

HILLARY'S VISIT 4 Hizb-ut protesters arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday arrested four members of banned militant organisation Hizb-ut-Tahrir for bringing out a procession in the capital protesting the arrival of US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

The arrestees are Mohammad Aziz, 22, a BBA student of East West University, Jahangir Alam, another BBA student of the same institution, Abdullah Al Mobin, 26, MBA student of Dhaka University, and Mohammad Galib, 30, a BBA student of North South University.

They were arrested around noon when nearly 25 activists of the militant organisation brought out a procession before the Ministry of Foreign Affairs office to denounce Hillary Clinton's visit to the country, said Syed Nurul Islam, deputy commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

Police charged baton to disperse the procession that also demanded establishment of Islamic rule in the country and release of arrested party leaders and activists, he said.

Detained Jahangir Alam introduced himself as son of Dhaka University Kuwait Maitree Hall provost Farida Begum, said MA Jalil, sub-inspector of Shahbagh Police Station. She was not available on the phone.

A case will be filed after discussions with police high-ups, said Sirajul Islam, officer-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station.

As part of her three-nation tour (Bangladesh, India and China), Hillary Clinton is expected to arrive in Dhaka tomorrow and hold meetings with government high-ups, opposition leaders and civil society representatives.

Arms worth

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humanitarian group said. Myanmar bought \$600 million worth of weapons between 2000 and 2010, Iran purchased an estimated \$574 million worth from 2007 to 2010 and the Democratic Republic of Congo spent \$124 million from 2000 to 2002, the report said.

There have been 26 UN, regional or multilateral arms embargoes in force during this period, it said.

The United Nations is to hold talks on a new arms trade treaty in July.

Oxfam said the illegal trade reinforced the case for "robust" and legally binding laws on the sale and transfer of arms.

Oxfam's report, "The Devil Is In The Detail," says that the global trade in consumer goods such as bananas, coffee and cocoa is more tightly regulated than the arms trade.

"The challenge is to ensure the new treaty is really strong. It must unambiguously stop arms transfers where they would fuel conflict, poverty or human rights abuses," said Oxfam arms control campaigner Anna Macdonald.

"Existing arms embargoes are far too easy to break or ignore. The lack of international regulation means that states under embargo have been importing whatever weapons they choose with impunity."

Oxfam said there is "an intricate patchwork of regional and sub-regional agreements, but this lacks structure and coherence, allowing states to continue importing and trading weapons despite UN or other types of embargoes."

Macdonald added, "How can the sale of bananas be more tightly-controlled than the sale of machine guns? It just doesn't make sense."

The aid group said the proposed new arms trade treaty must block arms transfers where there is a substantial risk weapons will be used to violate international human rights or humanitarian law, or undermine development.

"Our position is clear: a weak treaty would be worse than no treaty at all, as this would merely legitimise the existing flawed system," said Macdonald.

BNP leaders

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Meanwhile, several top BNP leaders, including Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, Mirza Abbas, Goyeshwar Chandra Roy and Aman Ullah Aman, remain hiding since April 30, party leaders said.

They are not staying at their homes to evade arrest in connection with those cases, they added.

The cases -- one for exploding "bombs" in the secretariat compound and the other for torching a bus near the Prime Minister's Office on April 29 -- were filed on Sunday night against senior leaders of the BNP-led 18-party alliance.

The accused include BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhru, Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, party standing committee members Mirza Abbas, Goyeshwar Chandra Roy and Hannan Shah and party lawmaker Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anee and Liberal Democratic Party President Oli Ahmed.

On April 30, police raided the houses of Mirza Fakhru, Mirza Abbas, former lawmaker couple Khairul Kabir Khokon and Shirin Sultana, BNP leader Habib-un-Nabi Sobel and Jubo Dal leader Moazzem Hossain Alal.

Most of them were not home during the raid, police and BNP sources said.

BNP's moves on Wednesday to secure HC bail for the accused leaders have failed.

The party yesterday accused the government of influencing the court, and like on Wednesday, pro-BNP lawyers yesterday demonstrated on the court premises demanding withdrawal of the cases.

Political tensions have been running high over the disappearance of Ilias Ali, an organising secretary of the BNP and a former lawmaker, and his driver Ansar Ali around midnight of April 17 from the capital's Banani area.

In protest, the BNP enforced three consecutive shutdowns from April 22-24 across the country and the BNP-led 18-party alliance enforced two similar lockdowns on April 29-30.

The hartal violence left five people dead and scores of vehicles damaged across the

country.

Meanwhile, Sirajul Haque, former deputy minister for health, who was arrested on April 30, was also sent to jail yesterday after a Dhaka court rejected the petitions for his remand and bail.

KHOKON'S BAIL
Following Wednesday's bail drama, a third bench of the High Court yesterday granted anticipatory bail to Khokon till May 9.

