

No let-up in outlaws' bomb attacks despite drives in Jhenidah

14 among municipality chairman, ASI killed, 59 hurt in 4 years

Hossain Serai and Azibor Rahman in Jhenidah

There is no sign of let up in bomb attacks by the cadres of outlawed parties in Jhenidah district despite several anti-crime drives and death of at least 53 outlawed cadres in 'crossfire'.

At least 16 incidents of bomb attacks took place in Jhenidah district between November 18, 2007 and February 10, 2008 in which two BNP leaders were killed and 15 other people were critically injured, according to police, intelligence agencies and newspaper reports.

The two BNP leaders killed in bomb attacks during the period are Shaikakupa upazila BNP's organising secretary Idris Ali and Kumbarbaria union unit Krishak Dal (peasant front of BNP) president Anwar Hossain Anu.

Besides, between June and October of 2007, Jhenidah Sadar upazila BNP's general secretary Abu Bakar Siddik and a leader of the same unit Awami League (AL) Subodh Kumar Kundu were also bombed to death.

At least 31 incidents of bomb attacks took place in the district from February 2004 to December 2006 in which 10 people including Harinakundu municipality chairman Azizur Rahman Mondol and assistant sub-inspector Zahidul Islam of Harinakundu Police

Station were killed and 36 other people injured.

Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-Janajuddho) claimed responsibility for at least 22 attacks while the rest attacks were launched by other outlawed outfits and criminal gangs, intelligence sources said.

In the latest bomb attack on a motor spares shop at Chuadanga bus stand in Jhenidah district town on Sunday evening (February 10), four people including the organising secretary of district bus and minibus owners association Abdur Razzak were critically injured.

On January 25 of this year, BNP activist Anwar Hossain Dablu was seriously injured as miscreants hurled bombs on him at Adorshopara in Jhenidah town.

Earlier, on January 21, Shaikakupa upazila BNP organising secretary Idris Ali was bombed to death when he was coming out of his house on a motorbike.

On the night of December 27 in 2007, a bomb attack at Kachua Bazaar in Shaikakupa upazila of the district critically injured Abu Taleb and Zahid of Kacherkhote village.

In the previous evening, four people were seriously injured when criminals hurled bombs on them at Kuthi Durgapur village in Jhenidah Sadar upazila.

Abdul Baki, secretary of district Bus and Minibus Owners Association, was critically injured

on December 18 night as miscreants hurled four bombs at a bus stand in Jhenidah town.

On December 12, physician Yunus Ali was seriously injured when miscreants threw a bomb at him at Ghoshnagar Bazaar in Sadar upazila.

After the death of BNP leader Abdul Halim of Dhobabila village in Jhenidah Sadar upazila in a bombe attack on December 9, Janajuddho leader Rajib Ahmed claimed responsibility for the killing.

On December 10, former leader of Bangladesh Chhatra League Alamgir Hossain and his friend Rabiul Islam were seriously injured as criminals hurled bombs at them in front of the local Fire Brigade office.

On November 18 of last year, Kumbarbaria union Kishak Dal president Anwar Hossain Anu was bombed to death while Jhenidah Sadar upazila AL leader Subodh Kundu was killed in separate bomb attack on October 4.

Earlier in the year, two BNP leaders were killed and 15 people injured in separate incidents as outlaws resumed their bomb attacks in June 2007 after a break of six months following the declaration of emergency.

In 2006, three local leaders of BNP were killed and eight others injured in bomb attacks.

In 2005, Harinakundu municipi-

ality chairman Azizur Rahman Mondol was killed and 13 people were injured in separate bomb attacks in the district.

In 2004, six people were killed and eight others injured in bomb attacks at different places of the district. The victims included ASI Zahidul Islam of Harinakundu Police Station and member of Madhuhati Union Parishad in Jhenidah Sadar upazila and local BNP leader Shafiqul Islam.

According to police and sources in intelligence agencies, about 1,000 armed cadres under 11 outlawed outfits are still active in the six upazilas of the district.

The strongest among the 11 outlawed outfits are Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-Janajuddho), PBCP-ML, New Biplobi Communist Party and Gono Mukti Fouz, intelligence sources said.

More than 25 special drives including 'Operation Clean Heart' and 'Operation Spider Web' were launched to track down the outlaws in the south-western districts including Jhenidah but they failed to bring about desired results allegedly due to leakage of information ahead of drives.

Besides, there are allegations of sheltering the outlawed outfits by two major political parties, said a high police official preferring anonymity.

Make corrupt people culpable: ACC chairman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chairman Lt Gen (ret) Hassan Mashud Chowdhury yesterday called upon all to identify the corrupt people and make them culpable through social movement against corruption.

All should remain alert and get united against any corruption to create mental pressure on the corrupt people so that they surrender before the nation, the ACC chairman said.

