

Janajuddha founder

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since it's establishment in 1999 and unleashed a reign of terror in some 10 southwestern and five northern districts.

The Rab personnel were tracking him and have recently learned that he was hiding somewhere in Kushtia.

"We had information Tapan and his brother Akash [also known as Kaitra Akash] were hiding in separate houses at Udiabari and Baradi near the outskirts of Kushtia town," Lt Col Neftaur Rahman, director of Rab-6 who led the drive, told newsmen.

A joint force from Rab-6 and Rab-12 raided a house in Udiabari village around 1:00am and arrested Akash who was living there with his wife and one-year son. The elite force recovered one 9mm pistol, 800 bullets, 5,000 books or booklets and 5,000 leaflets of the underground outfit from under his bed.

Following information squeezed out of Akash, Rab cordoned off another house in Baradi around 1:30am and knocked at the door in the guise of a neighbour.

A woman named Rikta alias Maksuda, aged around 30, came out. Seeing the law enforcers, she leapt back to the house and shut the door.

"A few moments later, gunshots rang out from the house, prompting us to retaliate," Neftaur said.

After the one-and-a-half-hour shootout, Rab men stormed into the house and found Tapan and Rikta dead.

The dead were sent to Kushtia General Hospital for autopsy.

The law enforcers said Tapan built the two houses between 2004 and 2007 buying two pieces of land.

Neighbours said they had seen Akash and Tapan several times but never doubted their identities.

THE WOMAN

Mystery shrouds the identity of Rikta alias Maksuda, who is said to be the first woman cadre of the 'women wing' of Janajuddha.

Sources say Tapan recently formed the 'women wing' for his outfit and made Rikta its commander. She was his close aide and always travelled and lived with him wherever he went in the last three years.

Police say Rikta, daughter of Shariful Islam, hailed from Bepari in Jhenaidah town.

Rab personnel suspect she received training on underground politics and always carried firearms. She also took part in different operations led by Tapan, they add.

Sources say Janajuddha had to form the 'women wing' as most of its men have been identified and many are dead. They add these women operatives wear veils and easily hide arms under it without raising suspicion.

RISE OF TAPAN

Hailing from Bishaykhli village in Jhenaidah sadar, Tapan, son of Ibadat Ali, received madrasa education and passed Dakhil (equivalent to SSC) before joining the NGO Gono Sahajaya Sangstha in Digholia, Khulna in 1981.

The NGO fired him as part of a disciplinary action following which he came in contact with criminals in 1982-83. He was arrested by police for criminal offences, but the days behind bars led him the way to becoming a more severe criminal.

Once out of jail, he committed the first murder by killing Imran Gazi of Dumuria, Khulna. Sources say he along with his accomplices went to Imran for talks in Sholghata and gunned him down on the spot.

He joined PBCP-ML in 1983, used to accompany one of the top brass Abdur Rashid Tapu and became an important member of the outfit through his dynamic activities.

The outfit made him the chief of its military wing and during this period he was involved in a large number of crimes including murders. He was on a killing spree as his involvement was suspected in most of the murders in the region during this time.

The joint force arrested him in Meherpur in 2001. However, his associates 'rescued' him from the

CCC evicts

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their houses on their own by the end of the day.

Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) ordered the eviction of people living in risky spots in the area. CCC is implementing the order in cooperation with Matijharna Samaj Unnayan Committee, a group formed by house owners and locals of the area.

The authorities evicted the people and had the shanties torn down. Ten shops situated in the risky spots will also be broken down, an official said.

Evicted families have been placed in temporary accommodation with other residents nearby. Local Ward Commissioner Monwara Begum Moni said.

CCC Superintendent Engineer (Division I) Mohammad Abu Saleh told The Daily Star that a similar drive was also carried out at city's Batali Hill area yesterday while others are scheduled for today at Kushumbag and Lebu Bagan areas where the major landslides occurred last year.

Khulna judge's court premises on January 26, 2002. Tapan could not be held since then.

Allegations are rife that his escape from the court premises was a "set-up" and that the then ruling party needed him to establish political supremacy in the region.

He defected from PBCP-ML and launched Janajuddha faction in June 2003. Tapan himself became the general secretary and made Mao Tse-tung, leader of Chinese revolution, the president.

