

Hunt on for new JMB 'chief' Saidur Rahman

Rab announces for arrest of ex-Habiganj Jamaat ameer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Law enforcers have launched a manhunt for former Jamaat-e-Islami leader Moulana Saidur Rahman, who has reportedly taken over as chief of outlawed Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen, Bangladesh (JMB).

Saidur Rahman is absconding since the arrest of JMB chief Shaikh Abdul Rahman in Sylhet city last year.

Sources in Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) claimed that Saidur Rahman is conducting activities of JMB since the arrest and hanging of its kingpins Shaikh Abdul Rahman and Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai.

A court in Sylhet tried him in absentia and early this month gave him 14 years rigorous imprisonment in an explosive case.

A Sylhet-based cable TV network-Sylhet Cable System--aired a message for three days till Friday, urging people to help law enforcers arrest Saidur Rahman alias Abu Zafar.

In the message, people were

requested to inform Rab-9 headquarters in Sylhet if any one knows whereabouts of Saidur. The message also said any body helping law enforcers in arresting Saidur will be rewarded.

Sources said, Moulana Saidur Rahman took the charge of the Islamist outlawed group after the arrest and hanging of Shaikh Abdul Rahman and Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai.

Saidur, a former Amir of Habiganj district Jamaat-e-Islami, was in Sylhet city and running JMB activities till the arrest of Shaikh Abdul Rahman on the morning of March 2 last year from a house in the city's Shaplabag area.

As Rahman was caught along with his family and some close aides, Saidur left the city within hours and is still untraced. A number of attempts by law enforcers to nab went in vain.

Just hours into Shaikh Abdul Rahman's arrest, law enforcers detected another den at a tin shed house at Hatimbag (91/B) area near Shaplabag and recovered a huge quantity of explosives and

bomb making materials.

The raid was done on confessions of Abdul Rahman's bodyguard Abdul Aziz alias Hanif, arrested along with Abdul Rahman.

Hanif in his confession said Moulana Saidur rented the house on February 15 last year for JMB organizational work.

Since then, law enforcers raided several places including Saidur's village home in Bahubal and his rented house in Habiganj town several times.

Saidur also ran an account with Islami Bank at its Laldighirpar branch in Sylhet city to meet party expenditures, the sources said.

This was detected after law enforcers recovered some cheques during the raid on Shaplabag.

Sylhet Divisional Speedy Tribunal Judge on September 12 gave Abdul Aziz Hanif and Moulana Saidur Rahman 14 years RI in the explosives case.

Moulana Saidur was the Amir of Habiganj Jamaat, but was expelled.

Hailing from Khozargaon village under Bhadeshwar union in Bahubal upazila of Habiganj district, Saidur used to reside at Rail Colony in Habiganj town.

Detective Branch of police caught Saidur's son Shamim following the August 17 serial blasts across the country in 2005.

Sources in Rab seeking anonymity said after arrest and hanging of the JMB kingpins, Delwar Hossain of Nakla upazila in Sherpur is in charge of JMB in Sylhet district.

Obaidullah and Nizam of Bogra is in charge Moulvibazar and Habiganj districts and Bilal of Naogaon is commander of the outlawed Islamist outfit in Sunamganj.

The four led 30 JMB cadres who were responsible for blasting bombs at 38 points in greater Sylhet region on August 17, 2005. None of the four top JMB militants has yet been arrested despite several raids by law enforcers at different places in Sylhet region and other areas.

Doctor held, illegal clinic closed in C'nawabganj

A CORRESPONDENT, C'nawabganj

Joint forces yesterday arrested a medical officer of Chapinawabganj Sadar Hospital for running a private clinic illegally.

The law enforcers arrested Dr. Asit Kumar Sarkar and closed his Grameen Clinic allegedly for running it without valid papers and proper facilities, police said.

They said the doctors also used his residence as a post-operative center for patients. The joint forces during a raid also found two patients at his residence, police said.

The raid was led by Magistrate Md. Nasiruddin.

