

2 more JMB dens busted

FROM PAGE 1 Rajshahi, a JMB bomber in Naogaon and 12 others in Mymensingh.

One of the JMB dens busted in Mymensingh is at Fulbaria and the other at Aqua in Morolpara. When a Rab team approached the Morolpara lair on RK Mission Road, the inmates put up such a stiff resistance by desperate shooting and blasting some 25 bombs that the crack retributing force was forced to retreat and the JMB operatives made a hasty escape.

The Mymensingh haul includes four grenades, 12 bombs of different sizes including a light-sensitive one, a sub-machine carbine, 80 electric detonators, 20kg ammonium nitrate, gun powder, GI wire, lead azide, lead nitrate, electric circuits, batteries, fuses, small shells and iron balls used in fishing nets. Besides, weighing and soldering machines and over 1,000 books on jihad were also recovered from the homet's nests. The police and Rab in the town arrested a total of 12 people in this connection.

Rab sources said the Mymensingh operation was undertaken based on some information extracted by interrogators from detained JMB Military Commander Ataur Rahman Sunny now in Rab custody. The Rab took Sunny to Mymensingh at 1:00am yesterday and brought him back to the capital after he had shown the cops the Fulbaria and Morolpara dens.

On the intelligence that some JMB top guns may be residing at two or three JMB dens in Kotwali area of Mymensingh town, a Rab Intelligence Wing team led by Major Javed with the help of Rab-9 carried out the operation, said a Rab press release last night.

MYMENSINGH OPERATIONS The first den the Rab busted was 'Nongar' on Fulbaria Road, Bilane No. 2, owned by Khorsheed Uddin Ahmed, a retired teacher of Nasirabad Collegiate School.

He told the press Shaheed, aged around 35, rented the first floor of the house at Tk 2,000 in April.

Rab members formed a cordon around the house and broke into the three-room flat around 2:30am. The tenants left the house on December 14, Khorsheed told The Daily Star.

The elite force recovered 56 detonators, gun powder, electric circuits, wires, around 100 batteries, a monitor, a keyboard, different types of CDs, around 1,000 books on jihad and paper clippings on militancy.

A Rab team remained in the house, while other members set off to bust another den on RK Mission Road in Aqua Morolpara.

ARREST OF ASADUZZAMAN The Rab started defusing the bombs at 10:00am at the playground of Nasirabad School. At 12:30pm, they blasted an almost five-kg bomb found on RK Mission Road.

While blasting the bomb, intelligence men held a youth roaming around suspiciously and took him to police custody. Khorsheed, who was in the police custody, identified him as Asaduzzaman.

CONFESION OF ASAD Asad at the Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC) admitted to being the JMB commander of Mymensingh. Asad, son of Bazul Haque of Hazimarket in Fulbaria, joined JMB in 2003.

He denied his involvement in the August 17 blasts. "I am not involved in the military activities," he claimed.

He named two of the three JMB men, Salauddin and Kalam, who worked under him. He said seven activists were working in the district.

LOCALS VERSIONS The house the militants resided was far from the road and has a local lawmaker's residence in the rear. The local ward commissioner resides some 100 yards in front of it.

Locals said Khorsheed is a clean man, who with his two sons and one daughter lives a peaceful life.

Khorsheed told The Daily Star Shaheed introduced himself as a shrimp trader and a resident of Fulbaria.

Shaheed had said he would live in the flat with his 25-year-old sister, her one-and-a-half-year-old son and brother Asaduzzaman, 18. Both the men were well bearded.

Asaduzzaman was said to be a student of English at Anandamohun University College. The 'sister', whose name Khorsheed failed to remember, was staying with Shaheed after being abandoned by her husband several months ago.

The law enforcers raided several spots in Fulbaria to trace Shaheed's origin in vain.

Khorsheed said his tenants strongly maintained veils. "The curtains of their windows and doors were drawn most of the times, and the 'sister' never came out without veils."

Kaiyum, who keeps a shop near the house, told reporters he saw Shaheed's 'brother' coming out of the house with books on a bicycle. He did not notice any strangers visiting the house.

The 'brothers' all on a sudden shaved their faces two months ago. In reply to Kaiyum's question, Asaduzzaman said they did it to avoid harassment by law enforcers.