The faction distributed 25,000 leaflets in southwestern region calling for "social revolution" to establish a "classless labourers' society".

Janajuddha earned heavy notoriety and built numerous strongholds in the region within short time. During 2003-2008, the outfit killed at least 500 people including political leaders and workers, members of law enforcement agencies, public representatives, journalists, businessmen, contractors and general people.

Deviating from its 'ideals', the outfit was involved mainly in toll collection and its operatives did not hesitate to kill anyone who refused toll. After every murder, Janajuddha claimed responsibilities in phone calls or fax messages.

A Janajuddha-published book says it killed 272 people during 2003-2005, including at least 16 policemen.

According to Rab and police, Tapan was accused in 80 cases including over 50 for murders filed with different police stations. The others cases include abduction, rape and extortion.

Sources say at least 200 leaders and cadres of Janajuddha were also killed in 'crossfire' during shootouts with law enforcers, or by rivals since June 2004.

The authorities have beefed security measures in all 10 districts in Khulna and five districts in Rajshahi in fear of backlash from the outlaws. All the police stations, outposts and camps in the divisions have been put on alert.

The ongoing combing operation by joint forces started on May 28 has been intensified to track town Janajuddha operatives and others outlaws.

Lift emergency

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Observation Exploratory Mission of the European Union (EU).

The meeting held at Delwar's Nam flat in the capital lasted about one hour and 45 minutes.

The mission arrived here on June 15 on a week-long visit to assess whether to send EU Election Observation Mission (EOM) to Bangladesh.

Emerging from the meeting, head of the EU delegation to Bangladesh Stefan Frowein told reporters that they are collecting opinions of political parties as the EU headquarters will consider sending a team to observe the parliamentary polls here on the basis of report of the visiting team.

In reply to a question, Delwar said, "The government is showing a discriminatory attitude towards BNP. It has even taken a strategy of keeping BNP outside the election process."

The meeting was attended by BNP standing committee members RA Gani and Chowdhury Tanveer Ahmed Siddique, vice President Sarwar Rahman, Joint Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan and acting office secretary Rizvi Ahmed.

Earlier, the EU team went to Jamaat-e-Islami office and had talks with party leaders including Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed. The Jamaat leaders said the national election must be held with the participation of all parties.

Ex-state minister

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Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court showing 23 people as prosecution witnesses.

The IO prayed for issuing arrest warrants against the accused and the order to attach their properties as they have been absconding since the filing of the case.

The case was filed against them on November 22 last year with Ramna Police Station for amassing wealth worth Tk 128,612,543 beyond their known sources of income and concealing information about wealth worth Tk 5,36,00,051 in the statement submitted to the ACC.

SHAMIMESKANDER CASE
Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Waliul Islam recorded statements of witnesses Akhter Hossain and Belayet Hossain who were produced before the court by ACC Deputy Assistant Director AFM Zabid Hassan, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case.

However, details of their statements could not be known immediately.

The case was filed with Ramna Police Station against Shamim Eskander and his wife Kaniz Fatema on May 5 this year for concealing information about their wealth worth Tk 2,047,820 in the wealth statement submitted to the commission.

23 top cops

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SP of Jamalpur while SP of Jamalpur Aminul Islam was made AIG at the police headquarters. SP of Narsingdi Shahabuddin Khan was transferred as SP of Rajshahi, Chowdhury Manzurul Kabir as SP of Natore, DC of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) Mohammad Ali Mian as SP of Narsingdi, Rajshahi SP Didar Ahmed as DC of DMP Natore SP Abu Saleh Mohammad Golam Mahmood as SP of Thakurgaon and Barisal RRF Commandant Sheikh Md Mizanur Rahman was transferred as SP of Sherpur.

Moreover, Additional SP of Chapainawabganj Sazzadur Rahman was made DC of RMP and Additional SP of Chandpur Mir Ashraf Ali was made SP of Laxmipur while Additional SP of CID Mozammel Haque was transferred as AIG at the police headquarters.

Additional SP of Sirajganj Nazrul Hossain was transferred as SP of Sirajganj, Additional SP of Pirojpur Kamrul Ahsan as SP of Narail and Additional DC of DMP Abdul Fayez was posted as SP of Lalmonirhat.

