

AUG 17 SERIAL BLASTS BY JMB

Only 1 out of 10 cases disposed of in Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Only one case out of 10 filed in connection with the August 17 serial bomb blasts in 2005 in Sylhet city has so far been disposed of. Charge sheets in three others were submitted, sources said.

JMB 'commander' Saifullah, who was in charge of the outlawed party in Sylhet and Mymensingh and JMB chief's bodyguard Abdul Aziz Hanif led the bombings in Sylhet, they said. Among them, death sentence of Saifullah has been executed.

Abdul Aziz Hanif now in Sylhet central jail, is being tried. JMB 'chief' in Sylhet region Moulana Saidur Rahman is yet to be nabbed.

Among the 10 cases filed in connection with the blasts in the city, charge sheets in only four have been submitted.

The case filed in connection with blasts at the garden of Sylhet District Judge's court has been

disposed off. Sylhet Divisional Speedy Trial

Tribunal Judge on July 10 convicted Moulana Mohsin Khan and Abdul Hai and gave them 10 years' rigorous imprisonment. The verdict also fined them Tk 5,000 each in default to suffer six months more.

Trial in two other cases—one for blasts at the district record room and the other for the blasts at Ambarkhana in the city is going on in the same.

Another case is being tried at the court of Additional District and Sessions Judge's court.

On the day of charge framing in the court of Additional District and Sessions Judge on August 14, JMB commander and Shaikh Rahman's body guard Abdul Aziz alias Hanif admitted his involvement in with the blast at Kodomtoli bus terminal. The case is likely to be disposed of within weeks, sources said.

Trials of the two cases were delayed due to transfer of the Speedy Trial Tribunal Judge, the

sources added.

Charge sheet in the rest six cases are yet to be filed. Of them, five were transferred to the Detective Branch of Sylhet Metropolitan Police and the other is being investigated by Sylhet Kotwali police.

Investigation Officer Sub-Inspector Nazim Uddin will soon submit the charge sheet in the case. On August 17, 2005, bombs went off at 10 points in Sylhet city and eight points each in Sunamganj, Moulvibazar and Habiganj district towns. Sunamganj police filed six cases. Charge sheet in all the cases have been filed and these are now under trial at the Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal, Sylhet.

Deposition of witnesses will be recorded in the cases on August 21 and 22. These will be disposed of within weeks, court sources said.

Of them, Md Shahidullah, Mahbubur Rahman and Ruhul

Charges yet to be framed in 4 Khulna blast cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Charges against the accused in four cases filed in connection with the August 17 bomb blasts in 2005 in Khulna are yet to be framed allegedly due to weak investigation and lack of documents, sources said. The cases are being tried in the court of District and Sessions Judge, Khulna.

Four cases were filed with Khulna Sadar, Sonadanga, Daulatpur and Batiaghata police station in connection the blasts.

Nine activists of Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen (JMB) including Shaikh Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhai Siddiqui Islam were named as accused in all those four cases. Charge sheets against them were pressed in courts separately.

The seven other accused in the four cases are Mohammad Shahidullah alias Lokman, Mahbubur Rahman alias Liton, Ruhul Quddus alias Khalid Hasan, Hafez Mahmud Hasna, Asadul Islam alias Asad, Tanvir Hossain and Saiful Islam.

Of them, Md Shahidullah, Mahbubur Rahman and Ruhul

Quddus are in Khulna district jail while four others are absconding.

Shahidullah and Mahbubur Rahman gave statements to court under Section 164, confessing to their involvement in blasts at four spots in Khulna.

All these four case were recorded under Section 3 and Section 6 of Explosive Substances Act.

Trial of the four cases is being delayed as charges against seven out of nine accused could not be framed yet.

Besides, the court is yet to receive necessary papers from jail authorities regarding hanging of Shaikh Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhai Siddiqui Islam who were among the nine chargesheeted accused in four bomb blast case pending trial.

Two bomb blast cases in Kushtia district are now under trial at Khulna Speedy Trial Tribunal. Recording of statements of prosecution witnesses of the two cases will begin on August 20, sources said.



As flood water recedes, farmers in Gaibandha Sadar upazila are procuring Aman seedlings from far away places for cultivation. Seedlings are scarce this year as vast areas of seed beds were damaged by flood.

PHOTO: STAR

Ex-IOJ MP Wakkas sued in Kishoreganj for 'swindling'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

A lawsuit was filed with a court in Kishoreganj against former Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) lawmaker Mufti Md. Wakkas (Josore-5) and three others including his son-in-law on charge of swindling money. Wakkas was elected from Jessore-5 in 2001 election.

