

## JMB men regroup

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people have entered Bangladesh from across the border to help the JMB execute its plan to launch massive attacks targeting important installations in the north.

The intelligence men could not identify them but learnt that they have fanned out to different areas.

Speaking to the Bogra correspondent over cellphone, a JMB leader said that another group from a neighbouring country arrived in a northern district on Thursday night.

Wishing not to be named, he said that the visiting five-member team would meet the Majlish-e-Shura (top policy-making body) members to finalise a plot to carry out an attack in a bordering district.

The Shura was reconstituted following the arrest of top JMB leader Matin Mehedi in Kurigram in April.

The man on the phone claimed that the militants have planned to blow up all major bridges excepting the Jamuna Bridge. He added that the banned outfit has decided to reduce its dependency on foreign funds by generating income locally. It has already invested a lot of money in brick kilns in districts excepting Sylhet and Chittagong.

He said the JMB is working hand in glove with Harkatul Jihad and an Islamist party overtly involved in politics. They plan to divert the attention of the law enforcers through blasts in a southern district and then set off a wave of attacks throughout the northern region.

Our Sirajganj correspondent adds: A top official of the Rab-12 told The Daily Star that they have been alerted to the activities of Islamist militants on outlying chars in the four districts.

Intelligence sources said they believe some of the JMB Shura members are now holed up in Jamalpur and Sirajganj. Some

## TV channels

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Animal Planet, National Geographic Channel, Star Sports, HBO, Alpha Bangla, Zee English, Zee News, Zee Sports, Star News, Zee TV, Star Plus, Star Movies, Star World, Sony TV, Zee Cinema, Zee MGH, Zee Movies, MTV and Star Gold.

## BNP govt deprived

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in Sylhet and Chittagong regions, he added.

Yatebur said the immediate past prime minister and BNP chief visited Sylhet nine times during her tenure, and went to Khulna once only to inaugurate the Rupsha bridge.

Although the World Heritage Site - the Sundarbans - located in Khulna region, a STAL (short takeoff and landing) service of Biman could not be introduced to bring thousands of tourists there, he mentioned.

Closed mills and factories in Khulna could not be reopened due to lack of gas connection in the region, he alleged.

According to him, Akram point near Mongla port is the most suitable place for setting up a deep-sea port. But nothing was done in this regard, he regretted.

The BNP leader underscored reforms in the two major political parties. But any reforms excluding the two top leaders would not be effective, he said.

"Family dynasty exists in many countries but we have to see that competent people become successors to leadership. If incompetent people become leaders, it would not bring any good to the country," he observed.

The mayor attended an inter-ministerial meeting on handing over various establishments built

operatives from lower echelons are accompanying them.

Besides, military trainings are well underway at the chars on Brahmaputra near the Jamalpur town. Moinul Humayun Moin, a young Shura member hailing from Shariatpur district, is the main trainer there. He was a student of Jamilul Ulum Madrasa at the city's Mirpur-14.

The sources added that this time a number of elderly men and women have also been inducted into the suicide squad.

## Aminul Haque

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earlier.

The accused also cut trees and started a project styled 'Palashi Agro Fishery' on the land, Alauddin alleged.

He also said the accused demanded Tk 50,000 as toll from him in the name of iftar party as he made a complaint to Aminul about the land grabbing.

The plaintiff said he could not dare to file any case at that time, as there was no congenial political atmosphere.

## Jamuna Bridge

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Earlier, a truck could carry around 210 sacks of rice but since declaration of emergency the authorities do not allow more than 150 sacks. As a consequence, the transport operators have raised the fare to Tk 9,000 a truck from Tk 7,000.

The LGRD adviser further said that the government would gradually shift the wholesale kitchen market at Karwan Bazar to a nearby area in Tejgaon.

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) has already given approval for four new kitchen markets in Dhaka city corporation area. The other three markets would be set up at Gabtoli, Lalbagh and Jatrabari.

The government is now working with the agency concerned to acquire land for that purpose, he said.

## Hearing

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Jamaat simultaneously.