He was addressing a lively view exchange meeting with the elites about means and ways to eradicate corruption from the society at Barisal Auditorium.

The ACC chairman thanked the mass media for creating social awareness against corruption and corrupted persons.

Barisal Divisional Commissioner Harun Chowdhury presided over the meeting and Deputy Commissioner Manjur-ullah Chowdhury gave the concluding speech.

Mayor Tayebur's trial begins in narcotics case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Trial in Narcotic Control Act case against Khulna City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Tayebur Rahman began in the court of Khulna District and Sessions Judge Mohammad Shafiqul Islam yesterday.

The detained Mayor was produced before the court in this connection.

The court recorded statements of three out of 14 prosecution witnesses during cross-examination by defence lawyers yesterday.

These three prosecution witnesses are complainant of the case SI Golam Rabbani of Detective Branch of KMP and constables Nurul Islam and Tanjimullah.

The next date for hearing of other prosecution witnesses has been fixed on February 19.

Joint forces recovered some bottles of foreign liquor during raid in his Khulna residence on November 3 last year and a case was filed with Khulna Sadar Police Station under Narcotics Control Act.

The Khulna mayor was arrested from his Dhaka residence on November 21 last year.

One to die, 22 to serve life-term for murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A Rajshahi court yesterday gave death sentence to one person and life-term imprisonment to 22 others in the case for murdering Shafiqul Islam in Godagari upazila in 1996.

Death sentenced Rafikul Islam of Kalidaspur Chhatianpara was also fined Tk 10,000.

Life-term given convicts includes Omar Ali, Enamul, Shafiqul, Nazrul Islam, Mobarak Fazlul Haq, and Nasir of same area.

Among other convicts, Hazrat Ali, Abdul Bari, Arman Ali, Abul Kalam, Gias and Badar Ali were given additional three years imprisonment and fined Tk 5,000 each while Ibrahim, Anwarul, Ziarul, Manur Ali, Dulal, Taslim, Nesar, Hasiruddin and Maidul were sentenced to one more year for other charges.

The life-term and other sentences will start simultaneously, goes the verdict delivered by the Court of Additional Sessions Judge Rasheda Sultana was delivering the verdict.

Shafiqul Islam of Kalidaspur Chhatianpara was killed on December 28 in 1996 following a violence long-standing dispute over the land of a local club -- Juba Unnayan Sangha.

Woman, granddaughter acid-burnt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkira

An elderly woman and her granddaughter received serious burn injuries as criminals threw acid on them at village Baluigachha in Sadar upazila on Friday night.

The victims Sharifunnesa, 50, and Manira Khatun, 11, of village Baluigachha -- were admitted to Sathkira Sadar Hospital in a critical condition, hospital sources said.

Miscreants threw acid on them when they were asleep in the verandah of their house at about 3:00am. Sharifunnesa's son Momotaz Mondal said.

They received burn injuries on different parts of the body including face, hand and chest, police said.

By the time neighbours rushed to the spot hearing the victims' scream, the criminals managed to escape.



Citizens in Rangpur form a human chain in front of Rangpur Press Club yesterday demanding implementation of Rangpur university and punishment of Shibir men responsible for recent violence in Carmichael College.

Uncertainty over voter registration of enclave people in 3 N districts

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Uncertainty prevailed over registration of voters in 63 out of 65 Bangladeshi enclaves in three northern districts as the Indian authorities are yet to respond to the Election Commission's (EC) request seeking permission to visit the enclaves through Indian territory, official sources said.

Rangpur Regional Election Office deputy election commissioner Hamidul Alam said to The Daily Star the EC sought transit permission from the Indian government to go to our enclaves through Indian territory but they are yet to respond to the request.

He further said the EC is still continuing its effort in this regard.

However, voter registration in two enclaves named Dahagram and Angorpotia is likely to start from the last week of February as the two enclaves are connected with the main land of the country through Teen Bigha corridor.

The deputy commissioner (DC) of Lalmonirhat, Rafiqul Islam said to this correspondent voter registration will start in the two enclaves on February 22. He also said he did not receive any EC directive to start work on voter registration in the enclaves of his own district.

During launching of the countrywide voter registration cam-

paign with photograph, the EC expressed its firm determination to enlist the residents of the enclaves as voters.

At that time, a statement of election commissioners Brigadier General (Retd) Shakhawat Hossain was published in all the electronic and print media with due importance. He said the inhabitants of the enclaves have the right to be included as voters in the voter list. He also said effective measures will be taken to make the eligible enclave people as voters of the country.

Of the 63 enclaves, 18 are situated in Kurigram district, 33 are in Lalmonirhat and 12 are in Panchagarh district. The enclaves of Kurigram and Lalmonirhat districts are surrounded by Kunchbihar district in West Bengal, India while those of Panchagarh district are encircled by Jalpaiguri district in West Bengal, India.

