

Persistent militant activities in Bangladesh highlights needs for increased security preparedness



Perpetrator: Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB)

Date: 17 March – 1 April, 2017

Location: Dhaka, Sylhet, Comilla and Maulvibazar

Brief description of incidents:

1. **17 March:** A suicide attack took place at a Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) camp near Dhaka airport.
2. **18 March:** A militant wearing a suicide vest was gunned down by security forces while the former tried to attack a police checkpoint in the outskirts of Dhaka.
3. **24 – 27 March:** Four JMB militants were killed in a 4-days siege at a terrorist hideout in the outskirts of Sylhet city (Sylhet division) where Bangladesh military Special Forces had to be deployed to evacuate the 80+ civilians trapped in the building.
4. **24 March:** A suicide attacker targeted a police check post near Dhaka international

airport.

5. **25 March:** A suicide attack and later a grenade attack took place near the site of the Sylhet siege, killing 6 people and injuring 40 others.
6. **29 – 30 March:** Security forces eliminated at least 7 terrorists at a house at Nasirpur village in Moulvibazar district (Sylhet division).
7. **29 – 31 March:** Security forces eliminated three militants from another militant den at Borohat area in Moulvibazar.
8. **29 March – 1 April:** Security forces cordoned off a militant hideout in Comilla district (Chittagong division). However, it was later realised that the militants had escaped the place before the siege began.

ISS Risk Assessment:

- Suicide attacks and suicide vests are the new normal in the Bangladeshi militant landscape.
- JMB has significantly upgraded their bomb making skills and are now able to produce highly lethal IEDs.
- Militants, particularly JMB, have so far concentrated on attacking security forces. But their lack of success in executing any high casualty attacks would soon force them to go after soft targets, like foreign personnel and assets.
- Significant amount of weapons and explosives recovered by security forces at all the militant hideouts indicates an advanced level of planning to carry out attacks on pre-designated targets.
- The 136th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to be held in Dhaka from 1 – 5 April, where speakers, deputy speakers and MPs from 131 nations would be present, is a major target for attack.

ISS Risk Recommendations:

- Foreign company's operating in Bangladesh should upgrade their security arrangements in view of the changed environment.
- Foreign nationals, particularly those in Dhaka and Chittagong, should maintain heightened awareness of their environment and remain extra cautious while visiting

locations frequented by foreigners.

- Monitor local media and our feeds for latest updates.

Further Reading:

- Bangladesh siege continues into 3rd day ([link](#))
- ISS Risk Special Report: The Emergence and Growth of ISIS In Bangladesh ([link](#))
- ISS Risk Special Report:: Bangladesh Terrorism Review – March, 2017 ([link](#))
- ISS Risk: South Asia Analysis ([link](#))