The nine other accused are former minister and Jamaat Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid, Assistant Secretary General Muhammad Qamaruzzaman, Central Nayab-e-Ameer Mokbul Ahmed, Assistant Secretary General ATM Azharul Islam, Dhaka city Ameer Rafikul Islam, Islami Chhatra Shibir (student wing of Jamaat) President Shafikul Islam Masud, General Secretary Zahid Hossain and president of its Dhaka University unit Shishir Monir.

On April 11, investigation officer (IO) of the case Sub-inspector AKM Idris Hossain of Detective Branch of police pressed charges against the 10 Jamaat and Shibir leaders.

The IO showed 45 people as prosecution witnesses in the charge sheet.

Activists of Jamaat and Shibir on October 28 last year had gathered in front of the north gate of Baitul Mukarram mosque and launched an attack on a procession of Awami League-led 14-party alliance. The attack sparked a fierce street battle between the two sides. Shibir activists were seen firing shots while their rivals launched a counter attack with boat-paddles and sticks.

Following a case filed by Workers Party leader Kamrul Ahsan, charges were brought against the accused for organising unlawful assembly, inflicting injuries to people, murder, and aiding and abetting criminal activities.

## Tigers

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the second innings on 100.

Man-of-the-match Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, who hit a career-best 79 to save his side from following on, took the first wicket of Dinesh Karthik (22) to finish the match with a haul of 5 for 133.

Left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique captured the remaining wickets including the two big scalps of Sachin Tendulkar (31) and Sourav Ganguly (13) who went for the big hits.

The second and final Test will start from May 25 at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

## Shahriar Kabir

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Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM), Dhaka.

The other six accused in the case are British journalist Zaiba Naz Malik, Italian journalist Leopoldo Bruno Sorrentino, social welfare activist Pricilla Raj, freelance journalist Saleem Samad, Tofael Ahmed and advocate Rana Das Gupta.

On November 25, 2002, police arrested the two Channel 4 journalists on sedition charges while they were crossing into India from Bangladesh through the Benapole border in Jessore.

The two foreign journalists came to Bangladesh to film a current affairs programme for Channel 4 about the reported al-Qaeda presence in Bangladesh. During their arrest at the Benapole border, customs authorities seized films and other documents from them, which were allegedly "intended for tarnishing the image of Bangladesh".

Shahriar Kabir, Pricilla Raj, Saleem Samad and others were arrested on charge of assisting the Channel 4 journalists. They were later granted bail from different courts on different dates.

A sedition case was filed with Motijheel Police Station on November 15, 2002 against the two foreign journalists, Pricilla and Saleem.

On December 11, 2002, the government deported Zaiba Naz Malik and Leopoldo Bruno Sorrentino following their undertaking that they would not broadcast any of the material collected from the country.

## Voter list

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election will be held earlier than the timeframe," Choudhury said.

After the meeting, ERD Secretary Aminul Islam Bhuiyan told reporters that the EC will send the donor agencies a demand letter in June. "The financial assistance will have to be unconditional," he said.

Sources meanwhile said the EC has decided to launch a pilot project in the first week of June to study feasibility of the voter list project. The EC will also request Bangladesh Army to provide technical assistance for the pilot project to be implemented in Siripur municipality of Gazipur district, a source said.

The EC will arrange a meeting next week to inform all officials concerned about the project. "The upazila nirbahi officer, chairman and ward commissioners of the Siripur municipality, the district and upazila election officers, and the assistant registration officers will be asked to attend the meeting," the source said.

The project steering committee headed by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda at a meeting yesterday afternoon discussed the implementation of the pilot project.

The EC has already announced that the field level task for simultaneously preparing the voter list with photographs and national identity cards will begin in August.

## Charge-framing

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Alamgir showed his bank account balance to be Tk 90,000 whereas investigations found that the figure is actually Tk 2.45 lakh.

CASE AGAINST MAMUN

Judge Mohammad Ashraf Hossain of the Fifth Special Court recorded statements of two prosecution witnesses including complainant of the graft case filed against controversial businessman Giasuddin Al Mamun.

The case was filed against him on April 5 for not submitting his wealth statement within the ACC's stipulated time.

Following the filing of the case, the court issued an arrest warrant against him and directed the authorities concerned to send a copy of the arrest warrant to the police station concerned. It also directed the police station to submit a progress report to the court.