EPR to be relaxed

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Manikganj Sadar, Chuadanga Sadar, Shariatpur Sadar, Naohata in Rajshahi, Dupchanchia in Bogra, Sripur in Gazi, Fulbaria in Mymensingh, Golapganj in Sylhet and Sitakunda in Chittagong.

The EC plans to hold the long over due polls to Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and some other municipalities in September.

It also plans to hold polls to upazila parishads in October. And the parliamentary polls will be held in the third week of December.

Major political parties have been opposing the EC plan for holding local government polls before the parliamentary elections. **STRINGENT RULES ON POLLS CAMPAIGNS**

The election rules and code of conduct promulgated by the EC on Tuesday slapped strict restrictions on polls campaigns. Rallies and processions will be allowed only within a specified period despite relaxation of the EPR.

Candidates might have three weeks time for polls campaigns after finalisation of their candidature. EC Secretariat sources said referring to the draft schedules for polls.

No intending contestants can bring out procession or stage show during filing of nominations, according to the new rules.

And candidates will have to seek permission from law enforcement agencies at least 24 hours before rallies and processions.

The new rules also prohibit indiscriminate pasting of posters and scrawling of graffiti on walls.

Under the new rules, the EC can cancel candidature for violation of the code of conduct and other irregularities during the polls.

The rules also empower personnel of the defence forces and police on election duty to arrest anybody without warrant for violating those.

EU adopts

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issuing residency or other permits to people coming in illegally from outside the bloc or returning them to their countries of origin.

Those denied residency have two options: "return" home or face "removal".

Should he or she -- the rules also involve children -- decline to go voluntarily, the individual would be forced to leave and face being banned from EU territory for five years.

As far as forced expulsions are concerned, authorities could decide to keep individuals in custody for up to six months -- 18 months under exceptional circumstances -- particularly if they are deemed a flight risk.

This could also happen if their home countries are slow to provide personal documents and information.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights criticised the new regulations during a press conference in Geneva on Wednesday, saying EU countries would do better to look at ratifying the UN convention on rights for migrant workers.

Arbour noted the "difficulty in advancing the fundamental principles of the protection of individuals' rights who are in a very vulnerable situation" and regretted the "resistance in public opinion" to the idea that the illegal migrants have the same rights as others in society.

Amnesty International said the measures do not ensure that illegal immigrants are returned to their home countries safely and in dignity.

"On the contrary, an excessive period of detention of up to 1.5 years as well as an EU-wide re-entry ban for those forcibly returned, risks lowering existing standards ... and sets an extremely bad example," a statement said.

Currently nine EU states set no limit at all on the amount of time that people can be detained. Many others have far shorter custody times than the six months the so-called "return directive" will introduce.

Graft increases

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diary respectively, Tk 2,605 had to be paid in bribe for a police clearance, Tk 1,703 for expediting submission of a charge-sheet, and Tk 5,120 for other services, the report said estimating the total amount of bribe in the sector during the survey period to be Tk 879 crore.

"While taking services from local governments, 53.4 percent households had to face different types of corruption," said the report.

On an average for having a house construction plan approved Tk 5,005 in bribe was required, a bribe of Tk 3,120 was required for setting up a tube-well, Tk 840 for getting a VGF or VGD card, Tk 828 for collecting a certificate for fertiliser, and Tk 505 for a trade licence.

The average rate of bribe required for getting birth, death and nationality certificates was Tk 84 while a bribe of Tk 310 was needed for getting old age allowance.

"A total of 52.7 percent households became victims of corruption in one or another way while taking services from the land administration," the report read adding that

Tk 1,606 crore, or one third of the total amount of bribe circulated during the period in the country, went to the land administration sector.

Average rate of bribe was Tk 5,680 for government land distribution, Tk 4,237 for a land registration, Tk 3,857 for a land survey and delimitation, Tk 3,303 for a mutation.

Tk 1,857 for a land purchase or sale, Tk 1,639 for getting a document, and Tk 1,170 to submit taxes.

Corruption continues to be pervasive in the country with two-thirds of the surveyed households experiencing varying forms of corruption for different public and private sector services, according to the report which added that 42.1 percent of the households had to pay bribe of Tk 4,134 on an average.

According to the report, 47.7 percent households became victims of corruption while taking services from the judiciary.

On an average Tk 5,124 was required for bribe at magistrate courts, Tk 5,516 at judge's courts, Tk 2,167 at the High Court, Tk 5,840

Gen Moen

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To mark the occasion, the President's Parade was held at the academy. The army chief reviewed the parade and took salute.

