

Ahab chief Galib still engaged in spreading militancy

Allege Jamaat-e Ahle Hadith leaders

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Freed on bail, Asadullah Al Galib, chief of the Islamist outfit Ahle Hadith Adolon Bangladesh (Ahab), is still engaged in spreading militancy and spending money from unknown sources.

The Ahab men, mostly divided, with no visible sources of income, are providing monthly salaries to some madrasa teachers for organisational activities.

This was alleged by leaders of Jamaat-e Ahle Hadith (Jah), an Ahab splinter group and the authorities of Al Markajul Islami As-Salafi Madrasa, in a joint press conference in the city yesterday.

The press conference was addressed by Rejaul Karim, secretary general of Jah and a teacher of Bogra Azizul Haque College, and Abdus Samad Salafi, superintendent and principal of the madrasa.

Galib was arrested in February 2005 as many arrested JMB militants named him as their spiritual leader, and he was implicated in nine cases.

However, Galib was bailed out from jail in September 2008.

Abdus Samad Salafi alleged that Galib and some of his loyal teachers have been sheltering outsiders, mostly university and college students at the dormitories of Al Markajul Islami As-Salafi at Nawdapara in Rajshahi city.

The pro-Ahab teachers led by Abdur Razzak Bin Yousuf often hold meetings with the outsiders at the madrasa mosque at midnight.

Although the madrasa is an institute under an NGO named Tawhid Trust and approved by Bangladesh Madrasa Education Board, Galib has been carrying out illegal activities of Ahab from the madrasa.

Several other Ahab groups including Ahle Hadith Jubo Sangha, whose members were involved with the banned Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), and Sonamoni are also functioning from the same campus.

Ahab is also publishing a monthly magazine named At

Tahreek from the madrasa, although its printer's line claimed its address as Hadith Foundation at Kajla area.

Rejaul Karim said when he was at Ahab, Galib had introduced him to JMB's executed chief Shayakh Abdur Rahman in 2002.

"Rahman sought my help for launching an armed struggle to stage an Islamic revolution in the country, but I refused terming it a stupid idea," he claimed.

"Later I left the organisation following Galib's militant connections and financial anomalies," he said, adding, "For playing a role against Galib, the JMB militants threatened me many times."

Rejaul said with the help of Galib, the JMB men used the facilities of some 1000 mosques across the country with the support of Revival of Islamic Heritage Society (RIHS), a Kuwait-based organisation that has been already expelled from the country for funding militancy through Ahab.

Galib founded Tawhid

Trust, but he was expelled from it for embezzling its fund of Tk 5 crore provided by Kuwait Embassy and RIHS.

Also known as Jomiatul Ehya-ut Turaj, the RIHS built the Nawdapara madrasa and a clinic at the madrasa compound that Galib is now forcibly using as his residence.

