

Huji emerged

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government did not succeed to check its advancement.

A few of nine suspected militants held by Rapid Action Battalion last two days with huge arms and explosives admitted their involvement in another assassination attempt on Hasina on 21 August, 2004.

One of the arrestees said Huji boss Mufti Hannan's men had asked him to keep grenades hurled at the AL chief's rally.

On the other hand, there are several reports that the BNP-Jamaat-led four-party-alliance government patronised the organisation and its leaders.

The alliance government, however, was compelled to take some measures including banning the group and arrest a few leaders in October 2005.

The move came in the wake of pressures from home and abroad to take action against the militant organisation, which investigators also found responsible for perpetrating the August 21 attack on Hasina.

Interestingly, a few days ahead of banning the organisation the then prime minister Khaleda Zia held a meeting with a number of Huji leaders when the militant leaders, posing as Islamic scholars, paid a call on her at the Prime Minister's Office.

A top Huji leader categorically branded a former BNP minister as his patron to the press after being arrested.

One year into banning, a number of top Huji leaders under a different banner held a public meeting in the capital after getting nod from the government in October 2006.

EMERGENCY

Back on April 30, 1992, the Huji

appeared in Bangladesh through a

press conference wearing sleeveless olive jackets over their shawar-

kaamez.

The militant leaders sat shoulder

to shoulder during the press conference at the Jatiya Press Club and boastfully described how they fought in the Afghan war. They demanded that Bangladesh be turned into an Islamic state.

For the first time the group came to light as Huji. A day after the emergence, they paraded through the Dhaka streets after Jumma prayers to claim victory over the Soviet forces in Afghanistan.

In 2002, the US blacklisted Huji as an international terrorist organisation. It took the government three more years to ban it on October 17, 2005 after much denial of its existence in Bangladesh.

Lawmakers of Jamaat-e-Islami who had allied link with the militants also denied Huji existence in Bangladesh.

Former Jamaat lawmaker Riasat Ali Biswas told The Daily Star the Huji leaders had appeared after getting the go-ahead from the government.

BNP-led alliance

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wishes, Criminal Investigation Department's (CID) Special Superintendent Ruhul Amin

arranged for a petty criminal, Jo Miah, to confess the grisly crime so the real culprits remain beyond the probe's reach, they added.

Making the statement before a magistrate on June 26, 2005, Jo named Mokhlesur, also a former ward commissioner of Maghbazar, as one of those who had planned the attack.

He also alleged that the infamous Seven-Star Group led by top criminal Subrata Bain executed the attack.

He told the magistrate that some 14 men, mostly belonging to the underworld gang, threw the grenades at an AL rally on Bangabandhu Avenue. He admitted that he was among the attackers and said five criminals—Subrata Bain, Masud, Joy, Mukul and Robin—played the key role in the attack.

Violating the Criminal Procedure Code, several CID officers were present at the magistrate's room when the statement was made, said sources.

The authenticity of the statement was questioned all along. That it all was made up became even clearer when Jo's sister disclosed that CID had been paying their family Tk 2,500 a month for upkeep since the arrest.

Based on statements of Joj and two others, CID investigators had moved to submit a charge sheet in the case, but the BNP government halted the process in the face of strong criticism from the media.

After the story fell flat on its face, 17 of the 20 suspects arrested in connection with the case were freed on bail. Jo Miah, Abul Hashem alias Rana and Shafiqul Islam, all of who made confessional statements, however are still behind bars.

The investigators hauled in the 20 with a view to make sure Joj's statement adds up, said sources close to the probe.

The other arrestees were Monjur Hossain, Shah Alam, Haji Shoib alias Dicon, Mokhlesur Rahman, Ayub Ali Khan, Saibal Saha Partha, Habib alias Abdur Hannan, Badsha Mia, Abdur Rahman, Mohammad Hossain alias Tusher, Zahid Hossain alias Liton, Aktheruzzaman alias Ata, Abdur Rahim, Walullah alias Ali, Mohammad Hossain, Monir Hossain alias Pichchi Monir, and Akash Sarkar alias Iften.

On August 26, 2004, the law enforcers arrested Saibal Saha Partha allegedly for sending email to the daily Prothom Alo with a threat to kill AL President Sheikh Hasina.

Getting out on bail, Partha told reporters that they had tried to torture him into making a confessional statement.

The present government on March 25 placed the case on the home ministry monitoring cell's list of sensational cases warranting proper investigation and quick adjudication.

