

Three JMB men jailed for Aug 17 serial blasts in Bagerhat

A CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

A Bagerhat court yesterday sentenced three operatives of banned Jama'at ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) to seven years' imprisonment in a case for serial blasts in Bagerhat on August 17, 2005.

The convicts are Ziaur Rahman alias Sabbir alias Sagar of Bagatipara in Natore, Anisuzzaman alias Anis of Char Astail village under Mollahat upazila of Bagerhat, and Abu Taleb of Garfa village of the upazila.

Judge Md Rezaul Karim of Additional District and Sessions judge's Court-2

also fined the convicts Tk 5,000 each, in default, they are to suffer one more year in jail.

The court acquitted eight others including JMB majlis-e-Shura member Rakib Hasan alias Hafez Mahmud alias Russell alias Haider as charges against them could not be proved.

Assistant Public Prosecutor (APP) Khan Mohammad Ali Badsha said eight

JMB men were acquitted of charges due to weak and biased investigation by the investigation officer (IO) of the case.

Ultra poor in char areas left out of OMS of rice

A CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Several thousand ultra poor people living at different char (newly emerged landmass) areas on Teesta and Dharla river basin are yet to get the benefit of OMS of rice as five dealers are yet to get permission for running OMS centres at the union level in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

OMS of rice started in Lalmonirhat town on February 25, but poor people in the char villages have to purchase one kg of low quality rice for Tk 25 to 26 in the local market, whereas rice sells at Tk 22 a kg at OMS centres.

"We, the ultra poor people in char villages are deprived of OMS facility that is available in town areas. It is difficult for us to purchase rice at government fixed price from there, as most of the char villages are about 10 to 14 kilometres off the town. So we have to purchase rice at high price from the local market," Momena Begum, 40, a resident of

Char Gokunda in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, said.

"The government opens OMS facility for the ultra poor people but those in remote villages are deprived while town dwellers are enjoying its benefit," said Salma Begum, another woman of the same village.

The authorities decided to open 14 OMS centres in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila -- nine in Lalmonirhat municipality areas and five others in nine unions of Sadar upazila.

But the authorities concerned arranged letter of permission for nine dealers to open OMS centres in Lalmonirhat municipality on February 25, leaving out rural areas at the union level. Five dealers submitted all necessary papers for getting recruitment as OMS dealers for union areas in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila food control office on February 24 but they are yet to get

permission due to unknown reasons.

At a press conference in Lalmonirhat Press Club on Tuesday noon, the five dealers -- Golam Mostafa, Umar Ali, Ayub Ali, Saiful Haque Mandol and Nazmul Haque Patwary said OMS centres in union areas could not be opened as Lalmonirhat DC is not giving permission to the dealers.

When contacted, District Food Controller Abdus Salam said there is no need to open OMS centres at the union level, as nine OMS centres in the town area is sufficient to meet the demand.

Denying the allegation of dealers, Lalmonirhat DC Mohammad Ala Uddin Fakir said food office has sent a letter to his office seeking permission to open five OMS centres at the union level, but copies of any government circular have not been submitted with the application.



PHOTO: STAR

Ultra poor people in char areas of Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila have to bear the brunt of price hike of rice as OMS centres at union level are yet to be opened.

FEB 9 VIOLENCE AT RU Bail prayers of 82 Shibir arrestees turned down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The District Judge's Court yesterday rejected bail prayers of 82 Shibir leaders and activists who were arrested in connection with February 9 violence at Rajshahi University.

The Shibir men accused in three separate cases appealed to the court after their bail prayers were rejected at a metropolitan magistrate's court on March 3.

Meanwhile, Shibir leader Ekram Hossain, accused of murdering RU Chhatra League activist Faruk Hossain, was yesterday taken on a seven-day remand.

Police produced Ekram in the Metropolitan Magistrate's court, seeking a 10-day remand. Magistrate Ziaur Rahman granted seven

days' remand for the Shibir leader. He also rejected Ekram's bail prayer.