Workers' leaders warn against leasing jute mills

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna regional unit of Patkal Sangram Parishad (PSP) has urged the government to cancel the decision to lease out state-owned Peoples Jute Mills (PJM) and Alim Jute Mills (AJM) to avert unwanted situation in the industrial belt.

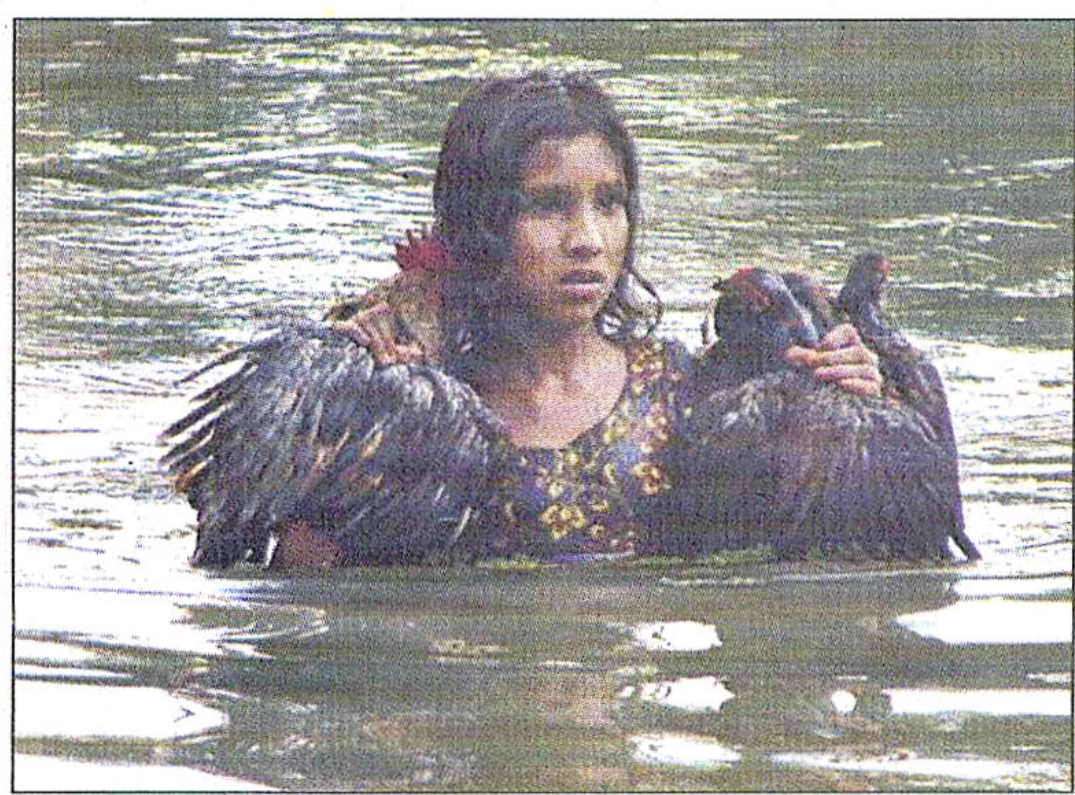
Situation in Khulna industrial belt will go out of control if thousands of workers take to streets in protest against leasing out of the two jute mills, said PSP convener Sarder Motaharuddin and Publicity Secretary Abdul Rahman.

PJM was shut down on August 1 while AJM was laid off for one month from September 22.

Hundreds of AJM workers demonstrated in front of the mill gate on Saturday evening and at 10.00am yesterday demanding its reopening through withdrawal of the lay off notice.

Agitating workers also tried to enter the mill compound but security forces intervened.

President of workers union Abdus Salam urged the workers to continue sit-in and demonstration to press home their demands for payment of all the dues and withdrawal of lay off notice.



A girl in flood affected Assasuni taking her fowls to a safe place yesterday.

35,000 marooned as 2 rivers burst dams in Asasassuni

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Over 35,000 people are marooned as the flood situation in Assasuni upazila in the district further deteriorated yesterday as waters continued to gush out through the three breaches in Kobadak and Kholpetua rivers.

