

# Human trafficking bid foiled in Teknaf

Two Rohingyas among five intercepted before setting sail to Malaysia; alleged trafficker held

AFP, Cox's Bazar

Bangladesh police arrested an alleged human trafficker and intercepted two Rohingya refugees preparing to board a boat for Malaysia, officials said yesterday.

Police acting on a tip-off raided a home near the coastal town of Teknaf, where five people had assembled ahead of a promised voyage across the Bay of Bengal. Two Rohingya Muslims, both men, were among the group.

The pair had arrived from Myanmar since August, when a surge of violence in Rakhine state forced hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas across the border.

The other three would-be passengers were Bangladeshi, another police officer said.

"They were herded there as part of an effort to take them to Malaysia. They said they would be taken there by sea," Teknaf police chief Main Uddin

told AFP.

"Among the five, there were two Rohingya men who had already paid 10,000 taka (\$120) each. The arrested person is being charged with human trafficking."

The would-be passengers told police they had promised to pay the alleged trafficker, a Bangladeshi, another 200,000 taka each upon arrival in Malaysia.

Since August nearly 650,000 Rohingya Muslims have fled a military operation in Myanmar's westernmost Rakhine state described by the UN and US as "ethnic cleansing".

Bangladesh authorities worry many refugees may risk travelling to Southeast Asia by boat, a route once popular among Rohingya seeking economic opportunities outside the grim, long-standing camps in Cox's Bazar.

People smugglers in recent years have

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Thousands of people gather at the Laldighi Maidan in Chittagong yesterday afternoon to join the namaz-e-janaza of former city mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury. The veteran Awami League leader passed away at a city hospital early yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

# In tears, Ctg bids farewell to Mohiuddin

FROM PAGE 1

private hospital around 3:00am. He was 74.

His passing has cast a pall of gloom on the port city as hundreds of thousands of people, many in tears, gathered at his funeral prayers at Laldighi Maidan to bid him the final farewell and pay their last respects.

Soon after the news spread, condolences poured in from all quarters, including from President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Mohiuddin, who was president of Chittagong Awami League for over a decade, had been suffering from kidney and heart complications for some time.

He was taken to the private hospital on Thursday, two days after he was taken home from Square Hospital in Dhaka, said his son Chowdhury Mahibul Hasan Noufel, also organising secretary of the AL.

Earlier, Mohiuddin, a freedom fighter, was taken to Singapore for treatment on November 16 from where he returned to Bangladesh on November 26.

His body was taken to the Chittagong AL office around 2:30pm from his Chashma Hill residence in Sholoshohor.

He was given a guard of honour at the Laldighi Maidan.

The crowd there stretched from the Laldighi ground to Anderkilla to Cinema Palace to Kotwali intersection, covering about one kilometre radius.

He was later buried at his family graveyard in Chashma Hill after his second funeral prayers at Chashma Hill Jame Mosque after Maghrib prayers.

He left behind his wife and five children -- two sons and three daughters -- and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death. His wife Hasina Mohiuddin is president of Mohila Awami League in Chittagong.

Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Commerce

Minister Tofail Ahmed, Industries Minister Amir Hossain Amu, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, Health Minister Mohammed Nasim, Civil Aviation Minister Rashed Khan Menon, Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Huq, Science and Technology Minister Yafesh Osman Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor and Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, among others, mourned his death.

**A GLITTERING POLITICAL CAREER**  
Mohiuddin became mayor of the Chittagong City Corporation in 1994 and held the office for 17 years straight before being defeated by BNP candidate M Manjurul Alam in 2010.

He was made president of Chittagong city AL in 2006. Before that he was general secretary of the same unit for more than two decades.

Mohiuddin was born on December

1, 1944, at Gohira village of Raozan upazila in Chittagong in a well-known family. His father was Hosen Ahmen Chowdhury, a railway officer, and mother Bedowra Begum.

