

AUG 17 BLASTS Fugitive JMB man held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion members arrested a fugitive Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) activist in connection with the August 17 countrywide series bomb blasts from the capital's Bhatara on Sunday.

The arrestee, Sagir Hossain, 45, is a chargesheeted accused in a case for blasting bombs near the then Zia International Airport terminal, now Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, Tuhin Mohammad Masud, commanding officer of Rab-1, told a press briefing at Rab-1 headquarters yesterday.

On August 17, 2005, around 500 bombs went off at 300 locations in 63 out of the 64 districts across the country. The bombs exploded in half an hour from 11:30am. JMB, the banned Islamist militant outfit, claimed responsibility for the blasts.

A team of Rab-1 raided Shaheed Abdul Aziz road area on Sunday evening, acting on a tip-off that Sagir might hide somewhere there and nabbed him, added the Rab official.

He further said two other JMB members, who were arrested earlier in connection with the bomb attacks, in their confessional statements said

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1



PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Devotees prepare offerings and decoration items at Nandan Kanon temple in Chittagong yesterday morning for Madhu Purnima, a Buddhist festival celebrated on the full moon in the Bangla month of Bhadro.

MP Enamul concealed asset info

Says ACC probe;
Enamul denies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) in its investigation found the ruling party lawmaker Enamul Haque to have concealed information of his properties worth over Tk 200 crore in his wealth statements.

The lawmaker from Rajshahi-4 was grilled by the ACC deputy director Jatan Kumar Roy at its headquarters in the capital yesterday.

Emerging from the ACC headquarters, Enamul told reporters that he had no properties beyond his statements submitted to the Election Commission before the January 5 parliamentary elections and then to ACC.

However, the commission in its probe found that Enamul has ownership of Ena Enterprise, a real estate company, which has seven sister concerns.

A top ACC official said "Enamul concealed information regarding the Ena Enterprise, where he and his wife have over Tk 200 crore."

Contacted, Enamul said "Ena

SEE PAGE 11 COL

Brain injury in womb

FROM PAGE 16

The cerebellum, Dr Wang theorizes, is responsible for helping young minds process complex sensory information, which, over time, eventually leads them to form normal social relationships.

The cerebellum only makes up about 10 percent of the brain's mass, and is mostly in charge of movement-related functions, such as coordination. Early in a child's life, however, Dr Wang makes the argument that the cerebellum has a much larger role, specifically as it pertains to social development.

"Some of the clinical and animal-research evidence for cerebellar involvement in autism has been known for years," Dr Wang says in an interview with The Daily Beast.

"But this evidence doesn't fit into the textbook wisdom that the cerebellum controls sensory processing and movement. At some level, researchers have been trapped by whatever framework they learned in college or graduate school."

The paper gives the example of a child's response to a parent's smile.

There is no reward to a smile, so the smile itself does not do anything to stimulate the parts of the brain that respond to rewards.

Over time however, the cerebellum begins to correlate seeing a parent smile with other rewards, such as being fed, and connects the areas of the brain that see the smile with those that signal rewards.

Should, however, a child have had any damage to the cerebellum in their formative years, they would be unable to make this connection between that part of the brain that sees the smile and that which triggers rewards, which would likely impair their social development.

Early damage to the cerebellum could also effect other "downstream" areas of the brain, such as those responsible for cognition, which would most likely inhibit normal development.

For a child known to have a cerebellar injury at birth, the paper reports an increased relative risk for an ASD as equivalent to that of a smoker developing lung cancer.

FREEING FOOTPATHS Ashraf blames cliques, police for futile drive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The capital's footpaths could not be freed from illegal occupiers as they get backing from influential quarters, and law enforcers are not sincere enough, according to LGRD Minister Syed Ashraf Islam.

State Minister for LGRD Moshir Rahman Ranga was replying to lawmakers' queries in parliament on behalf of the minister yesterday.

The city corporation authorities have been trying relentlessly to free footpaths from illegal grabbers in their respective areas, said the minister's scripted reply.

The two city corporations are also conducting mobile courts on regular basis to evict illegal occupants from footpaths so that pedestrians can move without any obstruction, added the minister.