The Kobadak burst its embankments at Kurikaunia and Chakla points on Thursday. The Kholpetua river dam gave in at Khorishkhola yesterday.

Over 568 families have taken shelter in educational institutions and on high lands.

The affected villages are Kurikaunia, Pratapnagar, Nakna, Goalpara, Khajra, Sanatanakati, Baintala, Gar Padmapukur, Kalyanpur, Shirshira, Goakati,

Rayerbeel Harishkhali, Moderbaria, Banyartala and Dargatalarati in Pratapnagar union.

Standing aman crops on 25,000 acres reeled under water that washed away shrimps from 756 enclosures, locals and officials said.

Scarcity of drinking water is prevailing in affected areas as most of the tube wells have gone under knee deep floodwater, Pratapnagar Union Parishad (UP) chairman Abdul Mannan said.

He said the villages were flooded as the Water Development Board did not take any action when signs of breach in the embankments appeared in Friday.

Local people said cracks were

developed on the embankment on Friday they were trying to reconstruct the embankment on self-help basis since then. Local people tried to repair the breaches but all their efforts were washed away by the strong current of water, he said.

Satkhira Water Development Board (WDB) official Shahidullah said they are trying to reconstruct the collapsed embankments but failed due to heavy current of water.

Assasuni Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Ananda Mohon Biswas said the administration with the help of local people are trying to mend the collapsed embankments but their efforts were deterred by the flow of water.



Polythene bags containing chemicals from different factories in Gazipur are washed in the Turag river, perilously adding to its pollution.

Fund crisis keeps handlooms silent ahead of Eid

25,611 looms out of 30,979 affected by floods in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Most handlooms in Pabna, affected by consecutive floods, are silent though water has receded.

Eid-ul-Fitr and Durga Puja bring good business for handloom weavers every year but it is a different scene this year. Handloom are idle ahead of the festivals, mainly due to lack of fund.

At least 25,611 looms out of 30,979 were affected by flood that hit the district twice in last two months.

The Basic Centre of Bangladesh Tant Board (handloom board) estimated the loss at around Tk 10 crore. But loom owners associations said the loss would be at least Tk 50 crore.

Affected weavers are yet to get any assistance either from the government or from any non-government organization, sources in the associations said. The local office of Tant Board has sought Tk

13 to assist and rehabilitate the affected weavers but the money is yet to be sanctioned, its officials said.

Pabna is famous for handlooms. This correspondent during a survey found that handlooms were worst affected in Bera, Santhia, Sujanagar, Pabna Sadar, Chatmohar and Ishwardi upazilas.

According to sources at the Tant Board Liaison Office here, 6,613 looms out of 7,348 were damaged in Bera upazila this year. This caused a loss of Tk 2.31 crore affected about 2,000 handloom families.

The handlooms damaged were 7,254 in Santhia, 4,336 in Sujanagar, 5,261 in Pabna Sadar, 1,213 in Faridpur, 654 in Chatmohar and 280 looms in Ishwardi upazila, the sources said.

Md. Habibur Rahman, a leader of Nagdemra Tanti Shamitee, said the handloom sector in the district suffered a production loss of at

least Tk 50 crore in last two months. A loom can produce saris and lungis worth Tk 1200-15,000 a day, he said.

"The Eid and Puja are knocking at the door but we have no work", said weaver Azizul Islam in Faridpur upazila.

"The festivals are the two largest selling periods for handloom products. These two festivals are in the next month. But our looms are silent", he said. Azizul said flood took every thing away and he has no money to buy yarn and dye.

Md. Abdul Ghani in Sujanagar upazila said, "Sales from my 12 looms was over Tk 2 lakh during Ramadan last year. All my looms went under water this year and I am yet to make them operational".

Ghani said he can resume production with a small amount of money.

There are about 200 marginal weavers in Nasrapara village in Faridpur upazila and most of them are affected. The marginal weav-

ers are dependent on periodical sales like in Eid and Puja. They said they face hard time this year all their looms were damaged by flood. Weaver Rezia Begum in the village said they will have to leave the profession if they do not get any assistance this time for survival.

