

JMB regroups in Kishoreganj, adjoining five districts

Niklee, Bajitpur being used as bases, detained cadres disclose

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kishoreganj*

Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) activists are regrouping and recruiting members from haor (water body) areas of Kishoreganj and adjoining five districts.

Two haor upazilas—Niklee and Bajitpur in Kishoreganjare 'strategically important' for JMB because, from there, it conducts its activities in remote areas of Kishoreganj, Netrokona, Brahmanbaria, Sylhet, Sunamganj and Habiganj.

The information were disclosed by the three arrested JMB cadres during interrogation, police said.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested Deen Islam, Harun, Abdul Hannan and Md. Hossain and recovered 5 kg power gell and 15 shells of powerful hand grenade in a raid in Hilochia village in Bajitpur on the night of July 17. All were residents of Satura village.

Harun, Abdul Hannan and Md. Hossain were Eahser members of JMB.

They told interrogators that Deen Islam, 50, Imam of Satura Jame Masjid, was the 'area commander' of JMB in Kishoreganj.

Harun, Abdul Hannan and Md. Hossain were placed on three days' remand on July 19. Din Islam was not remanded and sent to jail as he was sick.

Quoting the three JMB cadres, Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Bajitpur police station Ataur Rahman who is also investigation officer (IO) of the case told this correspondent that JMB network was shattered after execution of their leaders Shaikh Abdul Rahman and Bangla Bhai. They are regrouping now, the three cadres told the IO.

They said, targeting the poor and illiterate rural people in the vast haor areas of the six districts, an NGO funded by a Middle East country started functioning at Doulatpur

village in Niklee upazila using two madsaras during the four-party alliance government.

Officials of the NGO left the village when several top militants were arrested after the August 17 serial bomb blasts in 2005, the detained militants told the OC Ataur Rahman.

Students of the madrasas were collected from poor families in haor areas.

The NGO officials also held regular meetings of rural people to 'teach' them Islam. In the process, JMB members were recruited.

OC Ataur Rahman also said JMB Majlish-e-Shura member Shafiqul Islam alias Rakib alias Shohag of Bogra used to visit the madrasas often. He also said, JMB cadre Maolana Farid Ahmed of Bajitpur upazila sheltered JMB cadres coming from different parts of the country. Maolana Farid went to Saudi Arabia two months ago, the police official said.

He said, Shafiqul Islam Rakib, arrested on July 12 in Mymensingh, had supplied the 15 grenade shells and 5 kg power gell to the JMB cadres.

The detained JMB men disclosed names of five other party cadres in the region but police declined to name them.

JMB cadre Obaidullah Sumon was arrested from a mosque at Gurui in Niklee upazila on September 14, 2005 along with explosives. He later confessed before a court in Kishoreganj that he was involved in the August 17 serial bomb blasts in the town. Sumon is serving 15 years' prison term in Kishoreganj jail.

'District commander' of Hijbut Touhid, Md. Jashim Uddin of Madyha Chari Para village in Katiadi upazila, was arrested on May 24 this year from Haibotnagar in Kishoreganj town. He is in Kishoreganj jail. Katiadi upazila is adjacent to Bajitpur upazila.

CHARGES OF ARSON, LOOTING OF HOUSES IN 3 NATORE VILLAGES

Verdict of case against Dulu, 93 others on Thursday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Rajshahi*

A court in Natore has fixed the date for pronouncement of verdict in a case filed against former BNP deputy minister Ruhul Kuddus Talukhdar Dulu and 93 others on Thursday (July 26).

The accused were charged with arson and looting 18 houses in three villages in Natore.

The court of additional district magistrate in Natore Rawnak Mahmud heard arguments by state and defence lawyers yesterday before fixing the date.

As many as 28 accused including Dulu were produced before the court.

The court examined the accused under Section 342 of

Criminal Procedure Code to know about the allegations against them. All the accused, however, claimed innocence.

While arguing, public prosecutor (PP) Abdul Kader and assistant PP Shamsul Haq Bhuiyan said the depositions of all 26 witnesses corroborated each other and proved allegations against the accused without any doubt.

They sought tough punishment for the accused. Court inspector Abdur Rashid also presented a written argument demanding the same.

In defence, lawyers Shakhawat Hossain and Mozammel Hossain pleaded that most of the witnesses are relatives of the plaintiff and they have political rivalry with the accused.

