

Ansarullah alert

FROM PAGE 1

The organisation has built a radical Islamist network over the last five years and kept close contact with other Islamist militant groups inside the country.

All this revelations came at a press briefing where detectives also disclosed the detention of nine Ansarullah members from different parts of the capital on Saturday.

The nine -- Kazi Mohammad Rezwan, 30, Naimul Hasan, 28, Ali Azad, 28, Jahidul Islam, 27, Junnun Shikder, 27, Amirul Islam, 25, Abu Hanif, 23, Saiful Islam, 21, and Al Asadullah alias Abdullah alias Md Piyas, 19, -- were taken under five days' remand yesterday in a case under the anti-terrorism act.

While making the arrests, the law enforcers seized arms training manuals and scripts, a large number of books on jihad, 25 compact discs of sermons on armed jihad, three laptops, two desktop computers and

publications of the group. **THE MISSION**

At the press briefing, held at the media centre of Dhaka Metropolitan Police in the morning, Joint Commissioner Monirul Islam of Detective Branch explained Ansarullah's organisational structure, finance and links as revealed in the seized documents and primary interrogation of the arrestees.

Starting as an online group active with blogs and websites, Ansarullah emerged as an organisation with a four-stage mission called *Imara*, the police official added.

"The first level is *Dawah*," he explained. "*Dawah* invites to and inspires people in armed jihad; the second, *Idad*, is the planning and preparation phase of the jihad."

In the third stage, *Ribat*, the organisation will carry out guerrilla attacks on atheists, the persons it considers rivals and government institutions. It will take responsi-

bility for the attacks. The final stage, *Kital*, refers to the killing of all opposing forces to establish Sharia-based rule in the country, Monirul said, adding that the team is currently at the Ibad stage.

The outfit's central body is called Majlis-e-Shura. **STRATEGY**

Monirul said the Ansarullah use tactics of international terrorist organisations and operate through sleeper cells which are small units of three to four people to carry out part of an operation.

"Members of one sleeper cell have no information or knowledge of other sleeper cells," he said.

At the beginning of every month, said a detective wishing anonymity, members of Ansarullah plan their activities for the entire month and target who they will kill for "anti-Islam activity".

FINANCE AND LINKAGES

The Ansarullah team is financed by collections from affluent members who

include private university students and those working abroad, and from sales proceeds of the books and CDs of Muhammad Jasimuddin Rahmani, the spiritual leader of the organisation, said detectives.

Jasimuddin, arrested on August 12 from Barguna, is currently under Task Force Intelligence custody for quizzing, Monirul said.

Detectives found that apart from Rajib's killers, Rezwan Sharif, arrested in 2009 in Yemen for his association with AQAP leader Anwar al-Awlaki, Quazi Nafis, currently in a US prison for planning an attack on New York's Federal Reserve Bank; and Rajib Karim, now in a UK prison for planning to blow up a British Airways plane, were all members of Ansarullah.

Monirul claimed that the arrestees had revealed the names of many of their top leaders, including second-in-command Izaz Hossain, who escaped to Pakistan in 2008.

"Some of the websites of



The Detective Branch of police are taking nine arrestees, who are allegedly members of the Ansarullah Bangla Team, a militant organisation, to the DB office on Minto Road in the capital after producing them before the media at the media cell adjacent to the office yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

the Ansarullah team operates from Pakistan and Izaz controls their activities from there."

He quoted arrestees saying Ansarullah supports radical Islamist groups such as Hefajat-e Islam and many members of the group

worked as volunteers at Hefajat's May 5 Dhaka siege programme.

The Daily Star investigation too revealed that Ansarullah had links with such banned Islamist militant groups as Harkat-ul-Jihad-Al Islami (Huji) and

Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB).

Detectives said that before emerging as the Ansarullah Bangla Team, the group used to operate under different names such as Jamatul Muslimin and under the banners of differ-

ent NGOs and research bodies.

Though the exact number of members is not known, Ansarullah is active in Rajshahi, Chhapainawabganj, Barguna, Chittagong and Cox's Bazar.

Mamata rejects

FROM PAGE 16

her party's strong opposition to a constitution amendment bill proposed to be introduced in the Rajya Sabha for implementation of the LBA.

In a post on her Facebook account, she said, "In the Land Boundary Agreement, the state government had mentioned to the Indian National Security Advisor and the previous and present Ministers of External Affairs the need for obtaining consent from the people residing in the areas that are to be transferred. It must be noted that our state of West Bengal will get only about 7,000 acres of land but will have to cede nearly 17,000 acres of land to Bangladesh."