Gen Moen said many friendly countries send cadets to this academy for training. "It's indeed a matter of pride and joy for us. He paid tribute to the soldiers martyred during the War of Liberation.

Referring to the country's foreign policy motto--'friendship to all, malice to none'--the army chief said: "Upholding this theme, we have taken initiative to enhance friendly relations with neighbouring countries."

In this regard, he mentioned Army Training and Doctrine Command (ARTDOCT) and production of modern "BD-08" rifle in Bangladesh with the assistance of China.

The army chief later distributed prizes to the cadets who demonstrated excellent performance during the training.

Battalion Senior Under Officer SM Ahsan Ullah was adjudged best all-round cadet in the 58th BMA Long Course and awarded the coveted "Sword of Honour". Besides, Gentlemen cadet M Mahmudul Hasan received

"Chief of Army Staff (CAS) Gold Medal" for his outstanding performance.

Among others, high civil and military officials, diplomats of foreign missions in Bangladesh and guardians of the cadets witnessed the ceremony.

Rice prices

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polao rice rose by Tk 5-8 per kg in last four days. He had sold quality polao rice at Tk 70-80 per kg last week but the price was hovering around Tk 80-90 yesterday.

In the wholesale market, rice prices also increased by Tk 10-20 per maund (37.32 kg) yesterday.

Medium quality Parija was selling at Tk 1,270-1,290. A day ago the price was Tk 1,250-1,280. Miniket sold at Tk 1,430-1,440, BR-28 at Tk 1,200-1,210 and Irri at Tk 1,130-1,140 per maund.

Meantime, fish prices have been on the rise for last one month. Prices of ruhi, tilapia, puti, mala and shing increased by Tk 10-20 per kg in the last four days, market sources said.

The price of hilsha, however, registered the biggest spike as its supply went down significantly last week.

Shukkur Ali, a hilsha trader at Karwan Bazar, said price of an one-kg hilsha shot up by Tk 100.

He said he bought one hali (four) small-size hilsha for Tk 1,300 from Karwan Bazar wholesale market yesterday but the price was Tk 900 just a week ago.

He said hilsha supply in local markets has been strained as traders are exporting hilsha to India from wholesale markets by the river.

at special courts, and Tk 2,333 for other judicial services.

During the surveyed period, bribe of Tk 107 crore went into the health sector, the report said adding that 44.1 percent households became victims of corruption in the sector.

Most of the corruption in the health sector took place at upazila health centres, where 47.9 percent of the victims had to pay bribes.

Of the total bribe in the sector, 36.5 percent went to doctors, 32 percent to nurses, 13.9 percent to employees, 9 percent to ward boys, and 4.7 percent to middlemen.

A total of 39.2 percent households became victims of corruption in the education sector which got a total bribe of Tk 117 crore during the period surveyed.

Irregularities in the sector were related to admissions, distribution of stipends, delays in holding exams and dependency on private tutoring.

"In the education sector, the rate of bribery increased to 44 percent in January-June, 2007 compared to the 12 percent during the period of July-December, 2006," the report said.

In the power sector, 33.2 percent households faced corruption that ate up Tk 473.7 crore in bribe. Each household on an average had to pay Tk 2,552 to Desa, Tk 1,512 to PDB, Tk 1,468 to REB, and Tk 906 to Desco.

A total of 28.7 percent households became victims of corruption in the banking sector while 13.5 percent became the victims of irregularities while receiving services from the NGO sector.

Information

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foreign and law advisers, and special assistants to the chief adviser, the cabinet secretary and the chief adviser's press secretary were present at the meeting.

The government had formed the eight-member committee headed by Joint Secretary of the information ministry Kamal Uddin Ahmed to draft the law.

The committee analysed the right to information laws of India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in addition to the drafts prepared by the Law Commission and Manusher Jonno Foundation, a local NGO.

After formulating the draft, the information ministry made it open for public to receive suggestions on it.

Responding to citizens' request, the information ministry extended the time for sending opinion on the preliminary RTI draft from March 23 up to April 3.

The drafting committee had proposed forming a three-member information commission, but following demands from different quarters, it suggested that the commission has five members.

The cabinet, however, last night decided that it would be a three-member body.

