

## 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 shalwar-kameez.

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 Juma 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.

The US went one step forward to blacklist the Bangladesh chapter of Huji in 2003, but the government's denial continued as the then foreign minister M Morshed Khan said he had not seen "any activity of such organisation in Bangladesh".

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

Former Jamaat lawmaker Riasat Ali Biswas told parliament on September 11, 2005: "Reports of militant training of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and Harkatul Jihad to turn Bangladesh into an Islamic state are nothing but propaganda."

Under such lenience and denials, Huji spread its wing in madrasas, set up training camps in the greater Chittagong and three hill districts and carried out terrorist activities.

The militant leaders who attended the 1992 press conference - Abdus Salam, president of Huji Bangladesh, field commander Manzur Hasan, Dhaka city unit president Maolana Delwar Hossain, publicity secretary Mufti Shafiqur Rahman, Maolana Mufti Abdul Hye - remain untraced.

Forty-one armed men of the Huji arrested at a Cox's Bazar training camp in 1996 and handed down life-term were released on bail after the alliance government came to power.

The Huji Bangladesh top brass include Shaikhul Hadith Alam, Azimul Haq, also chief of a faction of ruling alliance partner Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ), Bangladesh Khelafat

**Truth commission**

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for any specific group of people.

"So far I know, people will not be allowed to contest elections even after confessing their corruption before the commission, and paying fines," Mainul told reporters after a review meeting on implementation of the annual development programme for the information ministry for fiscal 2007-08.

The adviser also ruled out the possibility of granting bail to businessmen who have been arrested as graft suspects but charges are yet to be framed against them.

"I don't think there is any scope for the government to consider this at the moment," he said when asked whether it is pondering about release of arrested businessmen on bail to run their businesses in the interest of the national economy.

"The no-bail provision for the corrupt suspects was incorporated in the law to quicken disposal of the cases," he said.

The government is rather working on formation of the Truth Commission and making necessary laws providing for confession of guilt, and avoiding imprisonment by paying fines, he said.

The issue of formation of the commission is already at the highest level of the government. Details including who will be on the commission and its organogram are yet to be decided, and the ministry is working on this, he mentioned.

"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.

The adviser also said 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 can be formed soon, the adviser said.

Majlish second-in-command Muhammad Habibur Rahman of Sylhet, Ataur Rahman Khan of Kishoreganj, Sultan Jaok of Chittagong, Abdul Mannan of Faridpur and Habibullah of Noakhali.

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 'Islamic scholars'.

The two were accompanied by Maolana Obaedul Haq, IOJ lawmaker Mufti Shahidul Islam, Ashraf Ali, Abdur Rab Yusuf, Yusuf Ashrafi, Nezamuddin, Mohammad Nazayun Kabir and Tafazzul Haq Aziz.

The home ministry note banning Huji by the alliance government reads: "Harkat-ul Jihad Al Islami is a self-proclaimed terrorist organisation. Its activities are very sensitive and it is identified as a terrorist organisation. The government is declaring Harkat-ul Jihad Al Islami and all its activities banned on the basis of information received so far."

Only Mufti Hannan, a central committee member and operation commander of Huji, was arrested on October 1, 2005.

After his arrest, Hannan told the press he had been staying in the country as the former home minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury had assured him of "no fear" in staying in the country.

"Editor of monthly Madina Maolana Mohiuddin played the mediator between me and the home minister," Hannan told reporters.

He also told the court law enforcers were not supposed to arrest him as some influential ministers of the alliance government had assured him that he would be exempted from the charge of the attempt on Hasina.

"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 enforcers, and newsmen.

More than a week before expiry of the alliance government's tenure in October, 2006 some Huji leaders including two top founding leaders Abdus Salam and Rahmat Ullah alias Sheikh Farid held a public meeting at Baitul Mukarram Mosque.

One of the organisers of the meeting 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, Joj 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, Joj named Mokhesur, also a former ward commissioner of Maghbar, 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 officials 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 Joj'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. Joj Miah, Abdul Hashem alias Rana and Shafigul Islam, all of whom 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 Shoab alias Dicon, Mokhesur Rahman, Ayub Ali Khan, Saibal Saha Partha, Habib alias Abdul Hannan, Badsha Miah, Abdur Rahman, Mohammad Hossain alias Tusher, Zahir Hossain alias Liton, Akhteruzzaman alias Ata, Abdur Rahim, Wallullah alias Ali, Mohammad Hossain, Monir Hossain alias Pichchi Monir, and Akash Sarkar alias Fiten.