The LBA envisages an exchange of 161 enclaves held adversely by Bangladesh and India. The boundary agreement cannot be accepted without

taking the local people, who live in the transferable areas, into account and without their consent," said Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee.

"What is the hurry of the Indian government to give away our land and our water without the consent of the state government?" Mamata posed questions.

India had given away land from Assam and Tripura states to the country concerned, she said.

"The interests of the states cannot be compromised this way. We strongly urge that the Indian government must follow the established federal norms of the country in the interest of overall well being of the country and its people."

"We maintain friendship and good relations with Bangladesh, but it should not be at the cost of the people of West Bengal," Mamata said.

Hopes low for peace talks: Palestinian FM

AFP, Quito

Palestinians have "serious doubts" about Israel's commitment to recently resumed peace talks, but they remain committed to participating in the negotiations, the top Palestinian diplomat said Friday in Ecuador.

"We do not have high expectations of the negotiations so far because we know in advance the official position of the Israeli government," foreign minister Riyad al-Malki told reporters during a visit to Quito.

Malki stressed that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government has not "agreed to cease illegal settlement construction in the occupied Palestinian territories," which has fueled skepticism of the peace talks.

"We have serious doubts about Israel's participation and the desire and faith that Israel shows in the negotiations, but that should not stop us from participating with our full faith and desire

as Palestinians," he added.

The parties resumed long-stalled direct peace negotiations last month after a three-year hiatus, but the talks have been overshadowed by Israeli plans to build more than 2,000 new homes for Jewish settlers on occupied Palestinian territory.

Malki expressed hope that Israel would adopt a "different view" and "surprise" Palestinian negotiators.

The Palestinian foreign minister also condemned the wave of violence engulfing Egypt, Syria and Lebanon, where 42 people were killed and hundreds wounded earlier in car bombs in the port city of Tripoli.

The violence marked the single worst attack in Lebanon since the 1975-1990 civil war.

Despite the spiraling bloodshed across the region, "we are totally against any foreign intervention in any country," Malki said.

Jamaat cannot contest

FROM PAGE 16

The CEC made the remarks while announcing the schedule for the by-polls in the conference room of the Election Commission Secretariat.

The constituency fell vacant following the death of lawmaker Golam Shabur Tulu in a road accident on July 26.

The last date for submission of nomination papers is September 5, scrutiny of the papers will be held on September 7 and the last date for withdrawal of nomination is September 15, the CEC announced.

The constituency, which consists of three upazilas, has a total of 2,31,003 voters. Barisal regional election officer Mostafa Faruk will work as the returning officer in the by-polls.

Voting begins at 8:00am and continues till 4:00pm without a break. The day of the election will be a public holiday in the constituency.

On August 1, following a writ petition, a three-member HC bench ruled that Jamaat's registration with the EC as a political party has no legal effect.

Jamaat is yet to file an

appeal to the Supreme Court against the judgment, as the full text of the verdict has not been released.

EC DIALOGUE

The EC will meet representatives of different foreign donor agencies tomorrow to discuss the logistic and financial support that they offer the commission to run many of its projects and arrange elections.

Rakibuddin observed, "We sat with them several times earlier to discuss their support. We will meet on August 27 for the same purpose."

Fakhrul accuses Joy of branding Bangladesh as militant country

STAR REPORT

Acting BNP secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday accused the prime minister's son Sajeeb Wazed Joy of trying to brand Bangladesh as a militant country.

He claimed that Joy in one of his articles had mentioned that around 35 percent members of the Bangladesh Army were militants.

"It is a deep-rooted conspiracy [against the army]," Fakhrul said at a mass campaign programme at Sadar upazila in Thakurgaon.

He urged people to resist "such conspiracies" against the country.

Fakhrul said democracy and people's life were not safe in the hands of the Awami League-led government.

"Innocent orphan boys were shot dead during a crackdown on a peaceful Hefajat rally in the dead of night. And the media was kept away from the scene at the behest of this government," he said.

The BNP leader, however, said his party did not support Hefajat-e Islam's 13-point demand.

A vested quarter has been propagating that the BNP backed Hefajat's demands, said Fakhrul.

He said his party had always believed in the freedom of women, and the BNP government set up a separate ministry for women in its tenure between 1991 and 1996.

Those who want to bring foreign soldiers into the country are busy labelling the country as a haven of militants, he said.

There will be no election in the country unless it is held under a non-partisan government, said Fakhrul.

He alleged that the government had been running the country by force, ignoring all laws and people's sentiments.

"It [the government] has given transit to India but failed to get anything from the neighbouring country in return," said the BNP leader.