On February 18, the ACC had directed Mamun to submit his wealth statement within 72 hours, but neither he nor any representative on his behalf submitted the

## Ctg mayor

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bench did not have jurisdiction over the detention matter.

Later, the chief justice sent the matter to the division bench, headed by Justice MA Matin, for disposal.

On May 17, the High Court upon a petition had granted him bail for three months in a graft case on health grounds. But, he could not come out of jail as the detention order against him was in force.

The joint forces arrested CCC Mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury at his residence in the port city on March 7 on charge of corruption.

On March 14, the mayor was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital from Bandarban jail following a heart attack. Later, he was shifted to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University in the capital as his condition deteriorated.

Barrister M Amir-Ul Islam appeared for petitioner Hasina Mohiuddin, wife of the mayor.

## Verdict in tender

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snatching case.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) pressed charges against 11 JCD leaders and activists on August 10 last year who were arrested in connection with preventing participants from buying schedules and bidding in a tender at the Construction Maintenance Management Unit (CMMU) of the health ministry on July 30 last year.

The charge-sheeted accused are Imtiazur Rahman Prokash, Sahabur Rahman, Humayun Kabir, Mafizur Rahman, F Kabir Khan Shilpi, Sajjad Hossain Robin, Shariful Islam Sabui, Majedul Islam, Abu Bakar Siddiqui, Asaduzzaman Asad and AKM Azad Swadhin.

A team of Rab picked up 13 people on July 30 at CMMU of the health ministry for creating obstacles to those who intended to buy or drop schedules.

Sources said August 1 was the last date for buying the schedules for three projects involving around Tk 400 crore under the development budget. August 2 was the last date for dropping the tender

statements. The anti-graft body at a meeting on March 29 gave approval for filing a case against him, sources said.

CASE AGAINST AMAN

Judge Firoz Alam of the First Special Court recorded statements of four prosecution witnesses of the case filed against Amanullah Aman and his wife.

After recording their statements, the court fixed today for next hearing of the case.

CASE AGAINST NASIR

Judge AK Roy of the Second Special Court recorded statements of four prosecution witnesses in the case filed against Mir Nasir and his son.

The court then fixed today for next hearing of the case.

## Top JMB leader

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Earlier on April 13 in 2006, Shafiullah Tarek, grandson of another JMB commander and militant Kingpin Asadullah Al Galib, admitted his involvement in the murder.

The JMB leader in his statement said JMB chief Shayakh Abdur Rahman, executed recently, ordered him over mobile phone to slay Yunus a month before the killing.

Mahbub said he and Golam Mostafa, adherent of Galib's Ahle Hadith Juba Sangha, used to follow Yunus' movement.

Ibrahim, lynched in 2005 by a mob, first hit on Yunus' head in the early hours on December 24, 2004 near Binodpur Ahle Hadith Mosque, according to the JMB leader.

Then Zayed alias Zahid, Abdul Matin alias Boma Matin, Abul Kashem Tufan stabbed Yunus till death, Mahbub said adding Shafiullah Tarek, Abu Isa Enamul and Golam Mostafa helped them.

Mostafa and Enamul earlier denied murder charges against them.

Mahbub also mentioned names of his two squad members-- Fazle Rabbi alias Sanaulah of Gaibandha and Abbas of Chapainawabganj. Both are absconding.

Yunus was an economics teacher and president of RU Bangabandhu Parishad.

schedules, which were being sold at 36 places across the country, the sources added.

CASE AGAINST PABAN

Metropolitan Magistrate Syed Mohamamd Mujibul Rab passed the order on charge framing date after three of the accused in the case surrendered before the court and sought bail.

Paban was absent in the courtroom yesterday and his layers filed a time petition saying he was sick.

The three who surrendered are Paban's alleged accomplices Zahirul Islam Robin, 24, Abdul Halim, 23, and Masum, 26.

Sub-inspector of Detective Branch of police Syed Selim Masud, also the investigation officer of the case, pressed charges against the four on December 28 last year showing 10 people as prosecution witnesses.

Three criminals at gunpoint carjacked a Toyota Premio from the owner at Motijheel in the city on October 13, 2005. The Detective Branch of police on Bailey Road arrested Paban on June 7 last year with the stolen vehicle.

## Scheme stalled

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in the international tender, but it will get the approval only if no other company can beat it in the bidding.