Waterborne diseases

FROM PAGE 16

35, of Char Kalirga village of Jattarpur union, Kurigram.

A total of 133 people were receiving treatment at district hospitals in Jamalpur.

In Tangail, Mohammad Ali of Gabsara Char in Bhuapur upazila said his nine-year-old boy has been suffering from diarrhoea for several days and was treated with oral saline.

"My wife has got skin infections in her hands and legs. People give us some rice, but I need to visit a market far away from my house for buying oral saline," he added.

Ameer Hossain of the same area said as most of the tube wells in the locality have been inundated by flood water, the health department should distribute water purifying tablets among the affected people.

In Barisal, the body of one out of three persons who went missing during erosion of the Kirtonkhola River early on Sunday, was recovered yesterday noon at Kalijira area of the city.

The deceased is Golam Mustafa

Shikdar, 60, son of Makbul Shikdar. The two still missing are Hossain Haoladar, 44, son of Bachchu Haoladar and Giasuddin alias Selim Sardar, 40, son of Jamal Sardar.

Kazi Mahbubur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Kawnia Police Station, said 11 people were rescued and the three went missing after the Kirtonkhola devoured four houses at Lamchaari under Charbaria union of Barisal city early on Sunday.

The government has allocated Tk 30 lakh on an emergency basis to check erosion of the river. However, a fund of Tk 46 crore under a sustainable environment project to prevent river erosion is yet to be approved by the government, according to sources at Water Development Board.

Meanwhile, Plan International in a release yesterday said they distributed relief materials among 485 ultra poor families in Begumganj union, Kurigram.

Our correspondents in Tangail, Kurigram, Jamalpur and Barisal contributed to this report.

Hardly anything safe to eat

FROM PAGE 1

almost stopped buying foods from regular shops or kitchen markets," added Shahana, a Lalmatia resident.

City dwellers have every reason to be alarmed.

Over 10 thousand samples of more than 50 different food items were tested at the Institute of Public Health in 2012-13. About 60 percent of the samples were found adulterated or contaminated. Only the samples of sesame (til) oil, black pepper (gol morich) and fenugreek (methi) were reported safe.

Mixing of lower quality ingredients is adulteration and adding toxic chemicals is contamination. Both are widely practised in the country, said Dr Tahmeed Ahmed, director at the Centre for Nutrition & Food Security of ICDDR, B.

The chemicals used in food include formalin, calcium carbide, sodium cyclamate, colouring agents, dye, urea, DDT, aldrin, chlordane, heptachlor, melamine, burnt engine oil, hormone and sulphuric acid.

Studies have also detected the pres-

ence of heavy metals like chromium, arsenic, antibiotics and banned pesticides in food. Besides, there are major loopholes in hygiene practices that cause microbial growth in food.

Food adulteration and contamination pose a serious threat to public health, especially in a country like Bangladesh where the level of awareness among the masses is very low due to poor literacy.

The ensuing health hazards include diseases like cancer, kidney or liver failures, memory loss, respiratory problems, infertility, kidney stone and damage of the cardiac system.

There is no database in the country on such crucial factors, but the recent surge in the number of patients suffering from liver/kidney failure indicates a deteriorating situation.

Citing a recent study, Tahmeed warns that the number of cancer patients in Bangladesh could increase to nearly 5 lakh in 2035 from 2,32,868 in 2012.

At present, about 6,00,000 children suffer from acute malnutrition, 41 percent under-five children from

stunted growth, while 70 percent of children are anaemic, and one in three is subclinical iodine deficient, he added.

Besides, according to the Centre for Nutrition & Food Security, a total of 16,57,381 cases of acute diarrhoea and resultant 2,064 deaths were reported in 1998 alone. Tahmeed believes impure food is one of the key factors behind all this.

So what should we eat? What should we avoid?

Raihana Ferdous, a mother of two, has stopped buying mangoes from city markets.

"Now it is hard to trust anybody," she said. "I wish I could test each and every food item before serving it to my children."

Raihana, who is a banker, lamented, "We are eating harmful food and living in a polluted environment in Dhaka."

