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Some politicians helped Lashkar put down roots

Investigators learned about the patrons following 2 key captures

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK and SHARIFUL ISLAM

Besides the local chapter of Huji, some political leaders have been helping Pakistan-based militant organisation Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) to operate in Bangladesh.

Investigators learned about the political patrons from two recently-detained LeT operatives and Indian nationals--Mufti Obaidullah and Moulana Mohammad Mansur Ali.

They are now working to gather more about them, said sources in the intelligence and law enforcement agencies.

Officials involved in the ongoing crackdown on militants said they have information that some politicians might have been sheltering LeT cadres as per secret deals with the terrorist group.

Though law enforcers had detained

several LeT operatives in the past, they formally admitted the outfit's existence here only last month after the Detective Branch of police arrested Obaidullah and Mansur.

Before that, they had been denying reports about foreign militants ensconced in the country.

A former investigator of the Rapid Action Battalion told these correspondents earlier that they had come to know about the existence of LeT and at least seven of its political patrons in Bangladesh during the last BNP-Jamaat-led government rule.

But they could not carry the investigation through as they had limitations with the four-party alliance in power.

Sources said investigators are confirmed that banned Islamist outfit Harkatul-Jihad-al-Islami, Bangladesh, has all along been backing LeT operations

here. The local political links became a focus of the investigation after names of some political leaders came up during interrogations of the detained Lashkar men.

DB Deputy Commissioner Monirul Islam who leads the agency's drive against militancy said, "We are now verifying the information and names we've got from the detained Lashkar leaders."

He, however, would not say anything about identity of the political leaders suspected of aiding and abetting LeT in Bangladesh.

Sources close to DB say some of the suspects are local level leaders of a political party and some are quite prominent at national level.

Investigators would also examine if any of the political patrons of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh are involved in

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MARKET WATCH

Traders yet to display price charts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

No price chart was displayed either in the wholesale markets or in the retail outlets in Dhaka and Chittagong though Commerce Minister Faruk Khan asked the traders for displaying price charts of essential commodities from yesterday.

The traders of the two major business hubs said they were preparing the price charts to display within two or three days.

Talking to The Daily Star, Shahjahan Ali, a retailer at the city's Karwan Bazar, said he was preparing the price list to display in front of his shop for the customers.

He said the shopkeepers at Karwan Bazar may hang the charts in front of their shops soon.

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TCB active a little late in the day

Consignment of essentials not yet shipped from abroad; import seen as inadequate to get Ramadan market stable

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) remains uncertain about starting fair-price sale of essentials from the first day of Ramadan as the state-run organisation is yet to receive consignments of essentials from Malaysia and Thailand.

It would take more than 10 days for the goods to arrive in government warehouses from the ports of origin, TCB sources said.

Market operators fear that the delayed and inadequate import of goods might hamper the purpose of keeping the market stable amid high demand of essentials during Ramadan likely to begin on August 21.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at a regular cabinet meeting at the secretariat yesterday asked Commerce Minister Faruk

Khan to take measures to keep the market stable during Ramadan.

When asked MA Rouf Chowdhury, president of Bangladesh Edible Oil Refiners' Association (BEORA), said the TCB should have imported the essentials much earlier to have a positive impact on the local market.

He said the consumption of edible oil goes up to 1,50,000 tonnes during Ramadan against usual monthly consumption of 100,000 tonnes.

Bangladesh Wholesale Edible Oil Merchants Association President Sher Mohammad said the quantity of goods imported by TCB is too small to help keep the market stable during Ramadan.

It would be difficult for the state-run organisation to even meet the demand of the consumers in

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A worker, left, on the side of the under construction 20-storey Fareast Tower on Topkhana Road installs tiles on the wall from a hanging platform.

The bottom photo shows how dangerously his life hangs on the balance as a few shabby sandbags are kept on the crane as ballast for his weight and the platform.

Three workers died Sunday at Bell Tower in Dhanmondi in the capital when their platform, similar to this one, fell from several stories up onto the roof of another building.

PHOTO: SHAFIQUL ALAM



Koko, lawyers asked to explain 'forgery'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday asked Arafat Rahman Koko, younger son of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, and his two lawyers to explain within three weeks why an enquiry into forgery allegations against them should not be instigated.

The government earlier alleged that Koko and his counsels barrister Mahub Uddin Khokon and Taherul Islam Tawhid submitted a forged letter of authority while filing a



writ petition with the HC challenging the proceedings of a money laundering case against Koko.