Actual population of these enclaves is yet to be ascertained officially although an abortive bid to make census in the enclaves was launched in 2001. But, unofficial sources said the population of 63 enclaves might be around 1.5 lakh.

The densely populated enclaves of Panchagarh district are Balapara, Khagrabari, Dahala Khagrabari, Kot Vagini and Behula Danga. The enclaves of

Lalmonirhat district are Batrigachh, Kisamat Batrigachh, Falnapur and Nalgram. In Kurigram district, most populated enclaves are Uttar Bansjani, Chhit Kachua, Moshaldanga Chhit Tirai, Poatur Kuti, Paschim Bakir Chhara, Chhit Karola, Shib Prasad Mostafic.

Bangladeshi citizens living in the enclaves seldom get any chance to be enrolled as voters not to speak of exercising their right to franchise since independence of the country.

In 1963, voter enumerators and supervisors under the guidance of an assistant registration officer enrolled voters in only 12 enclaves of Lalmonirhat and Kurigram districts. But they could not exercise their right to franchise.

In 1990, about 40,000 voters were enrolled in 33 enclaves of Lalmonirhat, Kurigram and Panchagarh districts. For the first time in the history of Bangladesh these voters got opportunity to cast votes in the 5th National Assembly elections in 1991.

In 1995 and 1999, India did not respond to the request of Bangladesh for cooperation in enumeration work of the enclave voters.

In 2000, only a few people of one or two enclaves became voters but they could not exercise their right to franchise.

Good yield of Amropali mango in CHT expected if weather favours

JASIM MAJUMDER, Khagrachhari

Massive budding of Amropali, a new variety of hybrid mango, is showing signs of a bumper production this year, to disbelieve of horticulturists in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

District Horticulture Office sources said the hybrid variety Amropali cultivation that began in hills eight years ago has opened up great prospects gradually for farmers at 25 hilly upazilas in CHT promising hefty gains.

The production of Amropali variety in hill districts this year may change the fate of CHT farmers, as there are massive budding on Amropali mango trees, Horticulture Department officials and farmers said. The hills with suitable soil and climate may be turned into mango orchards as in Chapainawabganj, they said.

The three districts level horticulture office sources said Amropali is now being cultivated in at least 3,000 small gardens and 146 larger ones in CHT comprising Khagrachhari, Rangamati and Bandarban hill districts, sources said.

Horticulturist Mizanur Rahman of Khagrachhari Horticulture Centre said there are over 1,000 small and large Amropali orchards in Khagrachhari hill district. Most of the gardens are in Dighinala, Matiranga, Rangpur, Khagrachhari Sadar, Panchhari, Mahikchhari, Mohalchhari and Laxmichhari in the district.

'Budding started early this year as flowering started within the bitter winter cold. The weather, temperature and soil are suitable for Amropali cultivation in the (CHT) hills', he told this correspondent.

In a modest target, yield from



Profusely budding Amropali trees in an orchard at Headmanpara in Khagrachhari district.

PHOTO: STAR

gardens in Khagrachhari may be over 1.5 lakh maund while about 90,000 maund in Bandarban and about 1 lakh maund in Rangamati district if weather remains favorable for two months more, horticulture office sources said.

The horticulture centre distributed about 70,000 Amropali plants in Khagrachhari, Rangamati and Bandarban districts in last three years while many people collected over 1 lakh Amropali plants individually, sources said.

But the gardens are facing the biggest threat of environmental pollution especially from brickfields. There are more than 140 brickfields in CHT and about 49 of them are situated in Khagrachhari. 'Smoke from the brick fields badly affects 'mango buds', sources said.

'Moreover, its each kilogram price is usually Tk 20 more than other mangoes', farmer Mongshi Marma at Kongchhari Para said.

Darmika Tripura at Headman

para under Sadar upazila in Khagrachhari said Amropali variety creates new hope for farmers in Khagrachhari. Within a short time farmers get benefits of its farming, she said.

Deputy Director of Agriculture Extension Office TM Monjurul Islam said as the weather and soil is appropriate and suitable for Amropali, they are trying to expand its cultivation. We need more production within limited lands, he said.

Three arrested with 21 bombs in C'nawabganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rapid Action Battalion yesterday arrested three people and seized 21 bombs from their possession at Bapdanga village in Chapainawabganj district.

Tipped off, a Rab team rushed to the village and caught red-handed Tipu Sultan, 35, Abdul Mannan, 24, and Fatik, 28, of the same village when they were trying to sell the bombs, Rab said.

The area along the Indian border has been used for trading arms and bombs for long, they added.

Rab in recent weeks found some 50 bombs in abandoned condition in the area.



Once mighty Arial Kha River has silted up to such an extent that it is now used for paddy cultivation in winter. The photo was taken from Narsingdi yesterday.

PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA