

Weekly Country Report – Bangladesh

25 – 31 August 2008

On 26 August, A court in the northern district of Pabna started hearing on the 17 August 2005 serial bomb blasts case.¹ The banned terrorist organisation Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) detonated five bombs in Pabna district town on that day.²

A regional commander of the banned left wing extremist group Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) was killed during a shootout with police in Rajshahi district in the north-western Bangladesh.³ The deceased militant named Sirajul Islam Siraj was accused in six different cases on charges of murder and extortion.⁴ During the raid, police recovered five rounds of bullets.⁵

On 27 August, the Inspector General of Bangladesh Police (the head of the police force) said that the Government will continue to crackdown on the ultra left organisations.⁶ He sought help from the local community leaders in Rajshahi, where traditionally left wing extremist groups have been active. The IGP stated that stern steps will be taken against those groups to hinder their ability to reorganise themselves.⁷

¹ The Daily Star, 27 August 2008

<http://www.thedailystar.net/story.php?nid=52015>

² Ibid

³ The Daily Star, 28 August 2008

<http://www.thedailystar.net/story.php?nid=52210>

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Daily New Age, 28 August 2008

<http://www.newagebd.com/2008/aug/28/front.html#7>

⁷ Ibid

Asadullah Khan Galib, the leader of the Ahle Hadith Andolan a group affiliated with the banned terrorist organisation JMB was freed on bail on 28 August from prison.⁸ Since his arrest in 2005, a total of ten cases were filed against him. He had earlier been acquitted in six other cases.⁹ He was subsequently released on three other cases as well.¹⁰ Galib had close ties with the top leaders of JMB and is reported to have played a key role in organising the finances for JMB activities.¹¹ Furthermore, Galib is also known to have ties with militant organisations in Kashmir.¹²

The Secretaries of the Ministries of Home Affairs of Bangladesh and India began a meeting in Dhaka on 30 August. Among other issues such as border demarcation and discussions on an extradition treaty between the two states, the meeting is also likely to discuss joint efforts at combating terrorism and violent extremism.¹³ The meeting is also likely to discuss efforts at countering cross border criminal activities.¹⁴

In conclusion, the ongoing dialogue between Bangladesh and India is an important one. The cooperation between the two neighbouring countries is pivotal in the fight against terrorism. The absence of coordination and cooperation regarding counter terrorism efforts has been a hindrance in the past. The statement by the head of the Police demonstrates the position taken by the Government to clamp down on the activities of the left wing extremist organisations. Those groups have long been involved in terrorising the population in the North West and the South of Bangladesh. Alongside Islamist militancy, left wing extremism also poses a significant threat to the security and stability of the Bangladeshi state. Furthermore, the left wing extremist groups are involved in a number of criminal activities as well. Hence, comprehensive and long term measures will have to undertaken in order to counter this threat.

⁸ The Daily Star, 29 August 2008

<http://www.thedailystar.net/story.php?nid=52340>

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Ibid

¹³ The Daily Star, 30 August 2008

<http://www.thedailystar.net/story.php?nid=52510>

¹⁴ Ibid