Khorsheed's wife said the tenants were unsocial and unfriendly. "They never visited our house either as tenants or as neighbours," she added.

MOROLPARA BATTLE The Rab members out for the other JMB den cordoned off the house, Noor Mahal, and knocked on the single-floor tin-shed house around

3:30am.

In response, the tenants hurled a bomb at the raiding force through a window, said a Rab member, who took part in the drive.

"The militants started hurling grenades and bombs at us one after another, some of those blasted with huge bangs, rocking the entire area," he added.

Mohammad Mahbub, teacher of a nearby madrasa, told The Daily Star he woke up hearing footsteps close to his bedroom. He resides just opposite the house of the busted den.

"I peeped through the window to see what's going on and heard some people saying 'take position', 'we'll shoot you' and 'surrender' sort of voices."

He immediately heard a huge bang and covered down, Mahbub said, adding, "I found the rest of my family shaking in fear."

"A little later, I heard some gunshots and crawled towards my roadside room to have a look outside."

Major Javed told the press they did not open fire on the militants as the area was over crowded.

"It was deep dark in the night and there were possibilities of crossfire," he said, adding, they shot some fires in the air for self-defence.

The militants fled from the scene hurling bombs. Some of them might have escaped through the gates in the rear of the house, while some others ran through the main road.

The Rab could not chase them because of bombs on the road.

The Rab in the daylight yesterday counted 25 bombs, some of those including a powerful one did not explode.

The Rab found a computer CPU burning on an oven inside the house. The CPU must have had secret information, the law enforcers suspect.

Two of the three rooms were almost empty, while the third one had all the recovered goods including electric detonators, ammonium nitrate, gun powder, charcoal, batteries, chemicals, improvised fuses, a light sensitive bomb, different dies, time circuit, 10 chainless wrist watches, two weighing machines, an AC/DC metre, wire, electric circuits, blades, shrouding iron, three knives, one saw, three militant books including one published by Revival of Islamic Heritage, and 50 small shells.

Rab bomb experts said the bombs recovered from the spots are similar of those blasted in Gazipur and Netrakona.

One of them said the militants could have made a huge quantity of bombs using the seized materials. He said there was a light-sensitive bomb, which goes off when comes to light.

LOCALS VERSIONS Sayeeda Noor, a widow, told reporters Abul Kalam, 25, introduced himself as a small trader, and rented the three-room flat in April.

"I did not want him to rent the flat as he was a bachelor, but he influenced me, saying I could throw him out at his first misbehave," Sayeeda said, adding, he lived with two, sometimes three of his friends.

Humaira, another tenant, said she had no idea who lived in that flat. "I only learnt about them when the Rab woke me up during the fazz prayers and asked me about them."

Police picked up her along with his two sons -- Jeyon and Hamman -- around 8:00am.

Sayeeda's daughter Shamima is a former president of district unit Islami Chhatra Sangstha, women student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, in Sherpur in 2003.

Her son Sadequr Rahman, an Alim student of Tamirul Millad Dakhlil Madrasa in Tongi, is a member of Islami Chhatra Shibir, Jamaat's student wing.

Shamima, a postgraduate in Bangla, claimed she kept herself away from Jamaat politics after her marriage.

She however admitted she at the directive from Dhaka and instruction of greater Mymensingh Islami Chhatra Sangstha in-charge Asifa Begum visited Sherpur to attend a meeting with other members at the house of Munnin Nalibari.

"I used to make visits only to invite women, who do not know basic Islamic rules," she said, adding, the meetings were financially supported by Jamaat's women student wing.

She told The Daily Star her husband has links with Jamaat but does not hold any political post.

RAJSHAHI Our Rajshahi correspondent reports: Tipped off that JMB Rajshahi divisional commander Shafiqullah alias Tariq was hiding in Nature, the Rab stationed in Rajshahi traced him to Nature Railway Station on Saturday night.

A Rab team from Rajshahi raided the station at 10:00pm Saturday and arrested the JMB kingpin, son of Abdur Rahman of Itagachha of Sathira district.

