

JMB cadres regrouping in Barisal in different names

Two top regional leaders out of dragnet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) cadres are regrouping under the leadership of two 'top' regional leaders of the banned Islamist outfit in Barisal, intelligence sources said.

They are carrying out organisational activities under the leadership of Hannan Uddin and Mawlana Mohiuddin Faruki in different names like Hijbut Tahir, Hijbe Abu Omar and Hijbut Tawhid. They change their addresses and residences frequently to evade eyes of law enforcers, intelligence sources said.

Both the leaders are returnees from Afghan war. Hannan Uddin is the son of Kamaluddin of Karupur village in Barisal Sadar upazila and Mawlana Mohiuddin Faruki hails from Chengutia village in Agoljhara upazila.

Hannan is an explosives expert and Mawlana Mohiuddin is trainer of JMB's suicide squad. They were earlier linked with Islami Chhatra Shibir, student's wing of Jamaat-e-Islami.

Mohiuddin was arrested in December last year by Barisal police from Fultala area in Khulna but was released on bail.

He was released allegedly on pressure from a partner of the immediate past ruling alliance though he was shown arrested in the August 17 serial bomb blasts in 2005. Despite being shown arrested in the serial bomb blasts, he was not included in the charge sheet because of the pressure, the sources said. Mohiuddin is not seen in public since his release.

JMB explosives expert Hannan Uddin, who can speak fluently in several foreign languages, was also arrested in Barisal in 1988, but came out of jail after four months.

He then opened a video shop in his native area, which was a only a cover to hide his militant activities, the sources said. He again went into hiding about three months ahead of the August 17 serial bombing and is not seen in public since then.

The intelligence sources said JMB's top leader Siddiqui Islam

Bangla Bhai met Hannan Uddin at a mosque at Kalihata village in Uzirpur before the murder of two judges in bomb blasts on November 14, 2005.

Bangla Bhai stayed in the area for three days and held secret meetings with JMB cadres led by their regional leaders Mohiuddin and Hannan Uddin.

Cadres of Hijbut Tawhid are changing their tactics. On September 2, 2005, Sohrab Khan of Sakokati village in Uzirpur upazila, Amir of Hijbut Tawhid in charge of Barisal, Jhalakati, Madaripur and Gopalganj districts, along with 20 others publicly announced their resignation from the organisation.

Then, one Jamal Sharif of the same village become the new regional Amir of Hijbut Tawhid. Since then, the organisation intensified its activities in the area and recruited a large number of followers including women and collected money.

Recently, leaflets were distributed in different areas of Uzirpur upazila, claiming that Hijbut Tawhid is not a banned organisation.

On March 5, 10 'top' leaders of Hijbut Tawhid left Sakokati village at dead of night with their families, a day after the arrest of two militants of Hijbe Abu Omar-Mawlana Akramuzzaman and Zubair Shikder-in Barisal with grenades and bomb making materials.

Maj. Jamil of Rab-8 said Akramuzzaman confessed to law enforcers during interrogation that he was an Ehsar member of JMB.

On the same day, six other members of Hijbut Tawhid including its regional Amir Farid Hossain also left their native areas in Uzirpur.

Since their arrest, law enforcers are raising different areas to nab Islamist militants. They raided several villages including Ratnapur in Agoljhara recently.

Highly placed sources in Barisal police said they have a list of JMB cadres in the district who are active in the guise of Hijbut Tahir, Hijbe Abu Omar and Hijbut Tawhid. Joint forces are raiding different areas to nab them, the sources said seeking anonymity.

BSF to show 'utmost restraint' on Rajshahi border

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) have signed five-point agreement to maintain peace and vigilance along the 179-kilometer border in Chapainawabganj and Naogaon districts.

The agreement was signed at a sector commander level flag meeting held at BSF camp at Mahadipur till on Wednesday, said a BDR press release here yesterday.

Rajshahi BDR Sector Commander Col Muhammad Iqbal PSC and BSF Maldaha Sector DIG Sri BV Saraswat led the two sides. The meeting lasted for six hours.

Chapainawabganj BDR Commanding Officer (CO) Lt Col Akhter Hossain, Naogaon BDR CO Lt Col Abdulillah Ali Zaeed, Narayanganj BSF CO RC Shing, Patiram CO Sri Brijesh Kumar and Arodpur CO PK Rathore also attended the meeting.

Under the agreement, BDR and BSF will show 'utmost restraint with respect' as regards firing on the international border, the press release said.

BSF troops will not cross the international border under any circumstances. In case of any 'accidental crossing', the border guard would be apprehended and handed over to the other party without delay.

Regarding dispute over reconstruction of river embankment in border areas, BDR would follow decisions of Joint River Commission while BSF would take the case to its headquarters to expedite the matter.

On disputed lands, the meeting decided that both the border guards would wait for a joint survey by before going for any action.

9 arrested Pabna AL, BNP leaders submit statements of assets

All including 2 Ex-MPs being quizzed on remand

A CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

All the nine arrested leaders of Awami League (AL) and BNP submitted statements of their assets and properties to joint forces yesterday.