The plaintiff and witnesses are convicted accused in Dulu's nephew Gama murder case and so they gave false depositions, they claimed.

Natore district Jatiya Chhatra Samaj president Asaduzzaman Shah filed the case with Naldanga police station on February 25 in 2004 accusing 105 persons.

On May 3, officer-in-charge of Naldanga Police Station Arman Hossain submitted two separate charge sheets one for arson and looting and another under Explosives Act accusing 94 persons.

Later, the charge sheets were sent to ADM and district judge's courts for trial. Charges were framed at the ADM court on June 27.

According to charges, the accused persons launched a series of attacks in Ramsa Kazipur (Dulu's village home), Shahpara and Amtali Bazar villages at Dulu's instigations to retaliate the murder of the former minister's nephew Sabbir Ahmed Gama on February 7, 2004.

Dulu's armed cadres unleashed a reign of terror in the areas blasting bombs and firing gunshots, it was alleged in the charges.

The arrested included Dulu's brothers Nabi Talukder, Rafik Talukder, cousins Atikur Rahman, Nurunnabi Talukder, Abidur Rahman, Mojibor Rahman, nephews Rentu, Belal, Helal and Bulbul, nephews-in-law Rahim Newaz and Natore Pourasabha ward commissioners Sadrul Huda Dambel and Nasim Khan.

Assembly of over 5 barred in Khalishpur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

Panic has gripped workers of laid-off state owned jute mills in Khalishpur industrial area since closure of two gruel kitchens on July 20 and law enforcers' presence in the area. The workers and CBA leaders fear police action.

The gruel kitchens were opened on July 19 by a newly formed committee styled National Relief Committee to provide food to families of retrenched workers of Peoples JuteM.

The gruel kitchens were closed under pressure and threat by law enforcing agencies, coordinator of the relief committee Alamgir Kabir alleged.

Police do not all assembly of more than five persons in the area though Section 144 has not been clamped, sources said.

Police did not allow assembly of more than five journalists of print and electronic media.

The sources claimed that police launched operation in Peoples Jute Mills colony from July 21 either to pick up or harass volunteers who worked for distribution of food in gruel kitchens in favour of the relief committee.

The volunteers are being threatened not to make any more attempt to distribute food among workers.

Talking to this correspondent seeking anonymity, two CBA (collective bargaining agent) leaders of Peoples Jute Mills said all volunteers of relief committee were on the run fearing police action. Even coordinator of the relief committee is also on the run, they claimed.

Officer-in-Charge of Khalishpur police station Azam Khan said that it was his duty to maintain law and order. He is acting on orders from superiors, he said.

Assembly of more than five persons in the prevailing tense situation should be restricted although Section 144 has not been clamped in Khalishpur industrial belt, OC Azam Khan said.

Acting police commissioner Raushan Ara Begum said there was nothing to be worried about intensified movement of police in the industrial belt as it is their normal routine duty.

She denied allegation of any excess by police during normal duty but expressed her determination not to allow any one to disrupt law and order.



STAR PHOTO

Children at a painting competition in Pabna marking the 101st death anniversary of poet Bande Ali Mia.

Another extortion case filed against ex-Jhenidah MP

A CORRESPONDENT, *Jhenidah*

Another extortion case has been filed against former BNP lawmaker Shahidul Islam Master.

Sheikh Shamsul Islam of Fatehpur village in Moheshpur upazila lodged the case with Moheshpur police station Saturday evening.

Shahidul Islam was elected from Jhenidah-3 constituency in 2001 parliemnetary polls.

Shahidul Islam master also faces another extortion case filed on July 7.

Police also filed a case against the former lawmaker on February 23 after joint forces recovered government relief materials during a raid in his house.

Eleven others have been accused in the case filed on Saturday. They are Giasuddin, Mohiuddin, Rafiqul Islam, Lutfur Rahman, Golam Faruk, Mozan Haq, Shahidul Islam, Ruhul Amin, Shahidul, Jahurul Islam, Abdul Latif and Moshir Rahman.

In the case Shamsul Islam alleged that Shahidul Islam Master on October 4 demanded Tk 20 lakh from him days after he became a lawmaker in 2001.

As he (Shamsul) refused to pay, the BNP activists on order from the then lawmaker looted fishes worth about Tk 50 lakh from his fishery project on October 10.

Shamsul also mentioned in the case that he did not file any compliant against them fearing reprisal as they were ruling party men at that time.