During primary interrogation, Shafiqullah confessed to be the chief of JMB Rajshahi zone covering Chapainawabganj, Rajshahi, Nature and Naogaon districts.

Shafiqullah is a grandson-in-law of Dr Asadullah Galib, chief of another Islamist outfit Ahle Hadith Andolon, Bangladesh (Ahab). Sources said Galib used to stay and hold meetings of Ahab at Shafiqullah's house when he visited this area.

A Rab press release quoted him as admitting that he used to look after the smuggling of all explosives and bomb-making materials and equipment, and that he recently smuggled

in some 5,000 electric bomb detonators from a neighbouring country. He said the detonators were with Tariqul Islam, son of Ataur Rahman of Boarmari Schoolpara under Godagari upazila of Rajshahi.

He also confessed that Tariqul was responsible for bringing the goods in across the Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj and Naogaon borders.

Acting on Shafiqullah's confession, the Rab team arrested Tariqul at his village at around 12:30am yesterday.

"Owning up his identity, Tariqul took the Rab team to the Madapur village home of one Ataur Rahman and himself brought 1,000 detonators out of an abandoned poultry house," read the Rab press release.

Tariqul told the Rab he kept the remaining 4,000 detonators with one Rezaul of his village. The Rab team rushed to Boarmari village and held Rezaul, son of another Ataur Rahman.

"Rezaul admitted that Tariqul asked him to keep the detonators and took the Rab men to Charnichu area. There he dug out a sack that contained 3,978 detonators," the release said.

Rab sources said the arrestees would be handed over to police soon.

Meanwhile, Rajshahi Metropolitan Police yesterday took the JMB Rajshahi east district commander Abu Isa alias Enamul on a 21-day remand in three cases filed with Motihar, Boalia and Rajpara police stations on the August 17 bomb strikes. The police also took JMB operatives Ajmat Ali, Hasmat Ali and Abdul Wahab in a seven-day remand. The Rab held them all on Friday.

In the meantime, the police arrested in Sapahar upazila of Naogaon a man named Zillur Rahman Mahin, who confessed to exploding bombs in Rajshahi New Market area on August 17.

ARRESTEES The arrestees are Sayeeda Noor, 50, owner of Noor Mahal, her daughter and son Shamima Akhter, 25, and Sadekur Rahman, 15, who is also a student of Tongi Aminul Millat Kamal Madrasa, their tenant Humaira Begum, 55, her two sons Zeyun Khan, 28, and Hamman Khan, 25, retired teacher Khorsheed Uddin Ahmed, 60, who is the owner of 'Nongar' house, his tenant Asaduzzaman, 22, Hafez Saider Rahman, a teacher of Hefz Department of a madrasa in Jatrabari in Dhaka, Rubel Alam, Delwar Hossain, and Abu Sayeed, an employee of Uniliver Bangladesh.

Ex-JCD leader shot over tender brawl

STAFF CORRESPONDENT A former Jatayatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leader was shot last night at the Panthapath area allegedly by his rivals in a feud over tender business.

SM Manir Hossain, 28, former social welfare secretary at the JCD committee, was at the steering wheel of his out of order vehicle in front of Samarita Hospital when two youths on a motorcycle fired several shots at him around 9:30pm.

Manir was rushed to Samarita Hospital and later to Suhrawardy Hospital. Manir had a brawl with a group over a tender on the construction of a Khulna stadium.

Bimstec

FROM PAGE 1 technology and agriculture.

The foreign secretaries of the seven-member Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical Cooperation (Bimstec) countries at its meeting yesterday also recommended a number of issues and discussed on the ways to enhance cooperation in the fields of energy, tourism, agriculture, private sector initiatives, combat international terrorism and fight against poverty.

Development of transportation and communication linkages in all routes among the member states -- Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand -- was discussed with importance.

The meeting decided to hold tourism ministers meeting in Nepal early next year.

Preparation of a Bimstec charter, rules of procedure and setting up of a Permanent Secretariat also came up for discussion, he said, adding that the issues would be finalised at the ministerial meeting.

Saarc and Bimstec would be a bridge between South and South-East Asian countries and both the forum would be complementary for each other, Hemayetuddin said.

