

Two Jamaat leaders sheltered Dec 8 Netrakona bombers

JMB ‘commander’ Sunny discloses during interrogation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Netrakona*

Two local leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami sheltered the JMB suicide squad members who blasted bombs in front of Udichi office at Azahar Road in Netrakona town on December 8 last year.

Eight people were killed and about 50 including 10 policemen were injured in the blasts.

This was disclosed by JMB (Jamaatul Mujahideen, Bangladesh) ‘operations commander’ Ataur Rahman Sunny during interrogation in Dhaka by the investigation officer (IO) of the two cases filed in connection with the blasts. A murder case and another case under the Explosives Act were filed after the blasts.

Sub-Inspector Mohammad Alauddin of Netrakona police station is the Investigation Officer (IO) of the two cases.

SI Alauddin told this correspondent that he and the Officer-in-Charge of Netrakona thana went to Dhaka recently to interrogate arrested JMB ‘commander’ Sunny in connection with the blasts.

Asked why charge sheets were not filed even after two and a half



Ataur Rahman Sunny

months of the incident, Alauddin said he is awaiting orders from higher authorities.

Sunny told Alauddin that the suicide bombers came to Netrakona about 15 days before of the (December 8) blasts and stayed under the shelter and protection of the two Jamaat leaders. One of them is a front ranking leader of Netrakona district Jamaat and the other is a teacher of a madsasa in the Sadar upazila, Alauddin said quoting Sunny. The suicide bombers also took the help of local Islami Chhatra Shibir activists in making preparations for

the attack.

Sunny also told Alauddin that the suicide squad was sent to Netrakona on orders from JMB chief Abdur Rahman and JMBJ (Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh) chief Siddikur Rahman alias Bangla Bhai.

Alauddin said he got some other ‘important information’ from Sunny during interrogation, which will be very helpful in the investigation.

A high official of Netrakona police said investigations may have a new turn following Sunny’s confessions. “Sunny gave sufficient information about the bomb blast”, the police official said.

When contacted, Netrakona thana Officer-in-Charge Samiul Alam said, “We got important clues from Sunny and investigation is going on as per his statement of Sunny.” He however said submission of charge sheets may be delayed.

Earlier press reports said that before the December 8 blasts, JMB threatened the Netrakona Police Superintendent of bomb attack on his office and residence in case of action against Islamist militants. The threats were made over phone and the SP had also acknowledged the threat.



Police officials trying to calm down farmers agitating for fertiliser (left) and the barricaded Satkhira-Assassuni road at Dhulihar Bazar in the Sadar upazila yesterday (story on page-1).



PHOTO: STAR

I want punishment of killers, no help

Says ailing mother of Netrakona JMB blast victim Sudipta Paul

JAHANGIR ALAM, *Netrakona*

The JMB suicide bombing in Netrakona on December 8 last year ruined the family of Udichi cultural activist Sudipta Paul Shelly, like many others.

Shelly was among the eight people killed in the blasts in front of Udichi office at Azahar Road in the town. She was the only earning member of the family. Fifty others were injured in the attack.

Shelly’s parents—retired primary school teacher Sunil Chandra Pual, 70, and Aruna Pual—are suffering from cardiac ailments. Sunil has to go to Dhaka often for treatment. Shelly’s only brother Pintu Paul became mentally handicapped after the death of his sister.

They did not get any compensation from the government or any quarter. No government leader or official visited them after the incident.

This correspondent visited Shelly’s parents’ rented house at Azahar Road in Netrakona town recently. Ailing Aruna Paul was lying on bed. She said, her daughter’s murder has crippled their family.

Asked about their treatment, she said some well-wisher relatives were



Sudipta Paul

helping them.

She said they did not seek any help from government. “Killers have taken like of my daughter, my only son became shell shocked, my husband and myself are sick. But no government leader or official visited us.

“I want punishment of the killers, not help”, she said.

Shelly’s friend Chandana Das, a university student and a cultural activist, said, the family is a victim of violence by militants. The government should come to their aid as the incident took place due to its failure.