On contact, sub-inspector Ruhul Amin of Moheshpur police station confirmed filing of the case and said they are probing the allegation.

Sources claimed that Shahidul Islam Master is absconding since promulgation of emergency in January as he faces several allegations of corruption.

Acting on a tip-off, Moheshpur police raided Moheshpur BNP office on February 22 this year and recovered CI sheets meant

for relief.

SI Monirul Islam of Moheshpur police station filed a case with on the same day.

Joint forces raided the house of Shahidul Islam Master on February 23 and recovered 200 sarees, 80 blankets, 100 pieces lungi, some sports goods and 18 pieces relief CI sheets.

SI Mortuza Ali of Moheshpur thana filed a case in the evening on the same day.

Fish trader Kartik Halder of Solaimanpur village filed an extortion case against Shahidul Islam Master on July 13.

In the case he alleged that the then lawmaker had demanded Tk 5 lakh from him on May 4, 2001. As he refused to pay the toll, party men engaged by Shahidul Islam Master forcibly occupied his Solaimanpur Baur (water body) in which he cultivated fish, Kartik Halder alleged.

He also stated in the complaint that he did not file a case against Shahidul earlier fearing reprisal.

Ancient Bengal treasures finally being flown to Paris for display

ANWAR ALI, *Rajshahi*

Finally, the 24 rare ancient Bengal treasures of Barind Research Museum (BRM) under Rajshahi University (RU) are being flown to Paris for display at a museum there for 'a great global exposure' of Bangladesh.

The priceless objects of historical interest will be flown in the first week of next month.

A team from France's Guimet Museum are already in Bangladesh and it is due to visit BRM soon for packaging the treasures, said BRM Director Mohammad Zakaria.

These are scheduled to be taken to Dhaka on August 1 and to be flown for Paris on August 4, he said.

Some 120 objects selected from Bangladesh National Museum, Mahasthangarh, Paharpur and Mainamati Archeological Museum and BRM will be put on display at the mMuseum, said sources.

France's famous Guimet Museum, dedicated to Asian arts, will sponsor a four-month exhibition styled 'Sonar Bangla' from Oct 24 this year to March 3 next year.

The BRM assets include two 5th century manuscripts and 22 other old sculptures of 7th to 12th centuries. They include a unique gold-coated bronze statue of Manjusri.

The 'Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita' manuscript is a rare collection of texts of Mahayana doctrine in 32 chapters and 8000 lines. It has 49 polychrome miniatures representing gods and goddesses of ancient Vajra family. Dhyan Buddha Aksobhya was the founder of the family.

The sculptures include 7th, 9th and 11th century Suriya, 10th century Bara Havtara and 12th century black stone statues of Ganga, Ardha Nariwar (half female and half male god), Shiva, Shiva Ardhanari Nritta Ganapati and Karttiketa.

Former Rajshahi Bar Association secretary Muhammad Yahiya in a public interest litigation on April 4 had challenged the RU



PHOTO: STAR

A 7th century statue of Ardho Nari Iswar, one of the 24 rare Bengal treasures at the BRM, to be flown to Paris for display

decision to send BRM treasures abroad. But it was rejected on July 11. Besides, some 326 RU teachers on many occasions protested the decision.

Dr Sultan Ahmed, a senior teacher of Islamic History and Culture department at Rajshahi University, in an appeal published yesterday in local Bengali daily Sonali Sangbad said the selected BRM treasures are of great historic and archeological value and these should not be sent abroad.

Many archeological assets of this region were taken to different European museums during British and Pakistan periods, but none were returned, he pointed out.

Rajshahi University Vice-chancellor Prof Altaf Hossain said, BRM Advisory Committee and RU Syndicate took the decision in February following a government directive to help Bangladesh get a global exposure.

Earlier, in October 2006, RU Syndicate rejected the French

appeal, reasoning that any transfer or exchange of treasures was prohibited by the Charitable Endowments Act of 1880.

Established in 1910 by Dighapatiya Zamindar Kumar Sarat Kumar Roy, the BRM has 10,000 archaeological treasures that attract at least 300 visitors a day.

Poor facilities at hospital protested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Magura*

People yesterday staged a demonstration in front of Shalikhia Upazila Health Complex (SUHC) protesting poor treatment facilities at the hospital.

People of seven unions in the upazila are being deprived of proper treatment at the hospital due to lack of adequate doctors and various alleged irregularities.