INDO-BANGLA BORDER DISPUTES Demarcation teams to meet in Nov again

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The border demarcation teams from Bangladesh and India have decided to meet again in November to resolve the problems of unsettled areas at two places along the international border of the two countries.

The decision was taken at the three-day 82nd Indo-Bangladesh Joint Border Conference which concluded in Agartala on Saturday, according to reports in Indian newspapers.

Bangladesh and India have had disputed and adversely possessed areas at 25 locations along the 4,095-km boundary between the two countries, with 23 of them being resolved in the last four years.

But the disputes over two areas -- Muhurichar in southern Tripura (75 acres) and Chandan Nagar in northern Tripura (148 acres) -- are yet to be settled.

Abdul Mannan, director general of Bangladesh Land Record and Survey, led a six-member delegation at the meeting.

The Indian side was led by NR Biswal, Survey of India's Kolkata-based Director (in-charge of eastern Indian states).

"There are some 500 border pillars along the India-Bangladesh border in Tripura. There are some pillars either missing or damaged at five locations. We will jointly identify the place of the missing pillars

and take steps to repair them," Mannan told reporters at Agartala yesterday.

Biswal said the officials of the two countries would jointly conduct a survey and re-demarcate disputed areas, where border pillars had been missing for a long time, and embankments required for the protection of the border areas.

Mannan said the last border conference was held in Dhaka and the next meeting would also be held in Comilla to discuss border-related problems with India's West Bengal.

Talking to reporters, the officials of both the sides admitted that the long-pending border problems between the two countries would not be resolved unless India ratified the Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) with Bangladesh.

The two countries first signed the LBA in 1974. The LBA was signed again with additional protocol in Dhaka on September 6, 2011. The agreement envisaged exchange of 162 enclaves, adversely possessed lands and demarcation of 6.5 km undemarcated border.

But the Indian government has yet not been able to place the LBA bill in parliament amid protest by opposition parties.

Of the 4,095-km-long border between India and Bangladesh, Tripura shares a 856-km border, while West Bengal shares a maximum of 2,216 km, followed by Meghalaya (443 km), Mizoram (318 km) and Assam (262 km).

Urea price

FROM PAGE 16

briefing at her ministry in the afternoon.

The decision to cut the urea price comes hardly a week after the ruling Awami League's Central Working Committee recommended reducing its price to make farmers happy ahead of the next general elections.

Burdened with a huge subsidy following a price hike in chemical fertilisers on the international market, the government in June 2011 increased the price of urea from Tk 12 to Tk 20 per kg.

As against the country's annual requirements of about 24.50 lakh metric tonnes of urea, a deficit of around 17 lakh metric tonnes of the fertiliser is met by imports.

Dealers who have already got the fertiliser from the government at Tk 20 per kg for the next cropping season will be compensated, the minister mentioned.

As for the reasons behind the price cut, she said the government had decided to reduce the price considering fertiliser prices on the international market and keeping up the ongoing agriculture production trend in future.

The government in three phases reduced prices of non-urea fertilizers -- triple super phosphate (TSP) to Tk 22 from Tk 80 per kg, murate of potash (MoP) to Tk 15 from Tk 70, and diammonium phosphate (DAP) to Tk 27 from Tk 90 between January 2009 and October 2012.

This initiative is helping farmers avoid an excessive use of urea in their fields.

To boost agriculture production, the government had increased seed supply up to 55 percent from 17 percent, and had been providing 20 percent subsidy for the bill of electricity consumed in irrigation, Matia added.

Garment workers

FROM PAGE 1

Nearly a thousand workers of several garment factories blocked the road around 9:00am causing huge traffic congestion in the morning rush hours, said Mohammad Ali, officer-in-charge of Bhatara Police Station.

Workers of a factory of the Nassa Group at Joar Sahara began the demonstration in front of Radisson Hotel. The protest then spread to nearby Shewra Bazar area as workers of adjoining factories joined the agitating workers, the OC said.

A worker of the factory of the Nassa Group told The Daily Star that workers of

other factories of the group were getting lunch allowance but they were being deprived of it.

The workers have long been demanding lunch allowance and some other benefits, including Eid bonus for those who have worked at least for six months at the garment unit.

Contacted, an official of the Nassa Group said the authorities had accepted workers' demands.

Several workers of James Design Ltd and Euro Zone Fashion said workers from the Nassa Group's unit had hurled stones at their factories.

Some workers from these two factories also joined the

protest.

Police first urged the agitating workers to clear the busy road but they did not pay heed to the law enforcers, said Khandker Lutful Kabir, deputy commissioner of Gulshan Division of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Police then baton-charged them and hurled several tear gas shells to disperse the agitators, he added.