A team of Rab Intelligence Wing arrested Ekram, president of Amir Ali Hall unit of Islami Chhatra Shibir and a masters' student of RU Islamic studies department, at Kalampur in Dhamrai upazila on Sunday.

He was taken to Rajshahi on Tuesday.

During interrogation by Rab, Ekram linked key central leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami and Shibir with the killing.

He told a press briefing on Monday that prior to the attack on February 9, RU Shibir unit president Shamsul Alam Golap was in constant contact with the key Jamaat leaders and Shibir central president Rezaul Karim.

The key Jamaat leaders involved include Jamaat

Ameer Motiur Rahman Nizami, Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid and Maulana Delwar Hossain Sayeedi, Ekram claimed.

UNB adds: Police on Tuesday arrested a Shibir leader at Barura upazila Jamaat office under Comilla district.

Officer-in-Charge of Barura Police Station Ratan Krishna Nath said police arrested Shibir leader Mizanur Rahman at upazila Jamaat office where local Shibir leaders and activists were holding a secret meeting at noon.

Police also recovered 230 Jihadi books from the office.

Other Shibir leaders and activists attending the meeting, however, managed to escape arrest, police said.



PHOTO: HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU

Chhoto Jamuna River flowing through Naogaon town had waist-deep water in this area during this period of the year only five years ago but now it has turned into a dried up land with pockets of stagnant water due to continued grabbing and lack of dredging.

SNIPPETS

Two rapists get life

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

A Magura court yesterday awarded life imprisonment to two people for raping a teenager at Majgram under Magura Sadar upazila in 2005. Judge Mohammad Ruhul Amin Khandaker of Women and Children Repression Prevention Court, Magura, pronounced the verdict. He also fined the convicts Tk 25 thousand each, in default, they are to suffer another three years in jail. The convicts are Jamirul Islam and Tarikul Islam. They hail from Majgram village of the upazila. According to prosecution, the two kidnapped the girl, 15, from Barunatal village on May 5, 2005 and raped her, confining to the house of Mashiur Rahman at Majgram village. On information, elder brother of the victim with the help of locals rescued her from there. Victim's family filed a case with Magura Sadar Police Station against the two.

Fire kills 3-year-old boy

A CORRESPONDENT, Gopalganj

A boy was killed and 16 tin-shed houses were gutted in a fire at Bamandanga village under Mukshudpur upazila of Gopalganj yesterday. Police and locals said the fire originated from an oven at the kitchen of one Riju Munshi of the village in the afternoon and soon engulfed the house, killing Riju's three-year-old son Anik who was asleep inside the house. The fire quickly spread to nearby 16 houses and gutted them completely.

Hartal in Barkal upazila

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

The first day of a two-day hartal called by Samo Odhikar Andolan (SOA), a platform for settlers, and Parbatya Bangalee Chhatra Parishad (PBCP) passed off peacefully in Barkal upazila of the district yesterday. Both organisations called the hartal protesting murder of SOA activist Harun, 35. Harun went missing on Friday and his body was found on Sunday. Settlers blamed local indigenous people for the killing. Educational institutions and shops at the upazila headquarters were closed while vehicles off the roads. Attendance at banks and government offices was thin during the hartal. Some pickets obstructed a few engine boats at Suvalong in the morning. They however released those after an hour. Activists of SOA and PBCP brought out a joint procession at Barkal upazila headquarters demanding arrest and exemplary punishment of Harun's killers.

Three killed in trawler capsized

UNB, Munshiganj

Three people were killed as a trawler capsized in the Padma near Hasail Bazar in Tongibari upazila yesterday. The victims were identified as Quddus, 35, Samal, 20, and Asharful, 8, of Netrakona district. Officer-in-Charge of Tongibari Police Station Abdullah said the trawler, carrying about 100 passengers from Hasail Bazar to Padma char, sank in the river at around 7:00am due to over loading. On information, police rushed to spot and recovered three bodies from inside the trawler while the rest managed to swim ashore.