Official sources said only two medical officers (MOs) along with a dental surgeon are now running the hospital while six other posts of doctors including three posts of junior consultants are lying vacant.

Out of the remaining doctors, a medical officer went on 15 days leave on health ground and took admission at Jessore General Hospital showing himself a sick person. He allegedly left the hospital and reportedly appeared at the FCPS (Fellow of College Physician and Surgeon) examination held at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) from July 7 to 9.

When contacted, Magura civil surgeon admitted the irregularities and whimsical activities of the MO.

Transport leader held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Sylhet*

Police yesterday arrested Sylhet Zila Paribahan Sramik Union general secretary Reazul Karim Rezwan for misappropriation of union fund.

Police said, Rezwan was arrested in a case filed by general secretary of central committee of Inter-district Road Management Workers Association.

Babul Miah, general secretary of the central committee filed a case against Sylhet Zila Paribahan Sramik Union President Selim Ahmed Folik, general secretary Reazul Karim Rezwan, treasurer Ismail Miah and publicity secretary Abdul Khaliq Laqui for misappropriating Tk 11 lakh, police said.

AUGUST 17 BLASTS IN SYLHET

Argument in two out of six cases starts Aug 26

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Sylhet*

Argument in two cases of the August 17 serial blasts in 2005 will be held on August 26 in Sylhet Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal.

Judge Biplob Goswami fixed the date yesterday as deposition of prosecution witnesses ended.

The two cases are among the six filed in connection with blasts that took place in different areas of Sylhet city on August 17. The two cases were filed in connection with blasts near the Collectorate building and at Ambarkhana.

Two persons were injured in the

blasts near the Collectorate building.

During quizzing, both the accused—Abdul Hai and Mohsin Khan, Ehsar members of outlawed JMB—confessed to their involvement in the blasts. They also made similar confessional statements before a first class magistrate.

Mohsin Khan, 27, is son of late Rusmot Ali of Kaziatal village of Muradnagar upazila and Abdul Hai, 27, is son of late Abdul Malek of Asadnagar village under Bhrahmanpara upazila in Comilla district. Both were teachers at Sengram Dakhil Madrasa in

Jaintapur upazila in Sylhet. While serving as teachers, they got involved with JMB, they said.

Sylhet Kotwali Police submitted charge sheet of the case to Sylhet Sadar cognizance magistrate court against the two accused.

The same tribunal on July 10 gave the two accused 10 years RI in one of the cases of August 17 blasts. The judge also fined the JMB cadres Tk 5,000 each in default to serve one year prison term.

This was the first verdict in one case among 10 filed in Sylhet in connection with the August 17 blasts.

PROTEST AGAINST HASINA'S ARREST

Joint forces raid RU dormitories

RU CORRESPONDENT

Joint forces raided different dormitories of Rajshahi University Sunday night and searched for Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists.

The raid followed a demonstration by BCL on the campus Saturday night protesting arrest of Awami League president Sheikh Hasina.

During the demonstration, the BCL activists chanted slogans against the caretaker government and demanded resignation of the law adviser.

Campus sources said, joint forces led by army first entered Shaheed Habibur Rahman Hall, followed by Shah Mukdum Hall.

But they could not recover any

firearm. None was arrested.

Earlier, on Saturday night, police searched for some BCL leaders and activists at their residences near the university and in other city areas but could not arrest anyone.

Campus sources said, many resident students left their dormitories fearing further raid.

Some students of Shaheed Habibur Rahman Hall told this correspondent that during the raid, police asked them about BCL leaders and activists and if there was any more programme for demonstration.

Contacted, RU Proctor Enamul Haque said he was not aware about the raid.

RU BCL secretary Ayeen Uddin however protested the raid and hunt for party activists.

Budget session held at remote UP in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

An open budget session was held at Joynagar Union Parishad (UP), a remote union in Kalaroa upazila yesterday.

Joynagar UP chairman Tapan Kumar Saha placed a Tk 11,86,633.10 budget for the fiscal 2007-08.

Manusher Jonno Foundation and Agragati Sangstha, two NGOs, organised the budget session to ensure transparency and accountability of the local government body.

The UP chairman presided over the session while about 1,200 people discussed various aspects of the budget at the UP office. The UP chairman replied to various queries of the participants. He said that he would try to make the union a 'model' in the country.

Agragati Sangstha director Abdu Sabur was present as chief guest.

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