One of the injured was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital while several others were taking treatment at local hospitals, said a worker, who had taken part in the demonstration.

Nizami was involved

FROM PAGE 16

places in Pabna were commissioned and directed by Motiur Rahman Nizami," said Jamal.

In the first part of May 1971, Nizami, who was a leader of Islami Chhatra Sangha, the then student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, held a meeting with Jamaat men at Rupshi Government Primary School where Nizami urged them to form the Al-Badr force.

"I learnt about this [meeting] from Ainul Haque, the headmaster of the school, and Shamsul Rahman alias Nannu," said Jamal.

"Following the meeting and in the morning of May 14 [1971], the Pakistani army, local razakar and Al-Badr men raided Rupshi, Demra, Bausgari villages under the leadership of Nizami and shot 450 people dead," he said.

They torched 200-300 houses, looted houses of their valuables, mainly of the Hindus, and raped women, he added.

On November 12, 1971, the Pakistani army and members of its auxiliary forces -- the Razakar and Al-Badr -- led by Nizami went to Haria village to apprehend freedom fighter

Zahurul Haque. Failing to find Zahurul, they set fire to the houses of the Hindus of the village and raped two Hindu women there, said Jamal.

On November 27, 1971, three to four groups of freedom fighters, including Jamal's group, were beside Dhulauri village, said Jamal.

Learning about the presence of the freedom fighters, the Pakistani army, Razakar and Al-Badr men led by Nizami surrounded them around 3:00am (on November 28) and shot nine freedom fighters and 14 others dead, he said.

When the Pakistan army and its collaborators were returning from Dhulauri that day, they apprehended Samad, a student of Edward College, who had a grenade in his possession. They took him to Sathia Police Station where Samad was brutally killed, said Jamal, adding that they even cut off Samad's genitals.

Jamal said he learnt from freedom fighters Nizam Uddin, Abdul Latif, Lokman Hossain and Ramich Uddin that Nizami was present during the brutal killing.

Jamal said Shahjahan Ali, a freedom fighter and a victim of the attack, was still

alive. He said from Shahjahan he had learnt that one Sattar Razakar had slit Shahjahan's throat on the bank of the Ichhamati river as per Nizami's instructions but Shahjahan miraculously survived.

He said in December 2000, the local administration led by then state minister for information Prof Abu Sayeed recovered human skulls and bones from a ditch beside the home of Megha Thakur at Karmaza in Bera upazila of Pabna.

People present during the recovery said the Pakistan army and Razakars, led by Nizami, had killed nine people while raiding Megha Thakur's house in May 1971, and two women were also raped, said Jamal.

The three-member tribunal led by Justice ATM Fazle Kabir recorded Jamal's testimony and a part of his cross-examination before adjourning the case proceedings until today when he will face further cross-examination.

Nizami, a former minister of the last BNP-led government, is facing 16 charges of crimes against humanity and genocide at the tribunal.

Mexico migrant train derailment kills 4, injures 35

AFP, Mexico City

A cargo train carrying up to 300 US-bound migrants derailed in a swampy area of southeastern Mexico yesterday, killing at least four people and injuring 35, officials said.

Authorities said the death toll could rise after the train known as "The Beast," which carries migrants who sit on top of freight cars, careened off the track in a stretch of land lining a river in the state of Tabasco.

Luis Felipe Puente, the national civil protection coordinator, confirmed the toll on Twitter, adding that 16 of those hurt were in "serious" condition and rescuers were still working at the site.

Citing army and local protection officials at the

scene, Puente said that "for the moment they officially report four dead, 35 injured, 16 serious."

But he told Formato 21 radio that "we could possibly have more dead," adding that the train was also carrying scrap metal.

The Tabasco state civil protection agency said the train derailed at around 3:00 am (0800 GMT) and that rescuers were using hydraulic tools to cut through the metal to find survivors.

Eight of the train's 12 freight cars overturned and one of the dead is from Honduras, it added.

Local officials said the accident took place far from any road in the municipality of Huimanguillo, near the state of Veracruz, and that it was only accessible by air of

boat.

A photo broadcast by Milenio television showed freight cars lying on their side with the wheels detached from the bottom. The tracks are seen in a wooded area and covered with plants.

Huimanguillo civil protection and security officials told AFP that between 250 and 300 migrants were aboard the train.

"The Beast" carries Mexican and Central American migrants who pay smugglers upwards of \$100 for the right to travel from stations near Guatemala to the north Mexico.

Some 140,000 migrants enter Mexico illegally every year to travel to the United States, according to the National Human Rights Commission.