'Tortured to death' for Tk 150

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Owner of a grocery shop at Nekmarad Bazar under Ranishankoil upazila in Thakurgaon district allegedly beat dead an employee for 'stealing' Tk 150 from the shop on Tuesday.

Dinesh Chandra, 20, son of Padda Lal of Kalonda village under Baliadangi upazila of the district, had been working at the shop of Shahidullah Haji at Nekmarad Bazaar for about three years.

On Monday afternoon Shahidullah claimed that Dinesh stole Tk 150 from his cash box and informed Dinesh's father Padda Lal through one Abul Hossain to come to Nekmarad after sunset as they arranged a meeting for arbitration?

"Padda Lal came to Shahidullah's house at about 9:00pm. Saying that

Padda's son stole money Shahidullah started beating Dinesh. Padda requested them to free his son and said that he will pay that amount. Then Padda lost sense," said Abdul Wahab, chairman of Vanore Union Parishad.

After regaining sense, he told Shahidullah to bring his son before him but he declined.

Next morning Padda Lal came to Shahidullah's house with Ward Member Pober Ali and saw some people whispering.

Shahidullah came out and told Padda that his son committed suicide at night. Then he unlocked the door of a room where Dinesh saw his son's body hanging with mosquito net.

Dinesh burst into tears. Accompanying Pober Ali, he went to Ranishankoil police station, Pober Ali said.

Police went to the spot at about 10:30am and recovered the body that bore injury marks on the shoulders, hands and back, said Ranishankoil police station officer-in-charge Jahedul Islam.

The victim's father filed a murder case with Ranishankoil Police Station accusing four people including Shahidullah Haji on Tuesday evening, the OC said.

The body was sent to Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

Seeking anonymity, a neighbour of Shahidullah told this correspondent that at night he heard screams that seemed to be due to torture.

None was arrested in connection with the incident as Shahidullah and other male members of the family went into hiding, said the OC.

KUSHTIA, MEHERPUR Two housewives, school student commit 'suicide'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Two housewives and a school student allegedly committed suicide in Kushtia and Meherpur on Tuesday.

According to police, Ripa Khatun, 15, daughter of Golam Mostafa of Sadaki village in Kumarkhali upazila in Kushtia killed herself on Tuesday afternoon.

Sources said Ripa, a student of class nine at Patharbaria Moziobor Rahman Baria Moziobor affairs with one Tariq of the same village.

Tariq was father of a 4-year-old child.

On Sunday, Ripa left her house with Tariq and stayed at the residence of a Tariq's relative at Choroakol village in the same upazila.

The next day the family members rescued Ripa and confined her to a room.

On Tuesday afternoon Ripa hanged from the ceiling of the room locking it from inside. Her body was recovered in the evening.

In Meherpur, 22-year-old housewife Rinki died on the way to a clinic at Bamandi in Gangni upazila at about 4:30 pm on Tuesday.

Rinki, daughter of Moslem Uddin of Mohammdpur village was married to one Alauddin, son of Tenger Ali of Kumaridanga five months ago.

She was married to one Tariq of the same village.

They said Rinki's body was recovered breaking open the door and she was admitted to Bamandi private clinic where doctors declared her dead.

Moslem Uddin, father of Rinki alleged that Rinki was strangled by her husband.

A case was filed with Gangni police station.

In another incident, Morium Khatun, 24, wife of Ingraj Ali of Mohammdpur village allegedly took poison at about 1:30 am on Tuesday over a family feud and died in the morning.

According to a family member of the victim, Morium, daughter of Serajul Islam of Pargol village in Daulatpur upazila in Kushtia was married to Ingraj five years ago.

They had no children and the couple often locked in quarrel.

On the fateful night, Morium took poison. She was taken to Daulatpur upazila health complex where she died the next morning.



PHOTO: STAR

A large number of people of the villages around Barapukuria coalmine in Phulbari upazila in Parbatipur district start an indefinite hunger strike near the entrance of Barapukuria Coal Mining Company Ltd yesterday demanding rehabilitation and compensation for the people affected by land subsidence due to underground coal mining.