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.

## 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 added.

To keep the prices affordable for farmers, fertilisers are heavily subsidised by the government. But smugglers find it a lucrative commodity to smuggle out of the country, 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 advisers 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, he said.

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

Additional Agriculture Secretary CQM Moshatq 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.

Around 1 lakh tonnes of non-urea fertilisers were imported last year and released for the market after ensuring their subsidies, he added.

Industries Secretary Nurul Amin, Principal Information Officer Irfekhar Ahmed and Senior Public Relations Officer Abdullah 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, Lufur Rahman, Siddiqur Rahman, Nizamul Islam and Mashur Rahman.

The names of three other accused -- top JMB leader Siddiqul Islam Bangla Bhai, Shaikh Abdur 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 Chouhsh 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.

## Justify judiciary

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sincerity and patience to dispensation of justice as the justice-seekers come to courts from far-flung areas.

"Despite adverse situation, you must discharge your judicial responsibilities and overcome the situation by applying your experience and wisdom," he told the judges.

In an oblique reference to administrative cadre officials at field level who will exercise their limited judicial powers after the separation of the judiciary from November 1, the chief justice said, "If anyone remains aloof, we'll cooperate with them."

Law and Information Adviser Barrister Mainul Hossain told the function that the separation of the judiciary would remain a glaring instance, which had not been possible in last 36 years despite it being a constitutional obligation.

He said justice is an inseparable part of good governance. "It now depends on the judges to successfully separate the judiciary from the executive by ensuring unity between the two state organs."

The adviser said many problems may crop up at the beginning of separation of the judiciary, but those can be resolved through open discussions.

Justice MM Ruhul Amin of the Appellate Division also spoke at the programme.

A total of 135 judges of the subordinate courts participated in the orientation function organised by the Judicial Administrative Training Institute (JATI) and presided over by Justice Hamidul Haque, the JATI director general.

## Try war criminals

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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 issue a suo moto rule against them.

"They [anti-liberation elements] must be tried... there might come a time when they would deny our Liberation War and demand our trial, accusing us of splitting Pakistan," Syed Muhammad Ibrahim said.

"Our ultimate goal is to bring them to justice because they were against our Liberation War," said the Liberation War veteran.

Sadeque Ahmed Khan, secretary general of Muktiyoddha Gono Parishad, said, "The whole nation is going to be united on the issue of trial of the anti-liberation war elements."

Language movement veteran Abdul Matin said, "Now Jamaat leaders are talking against our Liberation War, a time will come when they will dare to say that there was no Liberation War in 1971."

"They [war criminals] are the enemy of our country and should be brought to justice right now," he added.

Meanwhile, Freedom Fighters Rehabilitation and Recreation Centre in a press release yesterday said they would host a joint press conference with seven other freedom fighters' organisations at 11:00am, October 31 at the centre where freedom fighters will provide evidence of the crimes committed by the war criminals in 1971.

Various organisations continued to blast former Islamic Bank chairman Shah Abdur Hannan for his comments made on a private television channel talk show and demanded his immediate arrest and exemplary punishment. They said his remarks were evil-intentioned and extremely arrogant.

On Friday, speaking on the talk show, Hannan, also a former secretary and a well-known Jamaat sympathiser, played down the Liberation War of 1971 and termed the period "civil war". Moreover, he claimed that no genocide took place in the country during that period and no war criminal lives here either.

They also condemned the comments made by Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed as he claimed that his party did not act against the country's independence and denied outright the existence of any war criminals here.

In a statement, Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangsad central command council leaders yesterday said calling the Liberation War of 1971 a civil war is tantamount to sedition as the comment went against the spirit of Liberation War.

Shah Abdur Hannan through his remark has denied the Liberation War, said the council leaders adding that he also violated the constitution of the country with such remark. The government should, therefore, immediately file a sedition case against him.