He said the SOM meeting finalised the agenda, report on progress since the last summit of Bimstec with necessary recommendations for today's ministerial meeting that will adopt a joint declaration today.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will inaugurate the meeting at Sheraton Hotel this morning.

The senior officials' meeting was attended by Bhutanese Acting Foreign Secretary Ms Neten Zangmo, Indian Secretary (East) of the External Affairs Ministry Rajiv Sikri, Myanmar's Foreign Ministry Director General U Win Mra, Nepal Foreign Secretary Nabin Bahadur Shrestha, Sri Lankan Additional Foreign Secretary Karunatilaka Amunogama and Thai Deputy Permanent Secretary Thakur Phanit.

The government will have the right to share any forfeited wealth of such criminals with any foreign country which may assist it in probing and prosecuting such crimes or in confiscating the wealth.

On request of the BB, the country's courts can also order actions like confiscation of wealth in order to carry out the rulings of any foreign court for such crimes.

According to the law, any act that poses a threat to the sovereignty, unity, integrity or security of Bangladesh is a terrorist one. Use of bombs, dynamite, other explosives, flammables, firearms, poisons, harmful gases or any other chemicals in a way that may injure or kill people with a view to create public panic will also be considered a terrorist act.

Any act of damaging a public or private property, hindering supply

A university on paper

FROM PAGE 16 university's syndicate committee to the Prime Minister's Office without consulting the teachers of the college.

"Shirin Rahman has made a proposal for the university's syndicate committee very secretly proposing those names only who are active supporters of the ruling BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami," said a teacher of the institution requesting anonymity.

The teachers and students of JUC will not accept the proposed syndicate committee, if it is really formed at last, he said.

"Despite being declared as a university through the passing of law, admission test of the Jagannath University College may need to be taken under the National University due to the failure of Shirin Rahman," the teacher viewed.

Termining the allegations baseless, Shirin Rahman said, "As per the law [Jagannath University Act 2005] I had no need to consult with the teachers of the Jagannath University College."

"It may take time to arrange the admission test, but the fear that it will be held under the National University rule is illogical as the law has already declared the Jagannath College as a full-fledged university," she added.

She also hoped that the task of forming the syndicate committee and academic council of the university would be accomplished by this month.

Meanwhile, recruitment of teachers and employees at the university has also become uncertain as many teachers of the abolished college have recently filed

separate writ petitions in the High Court (HC) against some provisions of the law related to the recruitment process of the university.

Staying the operation of the transfer orders of some 15 JUC teachers, the HC on November 16 issued rule upon the government to explain why the provision of the Jagannath University Act 2005 that barred teachers with a third class at any level of educational background from teaching at the university should not be declared illegal.

The court orders came following a writ petition filed by 15 out of 38 JUC teachers, who were transferred to different government colleges, challenging the provision of the Act terming it "illegal and violative of fundamental rights".

The teachers through the writ petitions also challenged the provision that does not allow the teachers and employees of the JUC to be recruited at the Jagannath University automatically.

Referring to the examples of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University and Sher-e-Bangla Agriculture University, the teachers said many universities converted from colleges have the provision that the teachers of the abolished colleges concerned can be appointed automatically.

But the law for Jagannath University does not have the provision and Shirin Rahman had contribution to making the law that goes against the teachers of the college, they added.

No gains for Dhaka

FROM PAGE 16 the least developed countries (LDCs) by 2008 as the six-day sixth WTO ministerial conference concluded yesterday.

"Bangladesh would be benefited unless there is any declaration of the conference," Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury had told the press, bluntly after finalisation of the draft. He even reiterated, "Bangladesh will use veto even if it has to do it alone." He, however, refrained from using it when the agreement was endorsed.

"The conference seems to be a deadlock," he said as the 'green room' meeting came to a halt around 3:30pm HK time.

Bangladesh opposed even 0.1 percent of the total tariff lines to go in the sensitive list in apprehension the main export-earning source the ready made garments (RMG) could become the victim as USA categorically made it clear.

US Trade Representative Rob Portman said the textile products from Bangladesh and Cambodia would not be given duty-free and quota-free access to the US market, as "it would be difficult to justify because of the global competitiveness the two nations have achieved in the sector," BNEWS reported.