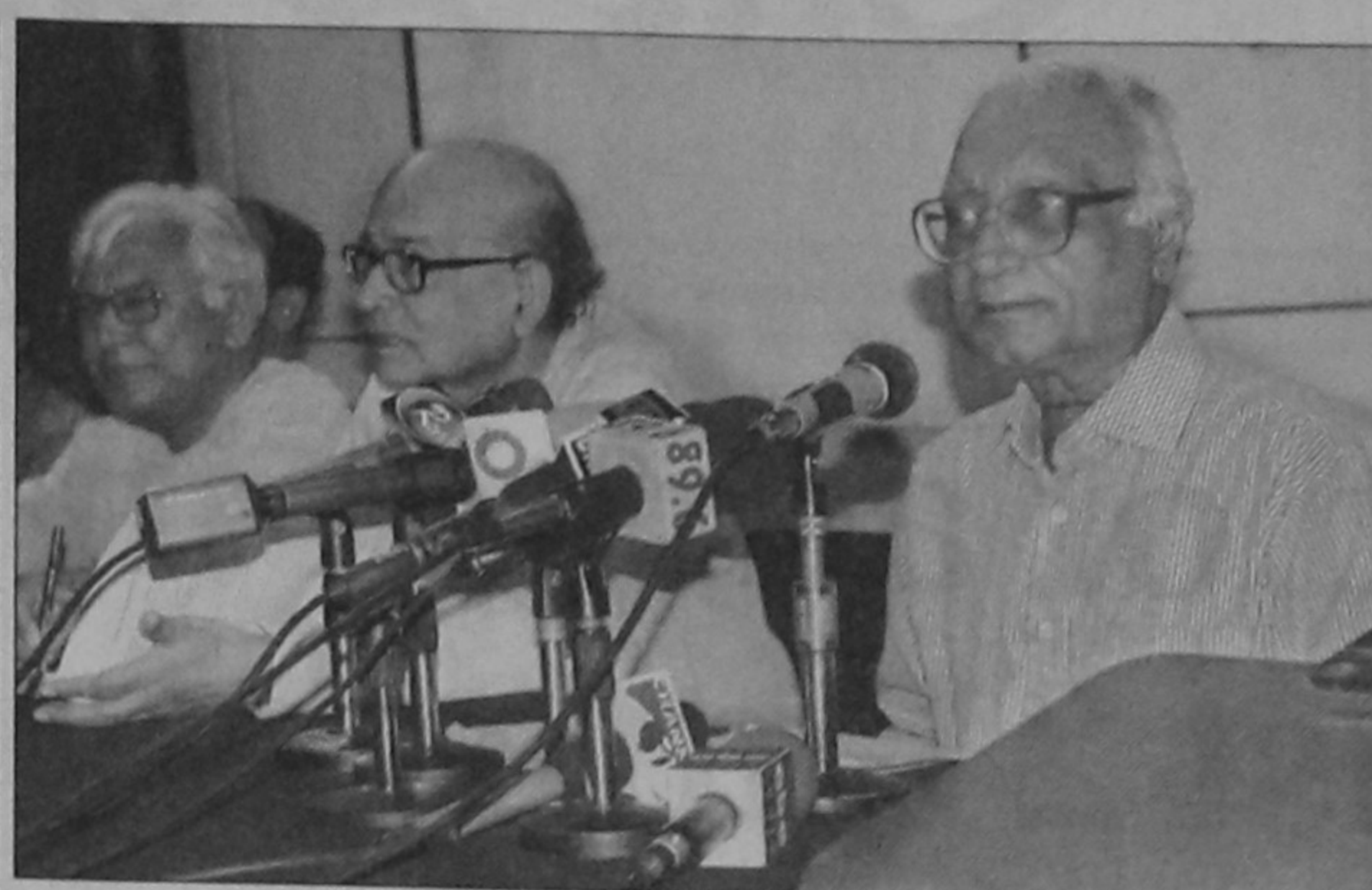
Galib was not available for comment.

His spokesman and Editor of At Tahreek Dr Sakawat Hossain, however, refuted the allegations.

Replying to a question, Sakawat claimed that Ahab is functioning from the madrasa following a decision of Tawheed Trust that was founded by Galib.

Asked about their monthly income and expenditure, he said Ahab receives some Tk 1.5 lakh a month as subscription from its members apart from donations from its well-wishers across the country.

"We spent some Tk 1 lakh as salaries for madrasa teachers and the rest for organisational activities," he headed.



Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury speaks at a press conference organised to present recommendations of university teachers on energy security at the Institution of Engineers in the city yesterday. On his right are Prof Muzaffer Ahmad and Prof Ahmed Kamal. (Story on Page 16)

'Ensure living wage for all'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

INCIDIN Bangladesh, a non-government organisation (NGO), yesterday demanded living wage for all so that everyone can fulfil the basic necessities and lead a respectable life.

The demand came from a press conference at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

The minimum living wage would ensure the wellbeing of the workers and improve social development through reducing poverty, said Ratan Sarkar, one of the executive directors of Incidin Bangladesh, in his written statement at the press conference.

He said the basic necessities and its market retail price should be considered in determining the wage.

The price of the food that is required for the workers should be determined by the cost of the allocated food per person in jail and hospital.