The government is also thinking of shifting the alignment of the expressway making it parallel to the existing Dhaka-Chittagong highway.

For constructing the six-lane expressway, as proposed by the Malaysian company, it will require requisitioning of at least 2,500 acres of farm land, an estimate that puts the government in a dilemma of whether to construct the expressway at the expense of so much agricultural land.

The Malaysian company committed to finish the construction work within a three-year period and to handover the 210-kilometre long expressway to the government after operating it for 30 years on the basis of build, operate and transfer (BOT) principle. The proposed investment would also be recovered from the toll collected from the vehicle operators who would use the expressway.

The proposed expressway would reduce the journey time between the two most important cities of the country to 3 to 4 hours from the existing 6 to 7 hours.

The feasibility study group led by Kazi M Hasan presented the first report in the second week of this month. The study found that at least 11 major bridges with more than 60-metre of lengths each and three flyovers will also need to be built to construct the expressway.

The study report however has yet to assess the actual cost of building such a modern express-

way in the country.

The group conducted preliminary surveys and drew conceptual designs of the expressway in two different alignments. According to the first design, the alignment of the expressway would be parallel to the existing Dhaka-Chittagong highway and the alternative alignment would have the expressway go through Munshiganj, Chandpur and Sonagazi connecting it with the existing highway at Mirersharai in Chittagong.

The Malaysian company proposed to construct the expressway according to the alternative alignment without involving any government expenditure.

Sources at the Board of Investment (BoI) however said the Malaysian investment proposal was not registered with the board. Although foreign investment proposals usually come through BoI, they get registrations after approval from the government agency concerned, said a BoI source.

## Foreign adviser

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Meanwhile, Bangladesh has pledged US \$1 million, in cash and kind, to flood-stricken Maldives after Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed called Maldives President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom to express his sympathy to flood victims.

Earlier, Gayoom sent Fakhruddin a letter describing the extent of the damage and terming the flood as an 'environmental emergency' that requires support and assistance from 'friends'.

## Another rags to riches story

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said an investigator of the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC).

"He is very cunning and probably has more properties in the country which did not come to our notice," an investigator quipped.

Investigators are also probing into his possible link with the murder of ex-finance minister of the last Awami League government SAMS Kibria. "Although there is no direct evidence linking Harris to the murder, we have knowledge that he had good connection with many of the accused and suspects in the murder," said an investigator.

Harris' ill gained properties include five houses in Dhaka and fixed deposits worth Tk 10 crore in banks. These are under the names of his wife, children, brothers-in-law, and his personal staff.

Harris owns a large number of shares of different companies worth crores of taka. For instance, he has shares in National Tea Company, Mutual Trust Bank, Ocean BD Ltd, etc. His shares in Ocean BD Ltd alone are worth more than Tk 10 crore.

Harris in his last tax return showed that he had total savings worth Tk 12 lakh. But tax officials found that according to his own tax statement his savings stood at Tk 18 lakh.

Harris started his political career in BNP by joining the party's youth front Jubo Dal during late president Ziaur Rahman's regime. He was made the joint secretary general of BNP in 1993 -- a profile he continues to possess, as the party has yet to oust him despite his conviction.

Along with his political profile, Harris maintained a humble car sales centre, Asha Car, owned by his wife, in Bijoy Nagar in the capital. On his tax returns he had shown himself as a 'small business operator' till he became the political secretary to the ex-prime minister. He however did not specify the nature of his business on the tax returns.

In BNP circles, Harris has been known for asking for money from the better off leaders on various occasions. In the 1990s, he took a large sum of money from others for his treatment abroad. Interestingly even after becoming the political secretary in 2001, he would call up the 'moneyed' ministers during special occasions including the Eid-ul-Adha to give him money, according to a senior BNP leader.

He used to live in a rented house in Shantinagar.

When Hawa Bhaban was set up

in 2000 right before the 2001 national election, Harris was deputed there from a group of BNP leaders. Insider sources said Hawa Bhaban was founded basically to collect money from persons interested in contesting the 2001 election with BNP tickets. Officially it was however claimed that Hawa Bhaban is the party's research and coordination centre, which is headed by the party's Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman.

