their demand of establishing Islamic rule.

Asked if the JMB has any ambition to grab power, Sunny answered in the negative. They only aim at establishing Islamic rule, he said.

Babar takes

FROM PAGE 1

the Netrakona suicide bomber as Yadav Biswas.

Wire was tied around his whole body and the evidence of the bombings showed he was a JMB man and Hindu, said the minister, adding, "The JMB has been speaking about an ideology. But now it is a new dimension. We need to look into it well."

Yadav Das, a cycle mechanic in Netrakona town, was coaxed to go to the scene after a bomb was recovered and fell victim with several others when a suicide bomber blew himself up in a gathering of people that included police and journalists.

Barhatta police on Friday night asked Satyen Chandra Das and Biplob Das, Yadav's father and brother, to come to the police station and detained them at dawn on Saturday when they showed up to meet the officer-in-charge.

Police released them on Sunday night when media investigations revealed that the claim of the state minister and the police were not based on facts.

BDNEWS adds: The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) yesterday demanded immediate trial, punishment and resignation of State Minister for Home Lutfuzzaman Babar for uttering a "falsehood" about Yadav, who was killed in the suicide bombing in Netrakona.

The State Minister for Home had tried to stage "Yadav drama" to protect the fundamentalist and extremist terrorists and militants, SCBA Secretary advocate M Enayetur Rahim said.

Patricia Butenis

FROM PAGE 16

the next US ambassador to Bangladesh.

"The US government has named Patricia A Butenis as the next ambassador to Bangladesh and we have given clearance," Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan told diplomatic correspondents at his office yesterday.

The immediate past US ambassador Harry K Thomas, now the executive secretary at the Office of the Secretary of State, discharged his diplomatic assignment in Dhaka from August 11, 2003 to July 2, 2005.

The joining date of Butenis, who is to be the 12th US ambassador to Bangladesh, is yet to be set as there are some formalities to confirm the appointment by the US Senate, an official of the US embassy in Dhaka said.

Foreign ministry sources, however, said the new US ambassador is expected to join the Dhaka mission early next year.

Journalists

FROM PAGE 16

accept such a law on the Press Council.

The government has a plan to bring amendment to the Press Council Act for empowering the council to provide higher punishment for offences of the media persons.

Press Council Chairman Justice Abu Sayeed Ahammed also suggested amendment to the section 12(1) of the act.

He said under 12(1) of the Press Council Act, there is a provision to warn, rebuke and reprimand the editor or journalist of a newspaper or a news agency if he/she resorts to professional misconduct or violates any guideline of journalism.

The press council chairman also recommended inclusion of punitive provisions to the act to make the council stronger and effective.

UNB adds: The prime minister during the meeting with journalist leaders urged the media to play responsible role through their writings and broadcasts to discourage terrorism, saying bomb terrorism will not continue many more days and will have to stop.

The journalist leaders gave suggestions individually on how to combat terrorism.

News Today editor and Jatiya Press Club President Reazuddin Ahmed suggested constituting a committee at grassroots level with social and religious leaders, public representatives and political leaders to raise public opinion against the militants and find out the people linked with the militants.

DUJ President Elahi Newaz Khan expressed doubt about the existence of JMB, saying that ahead of the general elections such a path of violence has been chosen by a vested quarter in a planned way in the name of JMB.

Goldman Sachs

FROM PAGE 16

is largely regarded as an Asian Century, the new Goldman Sachs list has four other Asian nations--Iran, Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines in addition to the two South Asian countries.

"Investors, always on the lookout for the next big trend, are scouring Asia as the region is home to booming economies, swelling populations and fast-developing markets," an economist said.

Mahm