On Wednesday, Justice Anwarul Haque granted anticipatory bail to Khokon for a week and directed him to surrender before the trial court within that time, while the junior judge of the bench, Justice Mojibur Rahman Miah, rejected the bail petition.

Following the dissenting orders, Chief Justice Md Muzammel Hossain yesterday sent the petition to the bench of Justice Musa Khaled, who passed the bail order.

Additional Attorney General MK Rahman opposed the bail petition.

BNP standing committee member Moudud Ahmed, also a counsel for Khokon, said his client would have to surrender before the trial court by May 9.

Earlier in the day, Moudud joined a human chain in front of the Jatiya Press Club where he alleged that the government was influencing the court not to allow bails to the opposition leaders.

He also criticised the government for deploying a large number of law enforcers in and around the court premises on Tuesday night.

"Security check posts have been set up at all the gates of the Supreme Court to bar the opposition leaders from seeking bail," said Moudud.

Indo-Bangla

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which she will discuss the progress made by West Bengal under her leadership and her take on India-Bangladesh ties.

"I think she (Hillary) look forwards to seeing chief minister Banerjee one of India's dynamic women chief ministers," a senior Obama administration official told PTI ahead of the Kolkata visit.

As secretary of state, this would be Hillary's first trip to Kolkata. She will be visiting Bangladesh and India from May 5 to 8.

Arriving in Kolkata from Bangladesh, Hillary would use the opportunity to talk with the West Bengal Chief Minister on the neighboring country, the US official said.

"Hillary Clinton sees this as an important opportunity to discuss (with her) some of the important opportunities for expanding trade with Bangladesh and beyond. We see some interesting opportunities opening up there," the official said.

In her meeting, Hillary would like to hear from Mamata "her version of how things are going", the official said, adding that West Bengal is the one State which stands to benefit from the improvement in India-Bangladesh ties.

However, the official involved in the planning of the trip appreciated the improvement in ties between India and Bangladesh after Sheikh Hasina became the prime minister of the country.

Hillary would also like to hear from Banerjee the "progress" of West Bengal, since she was elected the Chief Minister and what she sees in terms of the business environment there, the official added.

SCBABBING
The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) President Zainul Abidin at a press briefing demanded that the government withdraw the additional police forces from the SC within 24 hours.

"Lawyers of the country will wage a tough movement against the government if the forces are not withdrawn from the premises within that time," he warned.

He said the SC lawyers could not bring their clients to the court fearing their arrests.

Ex-Rab official
The law enforcers broke three cupboards open and looted the cash kept in six travel bags.

Four months later, driver of the shrine Idris Ali filed a robbery case with Anwara Police Station accusing 10 Rab men and two of their informants.

The accused are Lt Col Zulfiqar Ali Majumder, Flight Lt Sheikh Mahmudul Hasan, Subedar Abul Bashar, Sub-inspector Tarun Kumar Basu, Assistant Sub-inspector Hasanuzzaman, Lance Naik Liton Miah, Lance Corporal Jasim Uddin, naiks Jahangir Hossain and Suman Chandra Dey, soldier Ashraf Uddin and informants Didarul Alam and Anwar Miah.

Of the accused, Tarun, Bashar and Didarul were arrested earlier.

Facing grilling by police, Tarun admitted to receiving Tk 5 lakh, Bashar Tk 7 lakh and Didarul Tk 6.72 lakh as their shares of the loot, said Inspector (investigation) Abdus Samad of Anwara Police Station.

Zulfiqar got Tk 76 lakh as his share and purchased land with the money, said Anwara police.

Zulfiqar was in the custody of Ramna police till 12:30pm yesterday. Later he was taken to Chittagong.

Talking to newsmen at Ramna Police Station, Zulfiqar said, "I was the CEO of Rab-7. I have honestly served the army for 22 years. But unfortunately, an incident occurred and a case was filed."

He blamed the media for leaving him in a predicament. "Perhaps I am in this position for the media. You see, my punishment had started even before the trial began."

The former army official said he would face the case legally.

Inspector Samad, investigation officer of the case, said they would produce Zulfiqar before a Chittagong court today seeking remand.

The Rab authorities sent the 10 accused back to their mother organisations after a departmental investigation found them guilty of robbery.

Zulfiqar was posted to Army Training and Doctrine Command unit in Momen Shahi Cantonment.

Later the army carried out a departmental investigation and sacked him.

According to Rab officials, around 1,000 Rab men coming from the army, navy, air force, BGB, police and Ansar have been punished so far since the formation of the elite force in 2004 for their involvement in various unlawful activities.



Two teachers of Jahangirnagar University continue their fast-unto-death demanding the removal of the vice-chancellor although others withdrew their participation following assurances from the prime minister yesterday.

PM steps in to end JU crisis

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to bring an end to the ongoing standoff.

"You keep trust on me. You will obviously be happy with my initiative on the situation at your university," Prof Rayhan of Philosophy department quoted Hasina as saying in the meeting.