Insiders claim that young and older leaders trusted by Tarique, including Harris Chowdhury, raked in a humongous amount of money from election nominees. They claim that at least a third of the BNP candidates bribed them for nominations.

With election money bloating his personal account, Harris moved out of his humble Shantinagar residence into a house in posh DOHS area in the capital.

By the time the election was over, Harris became very close to Khaleda. Sources said coupled with his proximity to the erstwhile prime minister, Harris had strong recommendations from Tarique for the position of the political secretary number one to the prime minister with the rank and status of a state minister.

After assuming the position, he enjoyed both the power of his post and of Hawa Bhaban -- making him immensely powerful overnight.

"The first year was not unusual. But from the second year [2003], Harris became restless and reckless to make a personal fortune," said an ACC investigator.

Harris has a house in Block A of Bashundhara Residential Area under his daughter Samira Tanjin's name. "He did not buy this land. A developer gave him this land, while another person built him the house," the investigator added.

He also bought a palatial house in upscale Gulshan of the capital under a third person's name for a nominal price from the government during his tenure as an official of the PMO, sources said.

Documents of Harris' shares in National Tea Company worth Tk 1 crore were found in his Asha Car Centre office. But the shares were issued under the name of Mosharaf Hossain Thakur, president of BNP's cultural front Jasad.

Harris has four brothers. He has been in bad terms with one of the brothers Hasnat Chowdhury, and little link with his another brother who lives in Iran. He also has a brother living in Sylhet. Another of his brothers Selim Chowdhury has

## Int'l audit

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When contacted, officials of the companies declined to comment on the issue.

Rashid said issuance of wrong CRF will decrease if the NBR maintains an updated valuation database and send customs officials to foreign offices concerned.

"The NBR is preparing such a valuation database to keep the NBR updated on goods prices across the world."

The NBR member further said customs department runs short of manpower and the existing manpower does not have enough expertise on customs rules.

"The NBR with the help of the World Bank has taken up two capacity building projects, and on completion of those NBR officials will be able to carry out the inspection duties properly," he added.

## 6 of a family

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the house yesterday noon and smelt stench coming out of the house. Police rushed to the spot after he informed them.

Several hundred people of the locality thronged the spot hearing the news.

Officials of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and Detective Branch (DB) of Police visited the house and collected evidence.

According to the victims' relatives, they had moved to the town some three months back from Chinishpur village selling out their ancestral lands and since had been living in the one-storey rented house surrounded by concrete walls. An expatriate Bangladeshi Maznu Mian owns the house.

Rais Uddin, who had an electric appliance shop, sold his land at around Tk 5 lakh to send his son Rajib abroad, but Abul Kalam took a major portion of the money as loan from him, they added.

## 2 outlaws

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Sensing the presence of the joint team, the outlaws opened fire, forcing the law enforcers to retaliate.

Bishu and Jamal received bullets during the 'shootout' and died instantly, the sources said. Two guns and some bullets were recovered from the spot.

## Baghdad market

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insurgent groups, feeling the pressure from the crackdown, have hit back by stepping up their car-bombing attacks with their devastating death tolls. A May 6 bombing in a market in the Baiyaa district, killed 30 people and injured 80 others.

A few minutes before the bombing in Amil, which adjoins the neighbourhood where the May 6 blast occurred, gunmen in two cars drove through the nearby Khadra neighbourhood and ambushed a civilian car carrying three plain-clothes police officers from the major crimes unit, killing two and wounding the third, police said.

Police and other Iraqi security officers have been heavily targeted by insurgents, who accuse them of collaborating with US-led forces in the country.

Another police officer was killed when a roadside bomb exploded next to a police patrol driving through an eastern Baghdad neighbourhood about 9 am, police said. Three other officers were injured in the attack.

Later Tuesday, two mortar shells slammed into a teacher's college affiliated with Baghdad University, killing three students and injuring seven others, police said.

The violence came as US politicians debated how long US troops will remain in Iraq. A senior American official warned Monday that the Bush administration may reconsider its support if Iraqi leaders do not make major reforms by fall.

The US official, who briefed reporters on condition his name not be published, did not say what actions could be taken by the White House, but his comments reflected the Bush administration's need to show results in Iraq as an answer to pressure by the Democrats in Congress seeking to set timetables on the US military presence.