He also stressed introducing a suitable and acceptable process instead of old process in determining the wage.

Living wage would increase the productivity of the workers and reduce the absenteeism and capacitate the industry to be more competitive, he said.

The election manifesto of the ruling party Awami League had promised to implement the rights of the workers and their living wage, he added.

AKM Mustaque Ali, another executive director of INCIDIN Bangladesh, said living wage will contribute to the poverty reduction process of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Minar Pimple of UN Millennium Campaign, Nasimul Ahsan, Advocate Rafiqul Alam, Dipu Hasan, Roqibul Hasan, Rita Das, Mushfiqur Rahman, Aminul Islam, Tajnin Merin Lopa and Ahmed Borhan of Incidin Bangladesh were also present at the press conference.

United Airways to operate flights to KL, Kathmandu

UNB, Dhaka

United Airways, a private sector airline founded by non-resident Bangladeshis, is going to launch its operation on two new international routes by this month.

The new two routes will be Dhaka-Kuala Lumpur and Dhaka-Kathmandu.

Besides these two routes, the airline is going to add Dhaka-London route in its list by the end of this year.

"We are ready to start the Dhaka-Kuala Lumpur and Dhaka-Kathmandu routes by this month. On the other hand, we will try to start the Dhaka-London route in November. If we fail to do so then we will start the route by December," Deputy Manager (Marketing Support and PR) of the United Airways M Kamrul Islam told UNB.

He said the airline is going to procure another 170-seated MD-83 in this month.

"We will announce the date and time for these two routes after getting that aircraft," he said.

Kamrul said that the airliner will procure a 250-seated Boeing 767-200 ER by June 2010 to enrich its fleet.

Currently, the United Airways has two Dash-8 and one MD-83 aircrafts, Kamrul said adding the airliner is planning to procure another 50-seated Dash-8-300.

Initially for the Dhaka-London route, the airliner will use Dubai and Istanbul for its route as it will use 170 seated MD-83.

United Airways entered into the international arena on September 24, 2008 by launching its Dhaka-Kolkata flight.

The government recently took a decision to reallocate the frequency of local carriers' flights from Dhaka to London to allow private airlines to enter in this route.

Baby girl killed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cnawabganj

A baby girl was killed allegedly by her grandmother and uncle in Chapainawabganj on Thursday.

The victim was identified as Sujata Bala, two-and-a-half-month-old daughter of Paresh Barman of Barail village under Gomostapur upazila.

Sub-Inspector (SI) Hyder Ali of Gomostapur Police Station told The Daily Star that Sujata was sleeping with her parents on Wednesday night, but they did not find her in the bed at about 2:00am.

After searching relatives and villagers found the body of Sujata in a pond adjacent to their house in the next morning.

The police sent the body to sadar hospital morgue.

The IO said Sujata might have been killed over a family feud.

Victim's mother Zita Rani filed a case with Gomostapur Police Station accusing her mother-in-law Pushpa Rani and brother-in-law Ananda on Thursday night.

But none was arrested in this connection so far.



Nagorik Uddyog and Partnership of Women in Action jointly organised the national conference of workers in the non-formal sector at Rabindra Sarobar in the city yesterday.

ATTACK ON TEMPLE

Three cops suspended

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Three police officers were suspended on Thursday on charges of neglecting their duties in connection with an arson attack on a temple at Mokshedpur village under Palashbari upazila here.

The suspended officers were sub-inspectors (SIs) Julfikar Ali and Jalal Ahmed of Palashbari Police Station and Akhtaruzzaman, in-charge of Harinabari police investigation centre.

Police said a quarrel developed between the families of Ranajit Kumar and Bepal Hossain of the same village over drying cow dung in the sun. At one stage, a clash ensued between the inmates of the two families that left two people injured.

Following the incident, the rival group vandalised a local temple and carry out an arson attack which created tense situation among the Hindu community.

Though being informed, police did not intervene in the matter while they were on duty, sources said.

Gaibandha police superintendent suspended the three officers for negligence in duties.