When these concerns were conveyed to him, Dr Monirul Islam, director (nutrition) at Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC), said, "Fresh fruits and vegetables are safer than many other items in the

market because people wash those before eating or cooking."

The average residual life of modern pesticides is around three to five days, he said when reminded of reports on farmers using chemicals higher than usual and also too frequently.

Monirul, who has just completed a study titled "Contaminants and Adulterants in Food Chain and their Mitigation", noted that imported fruits like apples are also safe as growers use paraffin wax, classified as a preservative.

Non-commercial native fruits -- Amra (Hogplum), Kamranga (star fruit), Jolpai (olive), Dalim (Pomegranate), Amlaki (Aonla), Lotkon (Burmese grape), Jamrul (Wax Jambu), Batabilebu (pummelo) and the likes -- are produced without using pesticides or hormones. So they are good enough, he said.

His study, yet to be published, notes that the quality of raw milk from state-run Milk Vita is good.

Even so, artificial liquid milk, made of low-quality powder milk, flour, arrowroot, sulphuric acid, mustard oil and lubricants, is flooding the market.

Coliform and nitrate, formalin (four to five drops per litre) and heavy metals like chromium, lead and cadmium are also found in the milk.

To queries about other items of daily meals being safe or not, Monirul has no answers.

Sultana Kamal, chairperson of the trustee board of Transparency International Bangladesh, said the situation had turned worse because criminals had not been punished over the years.

Seeing that nothing happens even after a crime is committed, some people would do anything for profit.

"And exactly that's what is happening here."

Raihana Ferdous, the worried mother, has a question to ask: "Aren't our policymakers, especially politicians, including the president and prime minister, eating the same dangerous food bought from the markets in the capital?"

"Unless they take imported food, they ought to worry as well," she said, "as the future of their children is as bleak as that of ours."

Flood victims ACC finds ex-state minister at fault

FROM PAGE 16

The MRA is the central body to monitor and supervise microfinance operations of non-government organisations (NGOs) in the country.

The regulatory body also directed the lenders to provide their affected clients with emergency food and medicines supplies from their surplus or disaster management funds.

The microcredit providers were also asked to inform the MRA within October 31 about the steps taken after the directives.

The 17 flood affected districts are Kurigram, Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat, Gaibandha, Rangpur, Bogra, Sirajganj, Tangail, Jamalpur, Dhaka, Manikganj, Munshiganj, Faridpur, Rajbari, Netrokona, Sylhet and Sunamganj.

The MRA circular said the homes, farms and crops of thousands of people, who took loans from the microcredit providers, in the 17 districts have been affected by the recent floods, shrinking the income of the victims.

FROM PAGE 1
commission sources said.

Under the law, the ministry cannot issue any freedom fighter's certificate without the recommendation of the Council. Doing so is a violation of the Muktijoddha Council Act-2002.

The anti-graft body, which was investigating the five, including three incumbent secretaries, sent its report to the ministry yesterday.

The commission recommended revoking their certificates, as they had resorted to forgery to obtain them.

The five are Privatisation Commission Chairman and former P M O secretary Mollah Waheeduzzaman, Health Secretary Niaz Uddin Mia, Public Service Commission Secretary AKM Amir Hossain, former Liberation War Affairs secretary KH Masud Siddiqui (now an OSD) and Joint Secretary of Liberation War Affairs ministry Abul Kashem Talukder (now an OSD).

According to the documents submitted to the Liberation War Affairs ministry, Niaz Uddin was 15 years old, Masud Siddiqui 15, Amir Hossain 14, and Abul

Kashem just about 12 during the war.

The report did not mention Waheeduzzaman's age at the time, but ACC sources earlier told The Daily Star that he was 16 then.

The commission also sent the report to the public administration ministry for action on their misconduct.

Contacted, Tajul denied that there were irregularities or a violation of law on his part in issuing the certificates.

Asked to comment on the ACC report on phone, Health Secretary Niaz Uddin advised this correspondent to speak to the Liberation War Affairs minister.

"It is the ministry that issues the certificate. I will not say anything about this," he said and abruptly hung up.