After his SSC in 1962, he got admitted to Chittagong City College but shifted to Chittagong Polytechnic Institute the same year. He was expelled from the Institute because of his involvement in active politics on the campus, according to his biography written by journalist Muazzem Haq and published in 2014.

He eventually did his HSC and graduation in 1965 and 1967 respectively from Chittagong City College. He later got admitted to Chittagong University for his master's in Islamic History and Culture, but dropped out.

He was into politics since his college years and was soon spotted by the then AL leader Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury.

From 1968 to 1969, he was the general secretary of the Chittagong district

Chhatra League.

On March 1, 1971, Mohiuddin in collaboration with Sorbodolio Chhatra Sangram Parishad leaders enforced a strike in Chittagong and held a rally at Laldighi Maidan against the repression of the Pakistan government.

After the historical March 7, 1971, speech by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Mohiuddin and his fellows looted firearms and ammunition from Rifles Club and arms depot in Majhirhat area to make preparation for the Liberation War.

He was later arrested by the Pakistan army and sent to prison. Inside the Chittagong Jail, he pretended to be a lunatic, which prompted the occupation forces to release him.

He then went to India for guerrilla training and later joined the war as the platoon commander of East Mount Battalion.

Following the killing of Sheikh Mujib in 1975, he formed an armed resistance

group called "Mujib Bahini" against the Khondaker Mostaq Ahmad government.

He was arrested for this but was soon released. He then fled to India.

He was also imprisoned during the tenure of the BNP government in 1995 and the last caretaker government in 2007.

Despite being from the ruling party, Mohiuddin opposed the government decision to hand over the operational charge of the Chittagong Port to Stevedoring Services of the US in 2003, when the AL was in power. He launched a tough movement that forced the government to eventually back away.

Recalling his illustrious political career, BNP Standing Committee Member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury said, "He protested many controversial decisions of the government ... and he stood against financial corruption in politics and he maintained good relations with his opponents."

# The legend of Jagatjyoti

FROM PAGE 1

The result was tremendous. The gunboats blew up -- the mission was accomplished with minimum risk taken. The freedom fighters suffered no injuries.

This was one of the remarkable operations the group carried out in the region. They were called Das Party, one of the militias which carried out unconventional and guerrilla warfare striking fear into a professional and well-equipped force like the Pakistan military.

The man who led Das Party was Jagatjyoti Das, a 22-year-old student of Sunamganj College.

**THE RISE OF A WARRIOR**

Born in the remote Jolsukha village of Ajmiriganj upazila in Habiganj on April 26, 1949, Jagatjyoti was the youngest among three siblings. His father Jitendra Chandra Das was a mason and mother Harimoti Das was a housewife.

Daring since childhood, he received primary education in ME School and then enrolled at Ajmiriganj Bir Charan High School from where he completed his matriculation in the mid 60s.

He went to India for higher secondary education. There he learnt languages of several Indian states and got hands-on experience of arms and ammunition as he got in touch with some leftist rebels, according to his war-time aides.

"He [Jagatjyoti] was highly talented. His bravery was known to all. Everyone in the village believed that he would do something big in future," said Abdur Rashid, one of his childhood friends and a member of Das Party.

In front of Jagatjyoti's family house in Jolsukha, Rashid, now 78, shared the story of how his friend became a warrior and eventually led Das Party.

After completing higher secondary education in India, Jagatjyoti returned to his village and started teaching at a school. But the turbulent time and the socio-political situation of East Pakistan made him restless.

In the late 60s, Jagatjyoti got admitted to Sunamganj College and gradually got involved with left student body Chhatra Union. Rashid went to Jagannathpur of Sunamganj and lived in lodgings.

"But he [Jagatjyoti] would often come to visit me," he said.

