

CLASH WITH COPS

## Satkhira Jubo Dal man hurt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A union-level Jubo Dal leader was hit with bullets during a clash with police in the district's Sadar upazila yesterday.

Ziarul Islam, 32, is general secretary of Bramharajpur union unit Jubo Dal, the youth wing of the BNP. He is the son of Azimuddin Sarder of Dahakula village of the upazila.

Enamul Haque, officer-in-charge (OC) of Sadar Police Station, said acting on secret information that activists of Jamaat-Shibir and Jubo Dal men were organising themselves in Ramchandrapur village to carry out subversive activities in the area, a police team was sent to the spot.

When the law enforcers reached the spot at around 12:15 noon, some 150 to 200 Jamaat-Shibir and Jubo Dal men started throwing brickbats at the police, the police official alleged.

They also hurled cocktails at the law enforcers, forcing them to retaliate by firing gunshots in self-defence, the OC said.

At one stage, Ziarul was caught in the line of fire, while others managed to flee the scene, Enamul added.

Two constables were also hurt in the incident and were given first aid.

Ziarul was rushed to Satkhira Sadar Hospital where an operation was performed on his wounded leg.

He is now out of danger, said the hospital sources.

Ziarul is an accused in at least four cases, including the killing of Satkhira Jatiyatabadi Motsajibi Dal leader Amanullah Aman last year with the police station, the OC mentioned.

## ISI in thick of things

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cache of arms and ammunition was seized at the jetty of Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Ltd (CUFL).

Some accused in the two cases disclosed this during interrogation by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and making confessional statements in court, said Moniruzzaman Chowdhury, the latest investigation officer (IO) of the cases.

Former National Security Intelligence (NSI) director wing commander Shahab Uddin, who is now behind bars, alleged that former NSI director general Brig Gen (retd) Abdur Rahim had held several meetings with officials of ARY Group and the ISI at home and abroad.

Though Shahab Uddin during interrogation at the TFI cell in Dhaka in early May in 2009 had spoken about the arms smuggling plan, in a confessional statement on May 15 that year, he tactfully avoided many facts. In the statement he did not mention the name of the ISI or any of its officials. Rather, he only referred to meetings with "foreigners".

Rahim in his statement on May 27 in 2009 had mentioned the names of the ARY and ISI and spoken about holding meetings with the officials of the two organisations. He even admitted that he met ISI director general Lt Gen Ehsanul Hoque in London. But he did not give any hint about planning the smuggling in those meetings. Rather, he alleged that Shahab held a meeting with ISI officials to facilitate the arms smuggling.

### ISI, ULFA LINKS

Shahab in his statement stated that the ISI had provided mobile monitoring equipment to the NSI as a gift. NSI DG Rahim had been to London to meet ISI officials to discuss the handing over of the device.

In February 2004, the DG had given a briefcase to Shahab and told him to have it reach his residence. In it was the mobile monitoring equipment, mentioned Shahab.

The DG earlier had received dollars from foreigners in such a briefcase, he added.

On March 27 or 28, DG Rahim called some NSI directors, including Shahab, Didar and Enam. The DG told them that consignments for different embassies would arrive at different times and they needed to monitor it.

According to Shahab, Rahim called him on March 30 and told him that some goods would be transported from Anwara to Hulughat and it would be better if someone from the NSI accompanied it.

On the other hand, Rahim in his statement complained that Shahab had developed close relations with ISI officials Brig Sapir Uddin and Col Shahed Mahmud, who had been serving at the Pakistan High Commission in Dhaka.

The NSI had a fund of Tk2.50 crore for procuring mobile monitoring equipment in 2002. Shahab suggested purchasing the device from the ISI and talked to its officials in July 2002, claimed Rahim.

In early 2003, the ISI handed over the device to the NSI and Rahim went to London to discuss the payment with ISI DG Lt Gen Ehsanul Hoque. At the meeting the ISI chief told Rahim that the device was a gift for the NSI from Pakistan.

Rahim further alleged that in March 2004, Shahab tried to talk with him about ULFA leader Anup Chetia. As Rahim was indifferent to Shahab, he dropped the issue and told Rahim that they should help the ULFA. Infuriated at this proposal, Rahim questioned, "Shall we hand over Bangladesh to the ULFA?"

Shahab in his statement said one Pakistani national named Amir bhai, who was later known to him as ULFA leader Paresh Barua, met him at the Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka at 7:00pm on March 30, 2004. Amir told Shahab that he had a meeting with the NSI DG.

While seeing off Amir, Shahab could see from his cabin former DCFI director Brig Gen (retd) Rezzakul Haider Chowdhury standing near the staircase.

IO Moniruzzaman said though the two tried to accuse each other, many things became clear from their statements and it helped him in probing the cases.

