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Babar hired criminal to kill BNP rival

Terror Emon tells CID

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former state minister for home Lutfuzzaman Babar hired top criminal Sanjiddul Islam Emon to kill a BNP leader and pourasabha chairman of Netrakona.

But Emon, who was recently deported by Indian authorities, did not kill the chairman of Madan Pourasabha, Shafiqul Islam Liton, as they were relatives, he told the CID during an eight-day remand in a case filed under section 54.

He also confessed to having at least 20 firearms including an AK-47 assault rifle and links to firearm dealers. He said his associates used to carry those firearms.

During the remand that ended yesterday Emon disclosed his involvement in various criminal activities, CID sources said.

When contacted, Madan Pourasabha Chairman Liton told The Daily Star over telephone that he did not know Babar hired Emon

to kill him.

"I had good relationship with Babar but it deteriorated before the pourasabha election in 2002 as Babar nominated another candidate, Dewan Mosaddek Shafi," he said.

"I won the election as an independent candidate and Babar became angry with me," Liton told our correspondent in Netrakona.

"In March 2006, goons hired by Babar attacked me during a conference of Madan upazila BNP but I saved my life fleeing the scene," he added.

Meanwhile, following Emon's confession, the CID recovered a revolver with 32 bullets from the Rayerbazar killing field in the capital on Saturday night and arrested Emon's associate Jahangir in Paltan area.

CID Inspector Shyamal Chowdhury, who led the drive, said, "We took Emon to Rayerbazar at about 1:30am and recovered the

revolver and bullets from a place he located." This was Emon's personal weapon, Shyamal told The Daily Star.

"Jahangir who hails from Brahmanbaria is involved in 'jhut' business in Tongi area. We trapped and caught him," he said.

Jahangir had been on the run after he was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment in an arms case filed with Kotwali police station.

Emon was also sentenced to 17 years' imprisonment in the case. He was arrested with an AK-22 rifle while trying to take over Fulbaria bus stand along with his gang members in September 1997.

EMON'S LINKS TO ARMS DEALERS

CID sources said Emon had close links to several rings involved in smuggling and dealing firearms.

"Although pistols and revolvers are enough for personal security, it

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Sircar calls govt 'irregular' administration

UNB, Dhaka

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar yesterday termed the present caretaker government an "irregular administration" for its failure to hold elections within 90 days as per the constitution.

"This government is not an illegal government. Instead we can describe this government as irregular," he said at the launching of "Strengthening Public Accounts Committee Project" at Sonargaon Hotel.

The Parliament Secretariat and the World Bank jointly organised the function.

The Speaker said the caretaker government is a provision of the constitution.

"The priority of this government is to do routine work and assist the Election Commission in holding general elections within 90 days," he said.

Responding to a question, he told newsmen that it does not mean that the caretaker government would be illegal if it fails to hold elections within 90 days.

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Two citizens of Congo and Ivory Coast at the Detective Branch office of DMP after they were arrested at a hotel in the city's Gulshan yesterday on charges of attempted cheating.

CA arrives in London

BSS, London

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed arrived in London yesterday on a three-day official visit after attending the 11th summit of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) in Dakar of Senegal.

Ambassador John Dennis, director of Asia and Commonwealth Office of British Government, and Shafi U Ahmed, Bangladesh high commissioner in

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Ex-Jamaat MP Shahjahan indicted in extortion case

STAR REPORT

Charge sheets in two separate extortion cases against former Jamaat lawmaker Shahjahan Chowdhury and 35 others were submitted to a Chittagong court yesterday.

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WB MD in Dhaka to talk key challenges

UNB, Dhaka

World Bank (WB) Managing Director Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala arrived in Dhaka yesterday on a four-day visit to provide an in-depth view on key challenges facing the country and ways to deal with them.

During her visit, she will meet the finance adviser and other government officials, representatives of civil society and private sector and development partners to discuss the WB's development programs, climate change, good governance and economic growth.

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HASINA'S TREATMENT AL demands medical board with personal, hospital docs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) yesterday demanded that the caretaker government arranges coordinated treatment for its detained chief Sheikh Hasina, by forming a medical team comprising her personal physicians and physicians from Square Hospital.

It also demanded that the government sends her to the US for

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ACC allowed to quiz MK Alamgir at jail gate

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday allowed the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) to interrogate detained former state minister for planning Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir at the jail gate in connection with a Tk94 lakh misappropriation case.

Meanwhile, a witness gave judicial statement before a magistrate against detained Beximco Holdings Ltd Vice-chairman Salman F Rahman, former

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The Bailey bridge on Shah Amanat International Airport Road in Chittagong has become a death trap as several parts of the bridge have fallen apart.

PHOTO STAR

Standoff in rice import from India to end soon: Govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government looks to end the impasse in rice import from India through discussions with the Indian delegation that reached Dhaka yesterday.

The same day import of 1 lakh tonnes of rice at \$399 per tonne began after the Indian government had relaxed its export rules, a senior official of the food and disaster management ministry told The Daily Star.