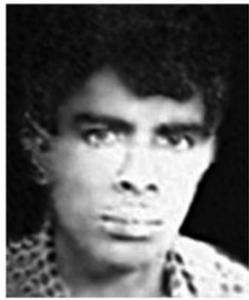
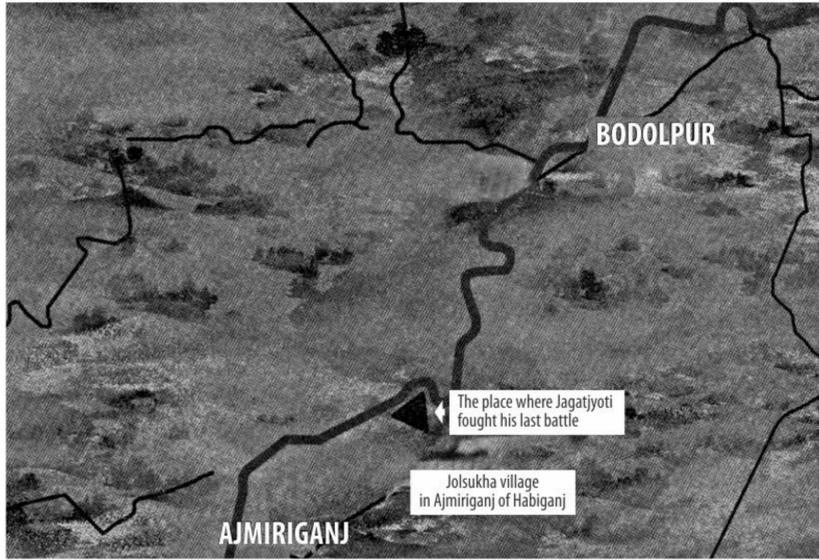
Then the Liberation War began.

At the beginning of the war, Jagatjyoti took part in the looting of the armoury in Sunamganj, Rashid recalled.

**FORMATION OF DAS PARTY**

After the Pakistan army took Sunamganj town, freedom-loving people of the region started going to India for training.

The first batch comprising 114 aspirant fighters, mostly youths, from



Clockwise from top left, map showing the place in Habiganj's Ajmiriganj upazila where Jagatjyoti Das had fought his last battle. Elias Chowdhury, second-in-command of Das Party, pointing at the spot. Abdur Rashid, a childhood friend of Jagatjyoti and a member of the guerrilla group, sharing his memories with The Daily Star about the guerrilla commander. The ancestral home of Jagatjyoti in Jolsukha which has been sold out. A portrait of the martyred war hero.

PHOTO: COLLECTED, STAR

Sunamganj, Habiganj, Kishoreganj and Netrakona were sent to Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya. Jagatjyoti was among them.

There he met Elias Chowdhury, the man who would become his closest aide and second-in-command of Das Party because of his courage and skills in arms operation. He considered Elias his younger brother.

The batch took a 32-day intensive training in the hills and jungles of Shillong. Some of them were given special trainings on destroying structures and bridges and battle on the water fronts.

The group came back to the country and joined the war's Tekerhat sub-sector in Sunamganj, Elias told these correspondents in Jolsukha on Wednesday.

Das Party was formed in July. It was tasked with freeing the entire Haor region in collaboration with other groups of freedom fighters. It would soon develop expertise in destroying cargo vessels and bridges and capturing enemy bases.

The guerrillas were also given a spe-

cial assignment to block the movement of Pakistan army on river routes. "That's exactly what Das Party was doing successfully under the leadership of dada [Jagatjyoti]," said Elias, who was 18-year-old in 1971.

"Dada could speak several languages. He had all the qualities -- courage, intellect and wisdom -- that a leader should have. That's why the group was named after him," Elias went on.

"We fought until the end of the war," he added. "We had over a hundred members at the beginning but eventually it came down to 36 to 37."

The squad started its operation by sinking a cargo boat in the Kushiara River. It conducted around 40 operations, including Baniachang, Paharpur and Dirai-Shalla operations and attacks on Ajmiriganj and Jamalganj police stations.

"We had operations one after another. We used to feel bad when there was no war, when there was no rat-a-tat or boom, boom," Elias said, as if he was seeing it all, as if he was in the middle of a war.