New timing of War Museum

BSS, Dhaka

Liberation War Museum will remain open for visitors from 10:00am to 5:00pm everyday excepting Sunday during the October-February winter season, says a press release.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

MA Hannan, a former law-maker, passed away due to ailments at his village home at Birkuli in Gowainghat upazila in Sylhet on Thursday at the age of 67.

He was buried at his family graveyard after namaz-e-janaza at Sonar Bangla High School ground after Asr prayers yesterday.

Sylhet City Corporation Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran and Imran Ahmed, MP consoled the death.

Abdul Hannan

METRO DESK



Abdul Hannan, former division chief of Planning Commission and father of Chief of General Staff of Bangladesh Army Major General Abdul Hafiz, passed away due to pancreas cancer at CMH Dhaka yesterday at the age of 83, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, five sons, a daughter and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

His Quikhwani will be held on Monday after Maghrib prayers at 8/16, Sir Syed Road, Mohammadpur in the city.

Goods train catches fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Ten people were injured while trying to extinguish a fire in a goods train near Raipur Railway Station in Sirajganj yesterday.

The injured were admitted to Sirajganj Sadar Hospital and local clinics.

The fire originated from the engine of the train at around 2:00pm on its way to Sirajganj from Iswardi.

On information, fire fighters from Sirajganj fire brigade rushed to the spot and extinguished the fire.

Following the incident, train movement on the Sirajganj-Iswardi route was disrupted for around four hours.

Transport workers clash in Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Seventeen people were injured in a clash between two rival groups over holding of the election of transport workers union at Gaibandha bus terminal yesterday.

Pro-election group put the union office at the bus terminal under lock and key at noon demanding immediate election of transport workers' union committee and the clash ensued.

The incident disrupted bus communication from and to Gaibandha bus terminal for three hours, causing untold suffering to the passengers.

Agitated transport workers said the tenure of the existing committee of Gaibandha Transport Workers' Union ended one and a half year ago, but it turned a deaf ear to trade union registration authorities, the deputy commissioner and the police super who had asked them to hold a fresh election.

The injured include Secretary of the existing committee Jamilur Rahman Jamil, pro-election group's Azizur Rahman, Abu Hossain Abu, Moinul Huq and Habibur Rahman.

DHAKA TODAY

Roundtable
The daily Prothom Alo organises a roundtable titled 'To change Bangladesh'. Venue: The daily Prothom Alo office. Time: 10:00am.

Lecture
Asiatic Society of Bangladesh organises Mustafizur Rahman Khan and Saleha Khanam Memorial Lecture 2009. Venue: Society auditorium. Time: 4:30pm.

Art exhibition
The inaugural ceremony of an exhibition of artworks by Farzana Ahmed Umi and Tanny Day will be held. Venue: Zainul Gallery, Faculty of Fine Art, Dhaka University. Time: 3:00pm.

Symposium
United Nations Association of Bangladesh organises a symposium to mark International Day of Peace and International Day of Non-Violence. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 6:00pm.

Convention
Bangladesh Union Parishad Forum organises its National Convention 2009. Venue: Hotel Sonargaon. Time: 9:00am.

Seminar
Youth Eco Forum, Japan organises a seminar on 'Environment and Electricity'. Venue: Bangabandhu International Conference Centre. Time: 4:00pm.

Workshop
Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC) and BDI will jointly organise a workshop titled 'Extreme poverty and graduation dynamics'. Venue: LGED auditorium. Time: 9:30am.

View exchange
Shraboni Prokashoni organises a view exchange meeting on Frankfurt Book Fair 2009 and Bangladesh publications. Venue: 132 Aziz Super Market. Time: 5:00pm.

Rotary Dhaka Central
The regular meeting of Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club. Time: 1:30pm.

WEATHER TODAY

Moderate rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at a few places over Khulna, Barisal, Dhaka and Chittagong divisions and at one or two places over Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:43pm today and rises at 6:51am tomorrow.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 36.6 degree Celsius was recorded at Sylhet and the lowest of 25.4 degrees at Jessore.