Recently, Bangladesh government signed an agreement with its Indian counterpart to import 5 lakh tonnes of rice as the staple remained in short supply in domestic markets.

Originally, the rice was to be

purchased at \$399 per tonne. But in the face of objections from pressure groups, the Indian government decided not to sell those at the rate it had earlier consented to sell.

However, after rounds of negotiations they agreed to allow 1 lakh tonnes to be sold at the original rate, the ministry official said.

"Bangladesh side will mainly discuss the price issue with the Indian delegates," he headed.

Besides, transportation systems, costs, timeframe and other barriers in import from India would figure in the talks.

Comprised of representatives from state-owned export agencies Mineral and Metal Trading

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Lift emergency, declare poll date

Politicians demand at roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of mainstream political parties yesterday demanded that the caretaker government immediately withdraw the state emergency and declare the schedule of general elections to dispel people's apprehension over the national polls.

The speakers at a roundtable titled 'Parliament Election, State of Emergency and Our Politics' also alleged that the Election Commission (EC) has failed to follow the roadmap as only 40 percent of voter listing has been completed in eight months.

The daily Ittefaq organised the roundtable at the National Press Club in the capital where partici-

pants expressed their concern over the parliament election and cautioned that the country would soon experience a famine due to the spiralling prices of essentials.

Renowned Jurist and Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain said the caretaker government should withdraw the emergency-step by step.

"We do not want to return to the pre-1/11 situation. Democratic atmosphere is needed for holding a fair election. This is why the caretaker government should withdraw the emergency gradually," said Dr Kamal.

Economist Abul Barakat, general secretary of Bangladesh Economic Association (BEA),

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SECTOR COMMANDERS Convention date re-fixed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sector Commanders' Forum (SCF), a platform of sector commanders of the liberation war, yesterday announced March 21 for holding its postponed national convention.

The SCF postponed the convention earlier as it failed to get permission from the government.

It will hold the convention at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Convention Centre in the capital to mobilise public opinion against the war criminals.

The SCF on March 13 postponed the convention, scheduled for March 15, failing to get government permission.

The invitation cards, which have already been distributed, will remain valid for the March 21 convention.

"We are determined to hold the

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2 foreigners held for cheating bid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two foreigners, a Congolese and the other an Ivorian, were arrested at a hotel in the city's Gulshan neighbourhood yesterday on charges of attempted cheating.

The two were identified as Souala Eric Oliver, of Congo, and Kouassi Durin, from Ivory Coast. Law enforcers are looking for another member of the gang, identified by his last name Ali, also an Ivorian.

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Missile strike kills 16 in Pak tribal belt

AFP, Undated

A missile strike in Pakistan's tribal belt killed 16 people yesterday, witnesses and state media said, a day after a bomb targeting foreigners at an Islamabad restaurant left a Turkish woman dead.

The deteriorating security in nuclear-armed Pakistan, a key ally in the US-led "war on terror", piles pressure on the incoming government which is set to be sworn in when the country's new parliament meets on Monday.

With the country on alert after Saturday evening's blast at an Italian eatery in the capital, one of several missiles fired into the South Waziristan tribal region slammed into a suspected militant compound, residents said.

Foreigners linked to the Taliban,

and Al-Qaeda were believed to be staying at the compound in Doog village. Residents said they heard a series of explosions.

"Militants have cordoned the blast site and are taking out bodies from the rubble," one local tribesman told AFP.

"The missile has left only part of a boundary wall intact and turned the compound into a pile of debris," he said. "Body parts were flung into the air and were lying in nearby farmlands."

Local officials and the official Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) news agency said there were 16 dead. State-run Pakistan Television gave a toll of 20 fatalities.

Pakistan's chief military spokesman Major General Athar Abbas said that he had received reports

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New Pakistan parliament sits today

AP, Islamabad

Pakistan's new parliament convenes today setting the stage for a power struggle between US-backed President Pervez Musharraf and a new coalition government that has vowed to assail his already diminished powers.

At stake are the future course and political stability of this nuclear-armed nation of 160 million people, which is struggling with economic problems and rising Islamic militancy at a time when the US is counting on its assistance in the war on terror.

On Saturday, a bomb exploded in the back garden of an Italian restaurant crowded with foreigners in the capital, Islamabad, killing a Turkish woman and wounding 12

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Locals filling up parts of Gulshan Lake with earth to grab land on its bank. The photo taken from near Korail slum shows bagfuls of earth kept on the lake bank.

PHOTO STAR

Condolence Message

With deep regret we announce the sudden death of Mrs. Shahjahan Begum (beloved mother of our Hon'ble Director Mr. Md. Showkat Ali Chowdhury) who expired on Friday 14 March 2008 at her residence at Chittagong.

The Board of Directors, Executives and all Employees of Eastern Bank Limited (EBL) express their most profound grief and sorrow at her death and pray to Allah the Almighty for the salvation of her departed soul with eternal peace and also convey our deepest sympathy to all the members of the bereaved family.

All Members of EBL Family