Condemning the remark, National Democratic Party (NDP) yesterday said Hannan's remark is untrue and extreme distortion of history.

Terming the comment ill-disposed and insolent, they said those who term the Liberation War a civil war are either insane or retarded.

Gono Odhikar O Sangbidhan Sangrakshak Kendra said the arrogant remarks of Hannan went

against the Liberation War, independence and sovereignty of the country.

In a statement, they demanded immediate arrest and trial of Hannan by filing sedition charges against him.

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

Muktijoddha Oikya Parishad, Bangladesh Chhatra Moitri and Jatiya Samajtantrik Samik Jote also condemned Mojaheed's remarks.

They demanded arrest and trial of 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.

They also valiant freedom fighters, said Nizami (Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami) in collaboration with occupying Pakistan army committed genocide during the war of liberation.

They demanded formation of a special tribunal to try the war criminals and requested the Chief Election Commissioner not to allow Jamaat to participate in the next election as the party leaders are distorting the history of the Liberation War.

Jatiya Party leader Advocate Badar Ali and Khulna Shishu Foundation Secretary General Sheikh Abdul Qayyum also demanded the trial of war criminals for the safeguarding of national independence and sovereignty.

## Old building

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building around 7:00am and the entire middle section collapsed within thirty minutes.

The standing portion of the building is also on the brink of collapse.

Rashida Begum, a resident of a room of the intact part of the building on the ground floor, told The Daily Star, she was sleeping and the noise of falling bricks from one of the walls of the room woke her up.

"I rushed outside with my children," she said adding that she also called out eight labourers who were sleeping in a room of the collapsed part of the building.

As soon as the labourers got out of the building the middle part collapsed, she said.

Hundreds of people gathered and witnessed the collapse.

The building was used by the New Government Girls High School until 1985 when they abandoned it.

The school Headmistress Anzura Anisa filed a general diary (GD) with Kotwali Police Station in this regard.

Locals said the building was a hundred years old. Pakistan Urdu School used the building from 1948. After the Liberation War the name was changed to New Government Girls High School in 1973.

Following massive casualties in the roof collapse of a building of Jagannath Hall at Dhaka University in 1985, the school moved to nearby Armanitola Boys High School the next day abandoning the building.

Anzura told The Daily Star that outsiders grabbed the building along with the land of the school campus. There is a case regarding the ownership of the land pending with the High Court, she added.

## Another militant

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Mahmood Khandkar said the arrests and seizures would help the investigators a lot to submit a charge sheet in the case. After primary interrogation, the arrestees would be handed over to Criminal Investigation Department (CID) that has been tasked with investigation.

Rab officials said they had raided five places in Dhaka, Kushtia, Jhenidah, Khulna and Narsingdi simultaneously following up leads obtained from prime accused Mufti Hannan and the other three.

The intelligence gathered over the last two years also helped to hunt down the nine and seize the grenades and other explosives.

The raids were conducted in the 24 hours ending at 6 in the morning yesterday. The crime busters first captured Hussain Ahmed Tamim with a grenade from Narsingdi. Meantime at Hatgopalpur of Jhenidah, another team recovered 15 grenades from under the floor of Ali Ahmed's house.

In another raid in Mohammadpur upazila of Magura, Rab arrested Baki Billah and recovered two Chinese rifles, one pistol, one revolver and around 60 kgs of explosives. Rab officials said that Mufti Hannan had asked Baki to take care of the firearms and explosives.

The rest were arrested in Khulna and Dhaka.

One litre of nitrobenzene, two kg sodium chloride and 2.5 kg methanol, 300 ml acetone, 400 gm sodium nitrate, 50 ml sulphuric acid, 200gm potassium dichloride, 10 gm sulphur, 200 ml nitrobenzene, 12 kg ammonium nitrate, 100 gm aluminium powder and different other chemicals are among the explosives recovered.

The seized items also include three wrist watch bombs, 18 switches, two capacitors, 14 bulbs, a pair of military uniforms, one military belt, a pair of military boot and a cap, 22 detonator casings, six improvised bombs, one walkie-talkie set, one pen bomb, 12 bomb casings and seven pipe bomb casings.