Imam’s wife reveals JMB attack plan

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

A plan for grenade attack on Satkhira Deputy Commissioner’s (DC) car and the district jail by the banned Jama’atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) suicide squad came to light on Monday.

A woman informed this in a letter sent by post to the DC. She

concealed her name and address and identified herself only as wife of an Imam of a mosque. The letter reached the DC office in the afternoon, police sources said.

In the letter, she stated that her husband along with some young men chalked out the plan. She wrote, ‘I have heard the plan when they took the decision at a meeting

held at my house’.

She said the young men also vowed to sacrifice their lives anytime. ‘I also saw a grenade kept hidden in a heap of straw’, she said.

When contacted, Satkhira DC Md Ilias and Sadar Police Station officer-in-charge (OC) Shajahan confirmed the incident.

A general diary (GD) was filed with Sadar Police Station.

Garo people forgetting their mother tongue

Schools teach in Bangla, no move to revive their alphabets

MIRZA SAHKIL, *Tangail*

Indigenous Garo people in Tangail and Mymensingh districts are forgetting their mother tongue.

This correspondent during a visit to Garo inhabited areas in Modhupur was surprised to see that most of the indigenous children can not speak in their mother language. Some children understand the language but can not speak.

According to Garo leaders in Modhupur, there are at least 1,25,000 indigenous people in their communities in the country. Of them, around 40,000 are in Modhupur region comprising parts of Tangail and Modhupur.

Elderly Ajoy-a-Mre said their children are forgetting the language as Bangla is the medium of education at primary schools. At workplaces also, Garo people use Bangla or English language.

A United Nations Charter gives all communities of the world the right to get educated in their mother languages. Bangladesh is a signatory to the charter. A bill ratifying the Charter was passed in parliament in 1997 but the law is yet to be implemented in case of indigenous people.

On investigation, it was gathered that a few of the Garo people are acquainted with alphabets of their mother tongue, ‘Achik’. The alphabet were lost when their ancestors came to the region from Tibet following a famine there.

The elders in the community

said ‘Achik’ alphabets were lost over the years due to onslaught of a different culture having a different language in an alien land. Moreover, many of their ancestors who knew the alphabets were killed in encounters with locals.

They however said the ‘Achik’ language can be developed here with government patronisation as this is the medium of education for Garo people in Meghalaya across the border. ‘Achik’ language is being used there through Roman alphabets, they said. Garo people in Tripura state of India also use the ‘Achik’ language, they said.

Shanti Sangma, an indigenous woman leader in Modhupur, said she talks to her children in Achik language at home, least they forget the mother tongue. But it is a fruitless exercise because the children will ultimately forget the language as they have to learn in Bangla at school and because they are not acquainted with the ‘Achik’ alphabet, she said.

Samoren Chichim, a Garo teacher in Modhupur, said, “If the mother language is not introduced at primary level education, the children will ultimately forget it.”

Prof. Babul De Nokrek, president of the Adhima Garo Youth Association, said the Garo language can be revived if it is introduced at primary schools. That needs patronisation by the government, he said.



Jasim Mela begins today

STAR NATIONAL DESK

A fifteen-day Jasim Mela, commemorating contributions of folklore poet Jasimuddin, begins in Faridpur today.

The programmes that will also include exhibition of his works and cultural functions will be held at the Jasim Uddyan, at the poet’s ancestral home in Gobindapur village in Ambikapur union in the sadar upazila.

The fair has been organised jointly by Jasim Foundation and Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC).

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Power failure costs jute mills Tk 75 cr in four months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

Twenty-two state owned jute mills in the country incurred a loss of Tk 75 crore in last four months due to power failure.

Besides, eight state owned jute mills in Khulna lost Tk 20 crore in last one month due to irregular attendance of permanent workers, acting secretary of the Ministry of Jute and Textiles, AMM Solaiman Chowdhury said during a visit to jute mills in Khulna on Saturday.

Later at a meeting of jute mill officials at Khalishipur in the same afternoon, Solaiman said the government is taking steps to reopen the closed state owned Daulatpur Jute mill in July this year. Overhauling of the mill will begin later this month, he said.

He also warned officials and CBA leaders of punishment for neglect to duty and corruption.