Moulana Sahadat Ali of Gojaria village in Bajitpur upazila filed the case on Thursday with the court of Magistrate Habibunnahar. The magistrate ordered the Officer-in-Charge of Bajitpur police station to investigate the matter.

Other accused are Md. Jubair Ahmed, 35, son-in-law of Wakkas, and NGO officials Babul and Milon of Dhaka.

In the case, the plaintiff alleged that he came in contact with Jubair when he (Jubair) came to Bajitpur in 2005 to organise people to attend a conference of Jomiat-e-Olama at Paltan Maidan in Dhaka. Then Jubair introduced him

(Shahadat Ali) to the three others and former lawmaker Wakkas and told him that Wakkas was going to float a Halal NGO styled Boyaska Sikkah Karjakram, the plaintiff alleged.

Wakkas also told him that members of the NGO would get interest-free loan and the money deposited by them with the NGO would double within a year.

Alluring people in this way, the accused persons swindled the new floated NGO members Tk 1, 80,600 between August 2, 2005 and October 25, 2005, the plaintiff alleged.

As no activity of the NGO was seen after deposit of money, its members asked Jubair and Wakkas to return the money that they took away as subscription.

The accused gave several dates to return the money but on August 1, Wakkas and Jubair denied having taken money from the NGO members, the plaintiff alleged.

Valuka land grabber in hospital under custody

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

An alleged land grabber who was arrested from the cantonment area Wednesday night is now undergoing treatment at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) under police custody.

A case was lodged with Bhaluka Police Station against Mukarram Hossain Daradi alias Mega Mukarram under Water body Preservation Act in 2000. He was also accused in three extortion cases and five other general diaries filed with the same police station. One of the cases was filed by chairman of Bhaluka municipality.

Police said, two extortion cases were lodged with the same police station on August 14 and 15. But he is yet to be produced before a court as he is under treatment in police custody, sources said adding he would be produced before court after his release from MMCH.

Mukarram took lease of 155 acres of land for 10 years for fish cultivation from different areas of Bhaluka including the municipality in 2006. But he started filling land to start a real estate business in March this year and filled three acres of land.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

As jute harvest begins, a farmer dries the golden fibre in Manikganj but their fate is uncertain as government jute mills are being closed on after another.

Explosives recovered in Kanaighat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) recovered some explosive materials from a stationery shop at bordering Momtajganj bazar in Kanaighat upazila yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, BDR personnel raided a stationery shop at Momtajganj bazar and recovered 7 packets of plastic explosives weighing 125 grams each packet, 16 electric detonators, 18 laboratory safety coats and a small pot of explosive weighing 110 grams from the shop.

They also picked up the shop owner as he failed to give satisfactory answer about the explosives.

Six packets of plastic explosive, 6 electric detonators and 4 non-electric detonators were also recovered from the same area last month.

4 cops sued for death in custody

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Three police officials and a constable have been sued for killing an arrestee in custody of Netrakona police.

Abdul Wahab Mollah, a retired police official and father of victim, Ziaul Haque Zia, 17, of Chalkpara in Netrakona town filed the case with a magistrate court here Thursday evening.

The accused are sub-inspector (SI) Sushil Kumer Biswas, SI Humayun Kabir, assistant sub-inspector (ASI) Golam Mostafa and constable Abu Raihan.

In his complaint, Abdul Wahab said the detective branch (DB) of police arrested his son and handed him over to Netrakona police. Then the four policemen beat him to death in police custody on August 8 night, the complainant said.

Former state minister legalises Tk 1cr assets

50 doctors among 134 in B'baria whiten income

SHEIKH SHAHIDUL ISLAM, B'baria

One hundred and thirty-four people including NP leader and former state minister for Land advocate Abdus Sattaar Bhuiyan and former party lawmaker Advocate Haroon-Al-Rashid in Brahmanbaria legalised their undeclared incomes by paying Tk 1.77 crore taxes to the tax departments and other fees. Rashid was elected from Brahmanbaria3 constituency.

According to Tax Department sources, Abdus Sattaar Bhuiyan legalised his undeclared income amounting to Tk one crore by paying Tk 12,31,000 taxes and fees. Rashid and legalised his Tk 60 lakh assets by paying Tk 6,52,000 taxes,

the sources said.

Now it is talk of the town how they earned such huge income being only lawyers. Most of the time they were busy with party activities.

People now suspect that the two BNP leaders might possess more assets than declared.

Of the 134 people, 50 are doctors, two teachers and the rest are businessmen.

Doctor Rohima Akter Shefali of the Mother and Child Health Care Centre and doctor Muhammad Farooque, a surgeon are at the top of the list of the doctors who legalised their earlier undeclared income by paying taxes last week.