Ali Ahmed who along with two others was allowed to speak said Mufti Hannan's men had asked him to keep the grenades. He claimed he

## Shahjahan Chy

**FROM PAGE 1**  
wealth statement submitted to the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC).

Shahjahan surrendered before the Court of Fifth Additional District and Sessions Judge Mirza Mohammad Ayub Ali on the scheduled date for hearing on charge framing of the case filed against him and former foreign minister M Morshed Khan's son Faisal Morshed Khan.

Following appeals by defence lawyers for time and division in jail, the court directed the jail authorities to make necessary arrangement for the accused as per the jail code and rescheduled the hearing on the charge framing to November 4.

The date for hearing on the charge framing was scheduled for October 18 but it was re-fixed to yesterday following a time petition made by the state lawyers.

ACC Deputy Director Abul Kalam Azad filed the case against Shahjahan Chowdhury with the Bandar Police Station in Chittagong on July 1.

Mohammad Jahangir Alam, deputy director of the ACC Chittagong-2, submitted the charge sheet on October 1 accusing Shahjahan Chowdhury of concealing his wealth in the wealth statement and Faisal Morshed Khan of abetting Shahjahan.

According to the charge sheet of the case, Shahjahan Chowdhury in his wealth statement, submitted on February 20, mentioned he possessed properties worth Tk 2 lakh 41 thousand.

However, ACC investigation found that his actual wealth is Tk 3 lakh 41 thousand. A Range Rover V8 was also recovered from his possession.

In the statement, Shahjahan said he imported the vehicle under the duty-free privilege of MPs, but the concerned agency, Motor World Ltd, did not hand it over to him due to his failure to pay up the Tk 50 lakh price.

During investigation, the ACC found that Shahjahan had released the vehicle by paying the amount by opening an L/C with Arab Bangladesh (AB) Bank Mohakhali branch in August, 2006 with the help of Faisal.

A court issued arrest warrants against Shahjahan and 16 others in connection with a murder case filed on September 9. That case was filed by freedom fighter Nurul Kabir and the court pressed charges against 42.

## ACC moves

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239 cases, a few cases were withdrawn, while a few others were thrown out by different courts.

The three cases filed by the bureau against Khaleda were thrown out by the High Court.

The current dilemma of the ACC regarding the leftover burden of the defunct bureau includes adjudicating the cases against government officials whose pensions and other facilities are still on hold due to the pending status of the cases against them. Some of those accused officials have already retired or died.

"The cases should be adjudicated immediately as many have not been getting their pensions because the cases filed against them are still pending in courts" the ACC secretary added.

Meanwhile, the ACC yesterday approved filing of first information report (FIR) against Joint Tax Commissioner of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) Harunur Rashid Bhuiyan for accumulating wealth that does not tally with his known sources of income.

Protocol Officer of the Land Ministry Kutub Uddin Ahmed, and former lawmaker Alamgir Mohammad Mahfuz Ullah Farid, both of whom are currently in detention, submitted their wealth statements to the commission through jail authorities yesterday.

The ACC secretary also hoped that the ongoing trials of high profile graft suspects will be completed by November 2008.

"If the number of special courts increases, all the cases filed by the ACC will be adjudicated completely on time," the secretary said.

The commission also instructed its director general (research) to document the ongoing activities of the commission, and to note its comments regarding different issues the commission is dealing with.

## Babar

**FROM PAGE 16**  
the accused at 10:30am, court sources said.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence had completed their arguments. The court recorded statements of 15 prosecution witnesses including complainant and investigation officer (IO) of the case.

Joint forces recovered four firearms -- a shotgun, a rifle, a pistol, and a Brazilian revolver, two magazines and 297 rounds of bullet raiding Babar's Gulshan residence on May 28.

Of those, Babar failed to show any valid documents for a revolver and 25 rounds of bullet.

Sub-inspector (SI) Helaluddin filed an arms case with Gulshan Police Station against Babar on June 3.

SI Khabir Ahmed, also the IO of the case, pressed charges against Babar on June 23 showing 16 people as prosecution witnesses.

The court framed charges against the accused on July 25. If convicted, Babar might face up to 17 years' rigorous imprisonment (RI) as per the existing law.

Earlier, two more graft cases were filed against him with Ramna and Gulshan Police Stations.

## Saifur acting chief

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