The report, obtained by this newspaper, said the five bureaucrats resorted to cheating while in public service, which is a punishable crime under the penal code.

Under the law, they can be sentenced to seven years in prison and made to pay an unspecified amount of fine.

Under the service rules, they can also be fired from their jobs for providing false information in their applications,

the report said.

"The Public Service Commission might take lawful action against them," it said, adding that these bureaucrats committed misconduct by obtaining the certificates through ignoring laws, circulars and directives.

On November 7, 2010, the Prime Minister's Office issued a circular outlining four criteria for extending the service period of freedom fighters in public service.

Of the five in question, four did not meet those criteria. They are Waheeduzzaman, Niaz Uddin, Amir Hossain and Masud Siddiqui, the report said.

The circular was not applicable for Abul Kashem Talukder.

Interestingly, the circular was issued by the then P M O secretary Waheeduzzaman.

And none of the five applications was presented before the Jatiya Muktijoddha Council for its mandatory scrutiny.

Masud Siddiqui and Abul Kashem Talukder used their influence as secretary and joint secretary of the Liberation War Affairs ministry to obtain the certificates.

On August 10, the public administration ministry decided to take action under criminal law against those who had obtained freedom fighters' certificates by faking documents to extend their service tenure.

It also decided to cancel the additional benefits of those who did not declare themselves as freedom fighters when they joined the service.

The government has revoked the freedom fighters' certificates of 182 government officials so far this year, as they had obtained them through cheating.

In November 2012, the Awami League-led government extended the retirement age of freedom fighters in public service from 59 years to 60. Earlier in April 2010, their retirement age was extended by two years from 57.

After the decision, many public servants fraudulently took freedom fighters' certificates to extend their service tenure.

Following the 2012 extension, the number of freedom fighters in government services stood at around 11,000. Of them, those in the final years of their service now were at best 15 or 16 years old during the Liberation War.

TRAINING AIRCRAFT Fuel tanks fall from sky!

STAR REPORT

Two reserve fuel tanks of a training aircraft of Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) came off over Raipura upazila of Narsingdi yesterday during training.

However, none was injured in the incident.

The pilot of the aircraft flew the plane back to Dhaka and landed it at Tejgaon Airport safely, said an official of Inter Services Public Relations.

"While on training in the sky over Narsingdi, two reserve fuel tanks of the aircraft came off due to technical glitches," said the official, wishing not to be named.

Farid Uddin, a farmer who witnessed the incident while working in a field at Kashminagar village, said, "I saw two aircraft flying overhead around 11:00am. Suddenly, I heard a big bang in the sky and found fumes coming out of one of the planes and two objects falling down."

One of the objects came down on a paddy field and the other on a nearby road, Farid told our Narsingdi correspondent.

Being curious, villagers gathered at the spot to see the objects.

Shahnewaj Khaled, additional superintendent of police in Narsingdi, told The Daily Star that a team from the BAF came to the spot and took the tanks to Dhaka.

Indian efforts

FROM PAGE 16

also discussed by her with Hasina but there is no timeframe for his handing over to India.

The signing of Teesta deal has been pending since September, 2011, since West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee opposed it and pulled out of the then Indian PM Manmohan Singh's visit to Dhaka.

While Bangladesh has approved the LBA long ago, its operationalization needs Indian parliament's approval because it involves land swap by envisaging transfer of sovereignty of 161 adversely-held enclaves and adjusting the boundary in some places.

After Rajya Sabha clears the bill, it will go to the Lok Sabha, the lower House of parliament whose members are directly elected by people.

The next session of parliament is due only in December.

Swaraj also said the India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Commission meeting will be held here on September 20 when the entire range of bilateral issues will

UNITE to stop

FROM PAGE 1

also suggest ways to end this hara-kiri.

Your newspaper is firmly committed to helping protect people's most fundamental right -- the right to SAFE FOOD.

So, stand up and rally behind our initiative: Safe food, Safe life.

We invite the government, growers, traders, retailers, parents, teachers, scholars, and all citizens concerned to work together and ensure SAFE food for children.

— Editor