The HC bench of justices Syed Refaat Ahmed and Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury asked them to reply why the court should not file a complaint with the chief metropolitan magistrate in Dhaka against them if the allegations are proved through inquiry.

The court also adjourned the hearing of the writ petition.

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3 outlaws killed brutally

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Three suspected operatives of outlawed Biplobi Communist Party were brutally killed by their rivals in Kushtia.

The severed heads of Ayub Ali, 35, of Boritupi, Joad Ali, 27, of Bangshitolu under sadar upazila, and Abdul Kaiyum, 45, of Bhabanipur in Kumarkhali upazila were found in front of the Kushtia Roads and Highways Department office yesterday at 8:45am.

Later, villagers of Sonaidangi in sadar upazila, 20 kilometres from the town, found three bodies and informed police.

Police rushed to the spot and recovered the bodies at about 1:30pm.

Police claimed that outlawed Gono Bahini had committed the crime to ensure their supremacy over other

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ছুটির দিনে কথা বলুন
মন খুলে, একদম নিশ্চিন্তে!

শুক্র ও শনিবার
সবচাইতে কম রেন্ট-এ
মাত্র ৪৯ পয়সা
দিন-রাত (রাত ১২টা - সন্ধ্যা ৬টা)

RANGAMATI Road blocked to protest army pullout

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Bangalee settlers in Rangamati yesterday put up barricades near Dighalchhari army camp under Barkal upazila demanding alternative security arrangements after the withdrawal of army camps from Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

They put up barricade by gathering at least 10 engine and rowing boats on the strip of Kaptai Lake, the entrance of Dighalchhari camp.

Around 2,000 protesters also barred Barkal Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) AKM Tariqul Alam from leaving the campsite for a couple of hours demanding guarantee of alternative security. They later let the UNO and four accompanying journalists leave upon verbal assurance.

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Mobile courts lack strong teeth

Drive against adulterated food starts today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is set to start anti-adulteration drive from today without any sting in the form of strict punishment against offenders, including the persons responsible for making foods toxic.

On July 23, the present government approved the Mobile Court Ordinance 2009, which lacks the provision for punishment like cancellation of trade licence.

However, the mobile court has been provided with the power to instantly try offenders, who are involved in adulteration and poisoning of food items.

But the new bill does not vest much authority in these mobile courts. It suggests that such courts may only fine the offenders and the maximum punishment will be a three-month simple imprisonment if any case is filed.

When asked, Industries Minister Dilip Barua told The Daily Star that the government would gradually increase the power of mobile courts to try criminals with strict punishment.

"We are going to start the anti-adulteration

drive from tomorrow [Tuesday] for ensuring the quality of food items during Ramadan," he said adding, "Initially, we are urging the manufacturers and businessmen to do ethical business, and not to involve in food adulteration."

"They should provide the consumers with quality food items, which are pure, accurate in measurement and toxin free," he said yesterday while speaking at a press briefing organised by the industries ministry.

With the new bill, the executive magistrates regain their authority to establish mobile courts to ensure food safety. After separation of the judiciary, the judicial magistrates only could operate such mobile courts against criminal activities, including adulteration of food.

The government has appointed two executive magistrates to run the mobile court in Dhaka.

"Simultaneously, we have taken initiative to strengthen the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) to ensure the quality of food items," said Barua adding, "As part of

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Swindling in the weirdest way

Man marries off wife to expatriate last year; manages flat, money, jewellery in the process

KAILASH SARKAR

Real life sometimes supercedes the fantastic plot of a cinema script. A man has been accused of arranging the marriage of his own wife with an expatriate man to extract money from him.

Monir Hossain Sikder, 35, married Salma Mustari Shumi in 2002 and then in January 2008 he got Salma married to Greece expatriate Bangladeshi youth Shilon Hossain Munshi.

Shilon Munshi filed a case with Shahbagh police station yesterday accusing both Monir and Salma of cheating him and misappropriating around Tk 50 lakh from him in the process.

In the case statement, Shilon mentioned that the fraudulent marriage was staged only to pocket money from him.

He also mentioned that he had lived a conjugal life with Salma in a flat at Banglamotor in the city for two months and had also spent a honeymoon at Cox's Bazar after the wedding.

"After I completed all formalities to take my wife to Greece, Salma refused to go and admitted during a telephone call to me that she was actually married to someone else," Shilon said.

Shahbagh police station officer-in-charge Rezaul Karim told The Daily Star that the case has been handed over to the detective branch of police for investigation.

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