A committee of five members will recommend appointments to the commission, naming three persons against each post. The president will pick one from them.

The chief justice will appoint an Appellate Division judge to head the committee, according to the proposal placed before the cabinet.

Individuals aggrieved at not getting information or being supplied with incorrect information can first appeal with the heads of the organisations concerned. If still not satisfied, they can go to the proposed information commission based in the capital, the proposal said.

Anyone found guilty of refusing to provide information or giving wrong information can be fined Tk 25,000 and departmental action can be taken against them.

Following public demand, the drafting committee also omitted the clauses on exemption from disclosure for "public interest" and "state honour".

"Besides, the instances of exemption have been specified in the proposed draft to remove vagueness," said a source, without detailing further.

Oil, gas price

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fuel oil at old rates incurring heavy losses.

He admitted that it's not easy to raise energy prices overnight inflicting a shock to the consumers and leaving an impact on the economy. "So, we've to wait and look into different aspects", he said.

2 JMB men

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succumbed to his injuries at the Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

A murder case and another explosives case were filed with Kotwali Police Station.

JMB kingpin Shayakh Abdur Rahman, Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai, and Ataur Rahman Sunny were also accused in the case for their involvement in the bomb attack. The three were exempted from trial as they were executed following a court verdict.

Nazmul Huda

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of a construction firm.

On June 5, the HC granted three months' ad interim bail to Sigma Huda in the bribery case under emergency power rules (EPR).

The ACC has filed a provisional appeal with the Supreme Court against the HC order granting her bail. Hearing of the appeal will be held today.

Bridge built

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barrister Aminul Haque laid the foundation stone. Aminul is now on the run following conviction in a militancy abetting case.

The construction work remained suspended for a year after the firm pleaded for more money following price hike of construction materials. Construction stopped again on June 11 last due to arrival of the monsoon. The project is to be completed by 2009.

Tanore upazila LGED engineer Mostak Hossain Joarder said, "There is no problem in constructing the approach road after the bridge is done... Many things cannot be planned at the same time."

"It will take time as land acquisition is a time consuming process," he said when asked when the road will be built.

"Constructing the link road will not affect the river [due to filling of a part of the river]... The river has already narrowed down and chars have appeared at places with the river leaving behind soil residues," he said.

During the end of the previous BNP-Jamaat coalition rule, around 20 bridges were constructed in the district, including one costing Tk 17 lakh on Chandunia canal in Tanore, one costing Tk 11.68 lakh at Mohislabari in Godagari upazila and one costing Tk 67 lakh on Borai river in Charghat upazila.

All the bridges are still unusable as they do not have any approach road or any road linking the bridges to the roads.

The number of unusable bridges is 600 in Rajshahi division. Contractors, chosen allegedly at the behest of former ministers and lawmakers, have reportedly withdrawn all the money for the constructions.

University student

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The driver later told reporters that they were wounded when an object fell on the car windshield and exploded.

"I drove to my employer's residence following the incident and later came to the hospital for treatment," he said.

Police were examining the car to figure out what actually happened.

Shyama's father Mirza Ali, a high official at the Pubali Bank Ltd, said they did not have any enmity with anyone.

India may lift ban

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As per the latest advance estimate, rice production in India is expected to be 95.68 million tonnes in the 2007-8 crop year.

The Commerce Secretary's remarks assume significance as India's lifting on a ban on non-basmati rice could help bring down rice prices in international market.

The international rice market carries around 28 million tonnes and India's absence in it is estimated to have taken out around four million tonnes of non-basmati variety.

Pillai said India was "quite comfortable" on the wheat front as the government has procured record quantity of food grains for buffer stock. India has already procured 225 tonnes of wheat whose import has been ruled out, he added.

India had imported 7.3 million tonnes of wheat in the last two years.

The commerce secretary said wheat harvest has been good and if the rice harvest is also good in November, "we will be quite comfortable both in rice and wheat".

Food grains prices have played a key role in pushing up the inflation in India which now stands at 8.75 percent, a seven-year high, putting the Congress-led coalition government under fire from opposition parties and Left allies which accused it of failing to contain soaring prices of essential goods.

Car bomb

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Hundreds of people were killed in the clashes that ended after a ceasefire was ordered by Sadron May 10.

The US military says that its strategy of deploying extra