Weaver Bital, 30, of Sujanagar upazila is pulling a rickshaw van for last two weeks leaving his family profession. He said he has no money to repair and operate his lone loom.

This correspondent talked to many weavers in the six upazilas. They said they did not get any help either from the government or from any NGO.

Radha Shame Roy, acting liaison officer of Basic Centre of Bangladesh Tant Board said we requested for Tk 13 crore assistance to affected weavers. The money is yet to be sanctioned by the government.

9 robbers held in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

The police have found clues to all the robbery incidents committed in the district during the last two months and arrested nine robbers from different areas in Khulna and Satkhira districts, Satkhira Superintendent of Police (SP) Mirza Abdullah Baki said yesterday.

Law enforcers also recovered some looted items and several devices and a pickup van used during robbery from their possession, he said at a press conference held on the premises of Sadar Police Station.

At least eight robberies were committed in different areas of the district during August and September while a gang attempted to rob the local Islami Bank branch at Pransayer in the town, the SP said.

In the wake of deteriorating law and order situation in the district, police nabbed the robbers with the help of army members, Rab and local people, he said.

The arrested dacoits who were brought before the journalists at the press conference admitted to their involvement in the robbery incidents.

Satkhira Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Kefayetullah, Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer AHM Abdul Karim and others spoke on the occasion.

Tk 7 lakh snatched in Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Cash and gold ornament worth about Tk 6.85 lakh were looted from two employees of a jewelry shop at Uttarabazar Chhita Fulbari in Golapganj upazila.

Dinesh Das and Pappu, two employees of Dhar Jewellers, were on way to the shop owner's house Saturday night. When they reached Chhita Fulbari, armed muggers swooped on them and beat them with iron rods causing their serious injuries and looted the cash and ornaments.

Dinesh was admitted to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.



World Girl Child Day was observed in Bangladesh yesterday to protect their rights. But 12-year-old Sonia of Khulna is unaware of it. She only knows she has to do this odd job from dawn to dusk.

'Develop Gobraakura land port'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Leaders of Gobraakura Land Port Importers and Exporters Association (GLPEIA) in Haluaghat yesterday demanded development of Gobraakura land port instead of Koroitali land port.

The government has decided to develop Koroitali land port under the Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) programme.

The leaders demanded this at a press conference held at Mymensingh Press Club auditorium.

GLPEIA secretary Ali Agar, also former chairman of Haluaghat upazila, read out a written statement on behalf of the association leaders.

The press conference said the two ports are situated within a span of 12 kilometre area only. Gobraakura is five kilometre away from Haluaghat upazila headquarters

and Koroitali is 10 kilometre off the upazila town.

While making a comparison between the two ports, the association leaders said 2 lakh 5,000 tons of coal was imported through Gobraakura land port in the last fiscal while 96,000 tons of coal was imported through Koroitali land port during the period.

The leaders said the government earned about Tk 40 crore as revenue from Gobraakura port in last three years while about Tk 19 crore was collected as revenue from Koroitali port during the same period.