The Pakistan army had to stop its

arms transportation on Dhaka-Sherpur route because of the activities of Das Party. Even there was an announcement on the radio, asking all not to use that route.

**THE LAST BATTLE**

In the last week of November, Das Party fought a three-day war in Sripur of Sunamganj's Tahirpur.

Its next mission was to destroy the electricity lines in Bahubal. For this special operation, he chose 42 fighters and went to Kalyanpur village in Khaliaghuri of Netrakona.

From there, Jagatjyoti, Elias, Rashid and other team members started for Bahubal by boats soon after dawn broke on November 16.

Around 8:00am, they reached Bodolpur union office. "There, a person told me that some razakars were collecting tolls from fishermen," Elias said.

Hearing it, Jagatjyoti instantly ordered an attack on the razakars' boats. The guerrillas started advancing towards the collaborators, firing incessantly, but some of the enemies managed to escape by a boat while some were shot

dead, according to one version.

Jagatjyoti and 13 of his men started chasing them and reached Nowagaon, a village near Jolsukha, leaving other Das Party members behind as a backup force.

The razakars anchored the boat and took a dried wetland to sneak into Jolsukha. "It was a trap and we could sense that," Elias said.

Finding none of the fleeing collaborators, Jagatjyoti and his men started heading back. As they moved towards their boats, they heard fires of Chinese rifles, which Pakistan soldiers used during the 1971 war.

Reaching near the bank of the river, they saw the Pakistan army on gunboats taking positions from three sides -- Ajmiriganj, Shalla and Markuli.

They also heard sounds of gunshots coming from Bodolpur side. A Fokker plane was hovering overhead.

Jagatjyoti and other freedom fighters were trapped in the middle of the dried wetland, near the bank of a tributary of Bheramohona.

Then began a fierce battle.

"Get them all. Don't spare a single Pak army," Jagatjyoti told his comrades



and continued to motivate them.

The fight escalated gradually.

The other members of Das Party who had stayed at Bodolpur could not come to help Jagatjyoti's group as another band of Pakistan army kept them busy by launching attacks.

Around 2:30pm, a bullet hit Elias in the left side of his chest. It went through his body without damaging his bones or any vital organ. "I told dada that I am injured."

Jagatjyoti took off the red scarf from Elias' head and used it to stop the bleeding and asked, "Are you going to die or live?"

Elias replied, "There is a chance I will live."

"Keep fighting then," said Jagatjyoti.

At one stage of the long battle, he inquired about the stock. Elias said they will be able to continue the fight till the sunset.

With time passing by, Das Party was losing its men. Both Jagatjyoti and Elias asked their co-fighters to go to safety but the duo continued fighting.

Moments before the sunset, a bullet hit Jagatjyoti.

"Ami Jaiga [I'm leaving]," Jagatjyoti managed to utter as he gasped for last breath.

"My dada was no more," Elias said.

Elias somehow buried the motionless body of his commander in the mud. With blood rolling down from his chest, he started for a nearby village with Jagatjyoti's light machine gun.

Reaching there, he found his comrades and informed them about Jagatjyoti's fate.

The battle claimed lives of three to four from Das Party and 12 to 13 from the enemy side, said Elias.

The next day, local razakars found Jagatjyoti's body. They dragged it to Jolsukha. They also brought his aged parents to see their dead son before setting fire to their house.

The collaborators, cheering, took the body to Ajmiriganj on a boat. Then they tied it to an electricity pole at Ajmiriganj Bazar. They also called a photographer and made him take a picture.

The body was then dumped in the river.

After the independence, the freedom fighter was awarded Bir Bikram, the third highest gallantry award in Bangladesh.

Forty-six years have gone by and many still don't know about the valiant war hero. There is still no memorial whatsoever in his village. Some local youths, however, set up a library after his name. There is another library built in Sunamganj in his memory.

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