## FILING GRAFT CASES AGAINST GOVT OFFICIALS HC verdict on ACC provision today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court is set to deliver the verdict today in a writ petition that challenged the legality of a controversial provision of curtailing the Anti-Corruption Commission's authority to sue government officials.

After ending the final hearing on the petition, the HC bench of Justice Quazi Reza-Ul Hoque and Justice ABM Altaf Hossain yesterday fixed today for passing judgment.

During the hearing yesterday, the petitioner's counsel Manzill Murshid told the court that a section of people had been given protection by including this provision

to the ACC law, which is contradictory to the constitution.

Deputy Attorney General Bishwojit Roy opposed the petition arguing that parliament ratified a bill on the provision, so it cannot be challenged.

The Jatiya Sangsad on November 10 last year passed the bill amending the ACC act, 2004 to introduce the controversial provision. The president signed the bill into law on November 20.

Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh on November 25 filed the writ petition as public interest litigation with the HC.

The HC on the same day issued a rule upon the government to explain why the amended provision of the ACC law should

## Raushan defends

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system was introduced, then we all knew about it," Raushan said while defending her party's dual role.

She was taking part in a brief discussion to felicitate Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury on her re-election as Speaker.

"We want to play the due role of the opposition, though three of our MPs are in the government," she claimed.

"I don't know how much we will succeed. But there will be no lack of sincerity in us as we play the due role of the opposition," she said.

Raushan criticised the relationship between the previous ruling and opposition parties. "They never sat together to hold discussions on important national issues. We have to shun the path of politics of vengeance and hatred."

Terming the BNP's boycott of the January 5 parliamentary polls unfortunate, she said, "But the election was a must for the continuation of the country's democracy."

"People voted for us so that we can find solutions to problems through discussion in parliament," said Raushan, who was elected uncontested along with her party's 19 other MPs in the January 5 polls.

Interestingly, the BNP's boycott of the election gave Raushan the opportunity of being recognised as the opposition leader with the status of a cabinet minister.

Since the restoration of parliamentary democracy in 1991, either Khaleda Zia or Sheikh Hasina had been recognised as the leader of the opposition.

### AL'S GENEROSITY!

JP lawmakers were allocated six seats in

the front row of the opposition benches, thanks to the ruling Awami League's generosity. The JP has 34 MPs including the three ministers.

Raushan, HM Ershad, Water Resources Minister Anisul Islam Mahmud, Ruhul Amin Hawlader, Kazi Feroz Rashid and Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu were given seats in the front row.

Information Minister Hasanul Huq Inu, Civil Aviation Minister Rashed Khan Menon, Forest and Environment Minister Anwar Hossain Manju and Jute and Textile Minister Imajuddin Pramanik occupied the remaining four seats of the front row on the left side of the Speaker's podium.

In the past ninth parliament, the ruling AL locked horns with the main opposition BNP over the seating arrangements. At that time, outgoing Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar had allocated six seats for the main opposition BNP, which had 30 lawmakers.

But the ruling AL raised objection to this arrangement. Then the newly elected Speaker of the ninth parliament rearranged the seating plan, allocating only four seats to the BNP MPs in the front row, which triggered a parliamentary standoff.

The BNP MPs who joined the inaugural sitting of the ninth parliament on January 25, 2009 remained absent from the second sitting of the inaugural session in protest at the reduction of the number of their seats in the front row.

They had demanded that the Speaker allocate two more seats for them. After long negotiations, the Speaker allocated one more seat for the BNP in the front row, which resolved the standoff.

## 19-party to stage protests

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police firing yesterday.

He hinted that Khaleda Zia might address a press conference within two to three days.

The activists of the 19-party alliance did not take to the streets yesterday and Fakhrul claimed that police had arrested their activists when they brought out processions in the capital's Tejgaon, Shantinagar, and Shahbagh areas.

The activists of the combine brought out processions across the country including Pirojpur, Kushtia, Noakhali, Narsingdi, Sunamganj, Chandpur, Dinajpur, Narayanganj, Joypurhat, Cox's Bazar, and Rangpur, report our district correspondents.

Besides, police also foiled the alliance's bid to bring out processions in Rajshahi, Barisal and Munshiganj.

Meanwhile, BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia exchanged views with freedom fighters last night at her Gulshan office and discussed the country's latest political situation, recent polls as well as the next course of action for the party.

## From Casio to arms

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During the caretaker government regime indicated that Babar was very much involved in the smuggling of arms meant for a separatist group in the eastern part of India.

Reaching the scene where the arms and ammo were captured, he had said the weapons were smuggled in as part of a conspiracy for subversion. He did not rule out any link to the April 30 deadline the main opposition Awami League had set for toppling the BNP-led government.

Later, he formed a probe committee which had a person alleged to have involvement in the smuggling itself.