"It's worst to bad for us. I'm sure textile and RMG will fall in the sensitive list of three percent and will be punished," BGMEA

Director Anisul Haque said. "And my personal opinion is Bangladesh will get out of the LDC group and form Asia Pacific LDCs," he said, apparently indicating the poorer nations had been divided in negotiation as the developed countries became successful in their strategy.

FBCCI President Mir Nasir Hossain, a member of the delegation, termed it disappointing and said Bangladesh would not benefit anyway. Economist Debapriya Bhattacharyya said, "It was a failure in the ability to pick up political signals."

Bangladesh delegation officials said the revised list would not be effective immediately, rather in 2008 or after the conclusion of Doha Round. "It's not bound, and reversible any time. They can shift the tariff line anytime," an official added.

The agreement urged that developing member countries shall be permitted to phase in their commitments and shall enjoy appropriate flexibility in coverage.

The WTO members urged development partners like World Bank, IMF, ADB and DFID to coordinate their work to ensure LDCs are not subjected to conditions on loans, grants and official development assistance that are inconsistent with their rights and obligations under the WTO agreements.

Tough law

FROM PAGE 1 to the cabinet, the finance ministry said the law has been designed in line with the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, the recommendations of an amendment committee on AMLA and the US Justice Department's suggestions.

The designers also studied the similar laws in the neighbouring countries before undertaking the task.

The proposed FCIPO will enforce the law by investigating and prosecuting money laundering and terror financing activities as guided by the central bank. It also provides for the sessions courts to act as money laundering and terrorist financing courts.

The law empowers the government to cooperate with any foreign country in investigating and prosecuting such crimes and also in carrying out court orders such as confiscating assets or funds of the criminals.

It also authorises the BB to share information and collaborate in any other ways with the financial intelligence units of foreign countries.

The government will have the right to share any forfeited wealth of such criminals with any foreign country which may assist it in probing and prosecuting such crimes or in confiscating the wealth.

On request of the BB, the country's courts can also order actions like confiscation of wealth in order to carry out the rulings of any foreign court for such crimes.

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Any act of damaging a public or private property, hindering supply

Biswa Ijtema

FROM PAGE 16 Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar, said yesterday emerging from an inter-ministerial meeting held at the home ministry.

The meeting also formed a committee headed by Additional Inspector General of Police Anwarul Iqbal to look after the law and order situation during the Ijtema.

Babar said there was no terror threat against the Biswa Ijtema.

Several close-circuit television cameras will be installed at the Ijtema site for round-the-clock surveillance and only vehicles bearing special stickers will be allowed to enter the Ijtema area.

The meeting also decided to hand-over the land on the west bank of Turag to Biswa Ijtema committee on permanent basis that was allocated earlier by Rajuk to different institutions and individuals, meeting sources said. However, the Cancer Hospital will remain there.

Rajuk will rehabilitate those who got the previous allotments.

Besides, the army would construct five pontoons on the Turag for movement of the participants.

During the Ijtema, all the cinema halls around the Ijtema ground will remain closed for three days and obscene posters will be removed.

The meeting decided to appoint some 63 medical teams for providing healthcare to the devotees. Of them, the health ministry will provide 35, while the Tongi Municipality the rest. Besides, 12 ambulances will be kept ready for carrying sick devotees.

Four mobile courts will be working in the site to ensure distribution of hygienic food among the devotees.

The home secretary, inspector general of police, director generals of Rab, BDR and Ansar and officials of the religious affairs ministry attended the meeting.

Hannan, Awal

FROM PAGE 16 also placed on a 10-day remand for sixth time since his arrest on November 18.

They were remanded in one of the August 17 blast cases filed after an explosion near the Jatya Press Club.

The Detective Branch (DB) of police, accompanied by the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members, produced Hannan and Awal, who were wearing helmets and bullet-proof vests, before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka at 3:00pm on completion of their five-day remand.

The forwarding reports placed before the court by the investigation officers (IO) of the cases, one for Hannan filed for explosion near Sheraton Hotel and the other for Awal filed for explosion near Jatrabari foot-over bridge, said Hannan and Awal gave important information about the bomb blasts.