The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity in percentage		
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	35.8	28.0	79	92
Chittagong	32.5	26.7	79	82
Rajshahi	34.0	26.5	79	88
Khulna	34.5	26.5	80	95
Barisal	34.2	26.5	78	86
Sylhet	36.6	26.4	68	63
Cox's Bazar	32.8	26.7	77	91

Banks pledge part of \$10b financing

FROM PAGE 1

But they said the local banks cannot entirely finance the sector as the investment requirement is huge and also because the banks understood little about the power plant technology and the managerial skills of the entrepreneurs an issue that can mar the possibility of recovery of loans from the projects.

The government side assured them of sharing knowledge on the power sector through continuous workshops to facilitate financing projects and monitoring them.

The bankers said the government still needed to tap international financial institutions and that they were willing to help the government in this regard by playing a role of catalysts.

"But to ensure easy financing transparent bidding process is a must," said a banker at the discussion echoing other bankers' sentiments.

The discussion was participated, among others, by State Minister for Power Enamul Haq, Adviser to the prime minister on energy Dr Towfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, Bir Bikram, Power Secretary AK Azad and PDB Chairman Alamgir Kabir.

Alamgir Kabir, who made a presentation on Investment Opportunity in Power Sector depicting a government vision of zero load shedding beyond 2010, said that the government was expecting 25 to 30 percent financing from the local banks.

But he urged the banks to think about long-term financing, which they are not used to make the financing cheaper by lowering interest rates.

Kabir noted that while the PDB has always paid power plant operators money for power supply on time and there were a host of guarantees ensuring investment return, the country needed to increase power tariff in the near future to ensure a healthy financial situation in the sector.

"The government is serious about tariff rationalisation. As you know, rental power is a costly solution. But we will have to do it and tariff rationalisation is necessary. The poor section of consumers will get government subsidy," he said, "and I am sure once the quality of power supply improves, the customers would not feel offended by tariff hike."

Towfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury said the expected financing was continuous and it should not be a problem for the banks once the lending took a structure. "We have to be innovative. The Non-resident Bangladeshis (who send home \$10b each year) may be attracted to invest in the projects through various means," he said.

He pointed out that the government has set up teams with PDB, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), Roads and Highways and Railway to assist and ensure power contractors that

the roads, bridges and water navigation systems were working properly for transport of plant equipment and other raw material.

Besides, in the past the PDB had given contractors undeveloped land, which affected the project implementation period. This time the land issue would be addressed before the contracts are signed.

Urging the banks to nurture power projects Elahi said, "the PDB and the power ministry will be your partners."

Secretary AK Azad noted that the country has had an average GDP growth of 6 percent over the last one decade. But there are huge unmet power demands. If that had been addressed the GDP rate would have been 7.5 percent.

"Right now our priority is for the next irrigation season. We are aiming at 250mw to 300mw rental diesel-fired power to ensure uninterrupted irrigation," Azad said, adding that that was why the government would not tolerate bidders that would fail to launch their plants on time.

"We want to implement the projects in a very transparent way. As part of it, we have put up the bid documents in the PDB website," he added.

The government has planned four 500mw coal-fired power projects demanding \$3 b investment under a private-public participation system in which the govern-

ment would provide \$750m dollars investment.

Besides, the PDB has floated tender for 530mw rental power projects and planned another 800mw fast track public sector power projects and 2400mw more as private and rental power projects.

Lending would be required not just for these power projects, but also to build transmission and distribution lines.

A representative of the IDCOL pledged Tk 300 crore lending for the rental projects and another Tk 700 crore for the large projects.

A Pubali Bank high official said that his bank was eager to invest Tk200 crore. The Sonali and Janata banks also made a promise of lending out through syndication.

A Premier Bank official noted two risks in financing power projects. One is related to the long tenure of power sector lending. "Commercial banks are habituated with short-term recovery. They will have to work on long-term financing," he said.

The other risk is not with the government's payment, but with the contractor-cum lenders' managerial failure to implement project properly leading to a massive loss.

An HSBC official added that local financial institutions did not have the capacity of investing in large sectors. Without foreign financing it would not be possible to achieve the investment target.