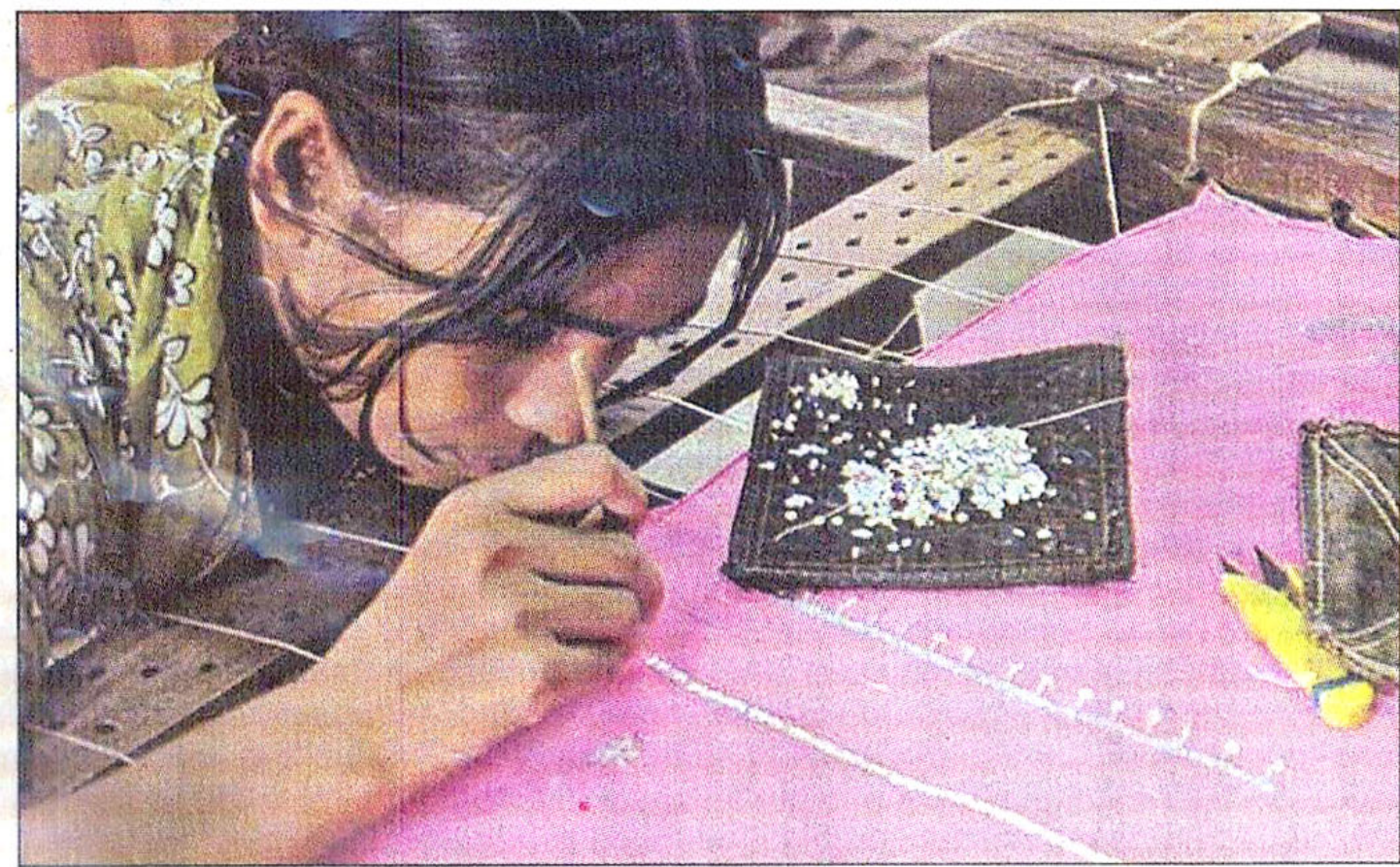
The National Board of Revenue decided to establish Haluaghat-Gobraakura land port in Haluaghat in 1989. But a vested quarter foiled the move by operating the port activities illegally from Koroitali, they alleged.

The association leaders, at a meeting held on August 15 this year,

informed the Land Port Authority chairman about existence of two land ports in Haluaghat.

Later, the chairman asked the local administration to investigate the matter by forming a five-member committee headed by Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Md Afzal Hossain. The committee visited the spot on September 24. But the association leaders apprehended the investigation report might have been influenced by the vested quarters.

Among others, former lawmaker and GLPEIA president Advocate Promod Mankin, vice president Principal Abu Abdullah Hossain Khan and members Saleh Ahmed, also chairman of Haluaghat union, Makbul Hossain, Haji Abdul Rahim, Ashikul Islam, Zabeed Ali, Noor-e-Alam, Humayan Reza and Junabul Islam Bobi were present at the press conference.



A teenaged girl decorating a sari with multi-coloured beads at a factory at Pahartali in Chittagong ahead of Eid.