"Initially we thought only businessmen will be allowed access to the commission. But it will be discriminatory. Many people are asking why politicians won't get the opportunity," said the adviser.

Asked who else apart from businessmen and the politicians will have access to the commission, Mainul said a complete picture is yet to get a shape.

Economic activities will get a boost if the commission is given a boost soon, the adviser said.

Govt notices

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greater interest of national food security and to ensure maximum food production."

All law enforcement agencies including joint forces, Bangladesh Rifles and Coast Guards have been put on alert to prevent smuggling of fertilisers, he said.

All of them are involved with different Islamic organisations and madrasas, and one of them, Ataur Rahman Khan, was elected an MP with BNP ticket in 1991 from Kishoreganj-3 constituency.

In an interview a few years back, Habibur Rahman revealed the names of those with whom he travelled to Afghanistan through Pakistan in 1988, visited some Taliban militant camps and even met al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden.

It may have some significance for the apparent government reluctance to go tough on Huji members that on October 6, 2005, eleven days before the ban came, Shaikhul Hadith and Habibur Rahman met Khaleda as its prices are lower than that of neighbouring countries, said industry experts.

A 50kg bag of locally produced urea currently sells at Tk 240 as opposed to its production cost of Tk 360. While a bag of the same quantity of imported urea is sold for Tk 265 when its import cost is Tk 1,550, said sources.

The joint forces will be assisting in issuing the fertiliser cards by April next year, prior to the beginning of next Boro season. Before the actual project, pilot projects for issuing the cards will be taken up within the next couple of months, the adviser said.

The government has also decided to build nine more buffer fertiliser warehouses in nine districts that currently do not have any such facilities, Karim added.

During this current fiscal year, 2007-08, the government aims to distribute 28.18 lakh tonnes of urea, which is 2.8 lakh tonnes higher than the previous FY figure, CS Karim said adding that till October 27, the stock of urea was 4.2 lakh tonnes, as opposed to 2.8 lakh tonnes during the same period in FY07.

The government has distributed 7.71 lakh tonnes of urea against the demand of 7.64 lakh tonnes from July through October in the current fiscal year.

Besides, the government has already disbursed subsidies to traders on non-urea fertilisers such as Triple Super Phosphate (TSP), Muriate of Potash (MOP) and Diammonium Phosphate (DAP).

Additional Agriculture Secretary COK Moshtaq said a huge quantity of TSP and MOP has reached the Chittagong Port and more shipments are on the way to meet the future demands.

Soon after the coalition government assumed power, I submitted a mercy petition to the prime minister, the home minister and some other ministers. And in reply they assured me that they will let me off," Hannan had told the court in presence of a large number of lawyers, law enforcement and newsmen.

Industries Secretary Nurul Amin, Principal Information Officer Iftekhar Ahmed and Senior Public Relations Officer Abdurrahman Al Shaheen also spoke at the briefing.

3 JMB men

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Five other accused in the case were acquitted as their involvement in the blasts were not proved. They are Habibur Rahman, Lutfur Rahman, Siddiquar Rahman, Nizamul Islam and Mashur Rahman.

The names of three other accused -- top JMB leader Siddiquar Islam Bangla Bhai, Shaikh Abdul Rahman, and Ataur Rahman Sani were dropped from the charge sheet as they were executed for killing two Jhalakathi judges in a bomb attack.

Four bombs went off at Chouhash intersection near Mamta market and the court compound in Kushtia on August 17, 2005.

Later, Rab official Mustafizur Rahman filed an FIR with Kushtia Police Station on August 18, 2005.

ASP Munshi Atiqur Rahman, investigation officer (IO) of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the court on October 10, 2005.

The court recorded statements of 19 out of 43 prosecution witnesses during the trial.

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Try war criminals

FROM PAGE 16

assume that someone inside the government is misguiding it."

Gen Ibrahim urged the High Court to consider Jamaat leaders' recent statements on the Liberation War as violation of the constitution and to suo moto rule against them.

They also condemned Mojaheed's remarks and demanded arrest and trial of war criminals.

Mukti Joddha, Okiya Parishad, Bangladesh Chhatra Moltri and Satya Samajtantri Sramik Jote also condemned Mojaheed's remarks.

"Our ultimate goal is to bring the war criminals and Jamaat leaders who are known collaborators of the genocide in 1971 and banning of politics based on religion and fundamentalism."

Our Correspondent from Khulna adds: Khulna district Awami League President Sheikh Harun-ar-Rashid and its city unit President Talukder Abdul Khaleque demanded immediate arrest of war criminals and their trial.

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