They should be confined in the custody until the investigation of the cases completes, the IOs said.

The IO of the Press Club bomb blast case in his forwarding report said the two were directly involved in the August 17 countrywide bomb blasts, including that at the Press Club. So they need to be quizzed further to find out vital information about the bomb blasts and whereabouts of their accomplices, the IO added.

After the hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Shamsul Alam granted the remand prayer.

Mufti Hannan, who dodged arrest for several years, was already shown arrested in four other blast cases filed with the Tejgaon, Ramna, Motijheel and Demra police stations.

Awal alias Ashique, JMB in-charge for the August 17 blasts in the Rajshahi region, is one of the seven members of Majlish-e-Shura, the top tier of the banned outfit. He was arrested from a Dinajpur-bound bus when it reached Thakurgaon bus stand on November 18.

Bangla Bhai

FROM PAGE 1 latter's anti-communist operations in Bagmara last year, the JMB commander said, adding that he witnessed all of Bangla Bhai's tortures and oppression in Rajshahi region and knew his relations with government officials and cabinet members during the period.

Listed as a JMB activist in Joypurhat police book, Nurul Haq was involved with Pabna JMB in the guise of a worker in a genji (vests) factory. There he was known as Kaiser only.

After arrests of JMB military commander Ataur Rahman Sunny in Dhaka and Javed Iqbal alias Mohammad in Chittagong, he went to his home for a few days following orders of his seniors.

Nurul Haq was sent to Pabna police for legal action after he confessed that he planted bombs at various places in Pabna in August.

Islamic NGO

FROM PAGE 16 while another charge-sheet accused 13 others in Rajbari.

The accused in Jhalakati are Ziaur Rahman Zia, director of an Islamic NGO Al-Ekram, and Farid Howlader, a rickshaw puller who was also wounded in the explosion.

Bombs exploded at five different points of the town on August 17 leaving more than half a dozen wounded.

Another report said investigators submitted charge-sheet accusing 17 bomb blasts case in Rajbari.

The charge-sheet was submitted on Saturday accusing Mamun Mollah and Khandaker Hafizullah who are in custody while 11 others remain fugitive.

Rich nations

FROM PAGE 1 on its powerful textiles industry means that certain products can be selectively excluded.

Negotiators had been counting on stitching up an agreement for 32 of the world's poorest countries, with the trade package initially seen as having the best prospects of being endorsed by member nations.

FARM SUBSIDIES Trade ministers signed up yesterday to a compromise deal clearing the way to a global trade deal in 2006, agreeing to cut farm trade export subsidies in eight years and provide special breaks for the poorest nations.

A draft statement issued at WTO talks approved a European Union plan for agricultural export subsidies to be scrapped by 2013. The United States and key developing nations had been pushing for 2010.

Anti-poverty campaigners however condemned the draft agreement as a betrayal of the poor, but ministers from the main trading blocs welcomed it as at least a modest step forward.

"We agree to ensure the parallel elimination of all forms of export subsidies and disciplines on all export measures ... by the end of 2013," said the draft, which was to go before a plenary session for

approval later Sunday.

EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson said the text was "acceptable" after other countries had accepted the EU compromise on the date.

"We have demanded and received equivalent movement from the other countries. While the outcome of Hong Kong is not a great success, this move of ours is enough to save it from failure."

The United States in turn welcomed the text, saying it had come to Hong Kong to build a solid platform to move forward global trade liberalisation.

Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim said the Group of 20 major developing countries also accepted the compromise.

Anti-poverty campaigners were not so pleased, however. "This is not a deal, it's a fraud," the head of ActionAid's trade justice campaign Aftab Alam Khan told AFP.

Oxfam's trade campaign chief Phil Bloomer said rich countries had conceded minimal access to their agricultural markets while opening up the sensitive industrial and services sectors of developing nations.

"This is a profoundly disappointing text and a betrayal of development promises," Bloomer said.

Drive to clean

FROM PAGE 1 Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain chaired the meeting held at the ministry auditorium yesterday.

"We have made a list of illegal grabbers of the banks of the Shitalakhya River under the Narayanjan river port. We are going to evict them," the shipping minister said, adding that 27 mosques and madrasas