They include Pabna district AL president and former lawmaker Shamsur Rahman Sharif Bilu and Pabna district BNP president and former lawmaker Sirajul Islam Sarder.

The rest seven are BNP leader and Iswardi Pourasabha chairman Moklesur Rahman Babul; Pabna municipality chairman and district BNP organising secretary Kamrul Hasan Mointo; BNP leader and former chairman of Hemayetpur Union Parishad Alauddin Malitha; Pabna Sonali Bank CBA (collecting

bargaining agent) Aby Ishaq Bappy; central vice-president of Awami League's labour front Sramik League Rashid Ullah; Iswardi AL leader Shafiqul Islam and Bharara Union Parishad chairman and AL leader Abu Sayeed.

All the nine were asked by joint forces earlier to submit statements of assets.

The statements were submitted by their relatives, sources in the joint forces told this correspondent.

The nine AL and BNP leaders were arrested on Monday night and Tuesday. They were produced before court on Tuesday and Wednesday, which placed them on seven day's remand.

Police sources said they are being quizzed for alleged corruption and irregularities.

Besides the nine, two BNP leaders also submitted their statements of assets yesterday.

They are BNP leader and former chairman of Iswardi Pourasabha Abdul Kalam Azad Minto and Iswardi BNP leader Abdul Mannan Tipu. They voluntarily submitted their statements, the sources said.

The two other BNP leaders are now hiding after the joint forces sought statements of their assets, the sources said. They are Akram Ali Khan Sanju, a businessman, and Zakaria Pintu, former central president of BNP's student front Jatiyatabadi Chhatra dal (JCD).

Sources claimed that Akram Ali Khan had close links with Hawa Bhaban in Dhaka.

RHD engineer, 3 officials held in Faridpur for bribery

Ward commissioner arrested on criminal charge

A CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

The army-led joint forces have arrested Superintendent Engineer and three other officials of Roads and Highways Department in Faridpur on charge of bribery. They fro a petroleum filling station manager in Faridpur town.

Assistant Superintendent Engineer Yunus Munshi, Working Assistant Ibrahim Kiah and Office Assistant Abdul Alim of RHD regional office at Faridpur were arrested Thursday night when they were taking bribe from Saiful Islam, manager of a filling station, police sources said.

On the basis of their statements, the joint forces arrested RHD Superintendent Engineer AKM Reazul Islam from his residence on the same night.

The owner of the filling station and police sources claimed that the RHD officials took bribe for renewing the lease of the land of the filling station.

During the arrests, the joint forces also seized Tk 2,75,500 and two blank cheques, signed by the filling station owner.

The four were handed over to Kotwali police Thursday night and cases were filed against them, police said.

Meanwhile the joint forces arrested Faridpur Pouroshava ward commissioner Mainuddin Ahmed Manu from his residence at Kamlapur in the town at about 2 pm yesterday.

He was handed over to police, who said he faces a number of cases.

Charak Puja begins in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

The three day long traditional Bothor Charak Festival (Charak Puja) of the Hindu community started yesterday with enthusiasm and festivity at Bothor village under Chatmohar upazilla in Pabna.

The festival begins on Chaitray 30 and ends with the celebration of Bangla New Year.

God 'Mohadeb' did arrive to the root of the Charak tree to convey the message of freedom of the Hindu communities. Since then Charak Puja has been performing. Historical 'Charak' tree stands at the center of the traditional charak festival.

In this puja devotees devour milk and sugar on the root of Charak tree and laid down their wrath to satisfy the God.

'Bothor Shib Mondir' arrange the traditional Charak festival every year. The festival is an example of communal and cultural harmony.

Several thousand devotees come every year to the festival from 'Shinghal', 'Burma' and India since 1947. Aristocrat Hindus also come here to achieve purity.

"The glory of the Charak festival has eroded enormously. Now it turns into only tradition", told Ashok Chakrabarty, president of the Bothor Shib Mondir.



PHOTO: STAR
Indigenous people joined by Bangalees brought out a colourful procession in Khagrachari town yesterday as part of celebrations to welcome Bangla year 1414.

SCAM IN GOLDEN HANDSHAKE AT MONGLA PORT ACC starts fresh probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Panic is prevailing among a section of officials of Mongla Port Authority (MPA) as Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) has taken preparation to initiate further probe into irregularities allegedly committed in the payment process of a fund of Tk 12 crore allocated by the immediate past government under golden handshake programme.

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Freedom Fighter dies in Moulvibazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Valiant freedom fighter of our liberation war Subedar Abdul Malek Choudhury died yesterday at the age of 88 at his Kalimabad residence in Moulvibazar town.

Abdul Malek Choudhury, Subedar of the then EPR, fought in the liberation war in 1971 at Lalmonirhat and Kurigram frontiers as a company commander.

After liberation he was awarded 'Bir Bikram' and 'Bir Protik' by the government for his heroic participation in the war. Subedar Abdul Malek Choudhury is the only freedom fighter, who had got two titles alone.

He was buried at his family graveyard with state honour.



A 3-day exhibition of paintings by children was opened at the Open Art School at Cox's Bazaar yesterday marking Pahela Baisakh.

6X3

6X2

12X3