His "Banglish" quips like "we are looking for shotrus [enemies]" made the nation chuckle and gave the impression that Babar was a simpleton in a high place.

But actually, he is a smooth talker who knows who he should invest in

and how.

Back in his smuggling days in the 1980s, he supposedly established a bond with then first-lady Raushan Ershad, now leader of the opposition in parliament. He called her "mother" to get into her good graces, which he reportedly used for smuggling through Dhaka airport.

According to Babar's close associates, he lived in Moghbazar with his family members since childhood. He left the area after becoming state minister for home in 2001. During his stay in Moghbazar, Babar came in touch with Arman, a top criminal of Moghbazar, and reportedly used him to smuggle gold.

Being the state minister, he also allegedly used another top criminal Pichchi Hannan for various criminal offences. Babar gave him protection even though he was the number-1 accused in the ward commissioner Khaled Imam murder case, said people who knew Babar well

then.

Babar enjoyed the blessings of Tarique Rahman, son of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, and his Hawa Bhaban, the alternative centre of power during the last BNP rule.

He was involved in tender manipulation, recruitment, promotion, land-grabbing and purchase procedures. He was a pioneer in the formation of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and widely criticised for introducing extra-judicial killings.

However, he became infamous during the last caretaker government rule when it was revealed that Babar had taken a Tk 21 crore bribe from Bashundhara Group in return for not implicating Shafiq Sobhan, the son of the group's chairman, in a murder case.

The army-led joint forces arrested Babar in 2007 and recovered four illegal firearms, two magazines, and 297 bullets.

Babar was released on bail before the 9th parliamentary elections on December 29, 2008. He contested the polls as an independent in Netrakona-4 and was defeated badly.

After the election, his bail was cancelled. He was sued by the Anti-Corruption Commission for hiding wealth worth about Tk 7.6 crore.

Later, he was handed down 17 years' rigorous imprisonment for possessing illegal arms and ammunition.

Babar is facing at least four more cases involving arms, smuggling, explosives and murder.

He was accused in the 10-truck arms haul cases through a supplementary charge sheet in 2011 following a reinvestigation of the cases.

The report is based on confessional statements, depositions, charges, verdicts, first information reports and people who knew Babar well.

general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir at a press briefing in the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office.

Criticising the government, Fakhrul said the government had violated people's fundamental rights by not allowing rallies and processions.

He said the 10th parliament was made possible toying with the constitution. He termed the members of the new parliament as clowns.

Fakhrul said, "Parliament went into session when another one is in effect and a cabinet was formed when another one was there."

He claimed that no foreign countries had given any legitimacy to the government. However, he said some countries had congratulated Sheikh Hasina on becoming the prime minister.

Referring to the recent killings across the country, Fakhrul urged the government to stop extra-judicial killings, disappearances, and withdraw the false cases filed against the opposition leaders. He claimed that a BNP activist was killed in Satkhira in

## Inqilab reporter

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submit it to the deputy chief reporter," Atique said in his confessional statement.

Atique also stated that he was instructed by deputy chief reporter Rafiq Mohammad to use information given on amadersomoy.com and bdtonorrow.org sites for composing the report.

"He told me that chief reporter Nurul Islam and the editor of the newspaper had given the same instructions. I also talked with

## Sitting chairmen

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"We think that the elections will be participatory and inclusive. Huge numbers of candidates loyal to different political parties will contest the polls. So, we want to make the elections free, fair and credible," an election commissioner told The Daily Star last night. He, too, wished not to be named.

Elections to 87 upazila parishads out of 487 will be held on February 19 in the first phase and to another 117 on February 27 in the second phase. Polls to the rest of the upazilas are likely to be held in different phases over the next few months.

The last election to 479 upazila parishads was held on January 22, 2009. The tenure of more than 106 upazila parishads is set to expire in February. Two twenty three upazila parishads will complete their tenure in March, 35 in April, 85 in May, 18 in June and the rest between July and September this year, EC secretariat officials said.

As per the electoral laws, polls to the upazila parishads are held within 180 days before their tenure expires. Chances are high that a number of sitting chairmen and vice-chairmen of the upazila parishads will contest the polls.

According to the changes, the candidates will be allowed to use loudspeaker for electioneering only between 2:00pm and 8:00pm, one hour less than what the existing laws permit.

About voters' slip, the amendment says candidates will not be allowed to distribute voters' slip without mentioning the name of printing press, its address and printing date.

The slip will contain only the candidate's name, photograph, name of post, symbol, name of voter and their father, mother or husband's name, address, voter no and name of polling centre. Nothing else is allowed to be mentioned in the slip.

Besides, the size of the voter slip must not exceed 12 centimetres in length and eight centimetres in width, according to the proposed amendment.