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Small but dangerous

Splinter groups of militants active despite counterterrorism drives

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Law enforcers claim they have largely contained militancy through close monitoring and regular drives for the last seven years. Still, small splinter militant groups continue to pop up and carry out criminal activities.

Sunday's armed attack on a prison van to snatch three JMB members is the work of such a group, according to sources in law enforcement and intelligence agencies.

The murder of blogger Ahmed Rajib Haider in February last year and the six murders in Gopibagh on December 21 are two other instances.

Many fugitive militants as well as those released on bail are trying to reorganise through these small militant groups with new names, said an intelligent official wishing anonymity.

Besides, the banned outfit Hizb ut-Tahrir is still active, he added.

The seven NSU students accused of killing blogger Rajib were initially suspected to be Tahrir members. Later, they were identified as members of a new group Ansarullah Bangla Team, headed by Mufti Jasimuddin Rahmani, who is also a charge-sheeted accused in the Rajib murder case.

Detectives say Jasimuddin had connections with international terrorist organisations, which is a matter of concern, especially after the arrest of three Pakistanis last month with manuals on bomb making.

The Pakistanis' main aim was to revitalise the weakened militant groups in Bangladesh, a DB official told The Daily Star.

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Police, jailers colluded in plot

Say home ministry investigators on JMB ambush

M RAHMAN

Jail and police personnel were involved in the ambush plot that resulted in three top JMB men getting snatched from a police van on Sunday, a home ministry investigation committee has concluded.

"Both the police and jail authorities ignored all norms for transporting the militants by providing unprecedented poor security -- a part of the plot," a source in the probe body told The Daily Star yesterday.

Earlier, escort vehicles with additional forces were used whenever the trio was moved out of the prisons but on Sunday only four cops, including the driver of the prison van, transported them, said the source.

The investigators also found that an acting reserve inspector of Gazipur, instead of a top police official of the district, dealt with the jail authorities' letter that sought

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Bangladesh captain Mushfiquur Rahim goes on the back foot to cut one on his way to scoring a superb 117 against India in the Asia Cup at Fatullah yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Kohli trumps Mushfiquur

BISHWAJIT ROY

It virtually turned into a battle of captains and Virat Kohli's brilliance cancelled out Mushfiquur Rahim's superb hundred to put an end to India's eight-match winless streak.

With 279 for seven on the board and having removed both Indian openers with the score on 54, the Tigers were on course to affect a memorable turnaround in their Asia Cup opener with only Indian run-machine Kohli in their path, and he silenced the partisan capacity crowd at the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fatullah last night.

The right-hander's second hundred against the Tigers, overall 19th in 131 matches, guided India to topple the home side's challenging total to cruise to a six-wicket victory as well as avenged their defeat in the last Asia Cup at Mirpur.

The capacity crowd burst into joy when pacer Ziaur Rahman bowled Rohit Sharma after left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak trapped Shikhar Dhawan in front as India were reduced to 54 for two but the players were not happy yet as they knew the danger man was still

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Reforms addressing BDR mistrust

SHARIFUL ISLAM

The discontent and mistrust between officers and soldiers that apparently triggered rebellion among border guards five years ago have largely waned, thanks to reforms and welfare measures afterwards.

Since the bloody mutiny of February 25-26, 2009 which left 74 people including 57 army officers killed, border guards have seen some major reforms -- from the force restructuring and enactment of laws ensuring death penalty for mutineers to increase in benefits.

The changes had been made based on the findings and recommendations of different committees that probed the mutiny in the then Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), later renamed Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB).

The reform moves were undertaken in line with the BGB Act, 2010 which was formulated

on the basis of the findings and recommendations of the enquiry committees.

The act empowers a BGB court to hand down the capital punishment as the highest punishment for mutiny instead of seven years' jail as per the BDR Order, 1972.

The Act also provides for a maximum of 14 years' rigorous imprisonment if a BGB member flees or assists anyone in fleeing from service during war or while on duty, or hands over any outpost or the place he has been assigned to guard.

The punishment will be the same if anyone uses force or issues threats to any superior officer.

Pent-up anger and discontent among the soldiers over a number of issues are believed to have led to the bloody mutiny, which compelled the authorities to rename the 218-year-old force to free it from the stigma.

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UPAZILA ELECTION 2014

AL, BNP eye better results in phase-II

Polls in 115 upazilas today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League wants to take lead in today's battle of ballots in 115 upazila parishads by performing better than its political archrival BNP.

Already in a comfortable position after the first-phase polls, the BNP too is expecting to ride the winning wave in the second-phase set to be held under tight security.

More than 1.94 crore voters of 115 upazilas in 52 districts will cast their votes today.

In the first-phase election to 97 upazilas held last week, BNP-blessed candidates secured 41 chairman posts while those backed by the AL won 34. As for the 192 vice chairman posts, including those reserved for women, BNP secured 72 posts and the AL favourites 63.

The results upset the AL high command and opted the party to persuade its rebels to withdraw their candidacies and back the AL

favourites.

It even expelled some party rebels who refused to quit the polls and warned many others of disciplinary actions if they continue to ignore instructions from the party high command.

"We are trying our best to win the elections by managing the rebels," Bir Bahadur, an organising secretary of AL, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Misbah Uddin Siraj, another AL organising secretary, yesterday said his party men were more active after the unexpected results

of the first phase polls. He is hopeful that AL would fight back in this phase of polls.

Meanwhile, the BNP grassroots have launched a hectic electioneering following their better performance in the first phase.

On directives from the party high command, the grassroots-level units of BNP last week put an all-out effort to negotiate with

Voters	1.94 crore
Polling centres	8,032
Chairman aspirants	500
Vice chairman aspirants	506
Female vice chairman aspirants	334



Ignoring traffic rules and even the High Court, bikers ride their motorbikes on the pavement, endangering pedestrians on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue in the capital. The photo was taken near Farmgate.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

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