According to sources, doctor Rohima Akter Shefali paid taxes

amounting to Tk 18,13,000 while Muhammad Farooque paid Tk 6,89,000.

According to Tax Department sources, out of 134 occupiers of undeclared incomes, Of the rest, 108 people legalised their assets by paying a total of Tk 1,68,53,357.00 to Brahmanbaria Sadar Circle tax department and 26 others paid Tk 8,75,400 to Ashuganj Tax Circle.

Officials said there may be more 50 people in the district who possess huge assets but are yet to legalise their income.

The tax department is probing their assets and will take steps against them, officials said.

FLOOD-DAMAGED AKHAURA ROAD

Export tumbles, bus service to Agartala stops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Export through Akhaura land port in Brahmanbaria has tumbled as the Roads and Highway Department has stopped movement of trucks with over seven tones of goods on the flood-damaged road.

Dhaka Agartala bus service remains stopped for some days due to lack of adequate passengers.

Yesterday, there was no export of stones, cement and molasses, the main export items, through the land port, sources said.

Due to bad condition of Dharkhar Akhaura land port road, Roads and Highway Department in the district served a notice earlier barring movement of trucks carrying

goods more than seven tones.

Akhaura police enforced the order. As a result, exporters are reluctant to send goods through this land port as carrying only seven tones in a truck causes loss, traders said.

When contacted, Md. Shafiqul Alam, president of Akhaura Land Port Import Export Association, said that they will not export any item if the authorities do not withdraw the restriction not to carry carrying over seven tones of goods in a truck. Carrying so small quantity causes loss, he said.

Land port official Md. Khurshed Alam said only a small quantity of fish was exported yesterday. No heavy truck reached the land port,

he said.

Revenue income has also dwindled as export through the land port has virtually come to a zero, other sources at the land port said.

Roads and Highways officials however said the damaged portion of the road is being repaired, which may take about two weeks. The restriction will then go.

The land port officials said Dhaka Agartala bus service is also stopped due to shortage of passengers.

About one and a half kilometre of the road from Akhaura Bazar to Gazir Bazar has been badly damaged by flood.

THREAT FOR TOLL

23 NGO offices not operating in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

At least 23 local offices of three NGOs in remote areas of the hill district are not functioning since August 12 allegedly due to demand for toll by arms cadres of United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF), according to police and officials of the NGOs yesterday.

The offices are in Munigrane and nearby villages in Panchhari upazila.

The offices include 12 of Grameen Bank, five of ASA and six of Brac, they said.

Khagrachhari police and the NGO officials told this correspondent that arms cadres of UPDF demanded Tk 5 lakh toll to the NGOs in Sunday. As they did not fulfill the demand, the extortionists forced them to keep the offices closed, they said.

The extortionists also threatened all loanees belong to ethnic communities not to repay loan installments of, said Sneha Kumar Chakma of Munigrane village.

Grammen Bank manager Mohammad Mujibur Rahman said they have about 400 loanees in the area, who are supposed to repay about Tk 50,000 a week. But all activities are stopped, he said.

District Manager of ASA Bithika Chakma said their five offices are not functioning. Brac district Manager Suhashi Chakma also said his six offices are closed for about a week, they said.

Khagrachhari Sadar thana Officer-in-charge Kazi Helal Uddin said they are taking action in this regard.

'Evolve environment friendly shrimp cultivation'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Speakers at a workshop here yesterday urged the authorities concerned to formulate a strategy for introducing a sustainable and environment friendly shrimp cultivation to boost yield and export.

Coastal Development Partnership (CDP) and World Fish Centre jointly organised the workshop. USAID financed the workshop chaired by CDP coordinator Ashrafur Alam Tutu. Satkhira deputy commissioner (DC) Mohammad Kefayetullah was present as chief guest.

Speakers alleged that unplanned shrimp cultivation is destroying bio-diversity and ecological imbalance in the southwestern region of the country.

They stressed on integrated efforts of shrimp cultivators and stakeholders for environment friendly cultivation of shrimp which brings Tk 1,200 crore foreign currency for the country annually through export from the district.

Speakers said saline water needed for shrimp cultivation is not only destroying fertility of agricultural lands but also damaging bio-diversity and shrinking traditional poultry breeding.

They said crop fields have lost fertility because of shrimp cultivation which thrives on exploitation of labour, muscle power and terrorism. Women workers are subjected to serious health hazard, they said.

They urged shrimp cultivators to release virus free shrimp fry in the enclosures for boosting production.

They urged them to be more responsible in cultivation of shrimp for protecting bio-diversity.

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