Meanwhile, the pro-VC teachers and students, who had set up a camp on the main entrance of the VC's residence on the campus, left the spot around 2:00am today, said Sina Hasan, an anti-VC campaigner.

However, the students and two teachers on fast-unto-death remained firm on their decision to continue with the strike until the VC is removed.

The university goes on one month's summer vacation today.

At both the meetings with teachers, Hasina said she would take a decision in consultation with the chancellor of the university; that is President M Zillur Rahman.

Sources said both the factions of teachers were

asked to meet the prime minister as part of the government's initiative to bring normalcy on the campus.

A group of 12 teachers of the anti-VC camp, Shikkhak Samaj, met Hasina in the morning at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

"We have only one demand, which is, the removal of the VC and we have informed her [the PM] of it," said Prof Nasim Akhter Hossain, convener of Shikkhak Samaj, after the meeting.

She said they had full confidence in the PM and hence, they had called off the protest programme.

"Keep faith in me. I will not disappoint you," Prof Nasim quoted Hasina as saying in the meeting.

Later in the evening, another group of 12 teachers led by the JU VC met the premier at PMO.

Prof Amir Hossain of economics department at JU and also a member of the pro-VC delegation told The Daily Star that the premier had listened to them and would take decision on talking to the chancellor.

"She [PM] had some enquiries and we answered those," he said.

Meanwhile, teachers of the pro-VC camp yesterday afternoon formed a human chain on the campus protesting the ongoing demonstration against the VC. In the morning, they brought out a procession in JU.

JU teachers sought PM's intervention when situation on the campus became critical after a section of JU students started hunger strike since Tuesday demanding removal of the VC and protesting assault on cultural activists by Chhatra League on April 28.

Shikkhak Samaj launched demonstration against the VC in December last year protesting recruitment of teachers and different irregularities on the campus. The demonstration reached the highest climax after the murder of Zubair Ahmed, a student of English department, on January 9.

Prof Amir said the prime minister also wanted to know about the university's actions against the culprits

responsible for Zubair's killing.

He said they had informed the PM of the highest punitive measures taken against the accused and it was now up to the state to try them as per the law of the country.

Tajikistan bans new Islamist group

AFP, Dushanbe

Tajikistan yesterday banned a fringe Islamist group whose existence it initially denied but later blamed for a series of bombings that killed more than 20 servicemen and police.

A group calling itself the Jamaat Ansarullah (The Friends of Allah Society) released a 15-minute video in September calling on the Central Asian nation's Muslims to wage a holy war against the state.

Authorities initially denied its existence or ability to carry out serious attacks despite continuing Islamist violence spilling over from neighbouring Afghanistan.

DC Hill turns

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visitors are now regular phenomena in the park located in the city's Momin Road area.

The park earned its name from the official residence of the deputy commissioner (DC) on the peak of the hill.

Situated on 5.2 acres of land, the park draws thousands of visitors for its natural beauty. People visit the place to get fresh air.

During a recent visit The Daily Star found some young men, barely out of their teens, roaming in the park. They were looking for customers to sell drugs, while some drug addicts were smoking cannabis.

One of the drug peddlers, on condition of anonymity, said, "I sell drugs including ganja in the park."

"I collect the drugs from a trader named 'Bodda' [elder brother] who lives near the park," he added.

According to him, a number of temporary tea stalls and nurseries set up in the park are also involved in the drug trade.

RP Sarker, a retired government officer and regular visitor to the park, said, "The drug dealers and the users are seen even during the day."

"Necessary measures should be taken soon to prevent the criminal activities in the park," he added.

Joy Prakash Barua, another retired government officer, said despite repeated complaints to nearby Enaet Bazar police outpost the illegal activities did not stop.

"Sufficient number of police should be deployed in the park," he added.

Bijoy Kumar Chowdhury, a ward councillor of Chittagong City Corporation (CCC), said, "The park turns into an unsecured place for the visitors due to a lack of lighting and security measures."

There is no street light at several spots in the park. Drug peddlers and addicts mainly gather at the eastern part of the hill where lighting is inadequate.

Victims of stalking, I even avoid attending cultural programmes there which often take place after dusk," she said.

Nazrul Square located at the front slope of the hill is the venue for cultural programmes, book fairs, and festivals on many occasions.

Mahfukul Haq, executive engineer of CCC, said, "We provide lighting only along the main street in the park that goes up to the DC's residence."

"But the entire park should be lit to prevent criminal activities," he added.

According to regular visitors, miscreants often break the light bulbs by throwing stones, and cut the power lines, so that they can carry out their criminal activities safely.

Fayez Ahmad, the DC of Chittagong, however, denied the allegations.

"The allegations are not true. I have not noticed any misdeed in the park area when I return home at night," he said adding that police patrol the area.

"There is no problem in the park and it is not a den of miscreants," he claimed.

Shafiqul Islam, acting commissioner of Chittagong

Metropolitan Police, said, "I am not informed about the misdeeds in the park."

"I, however, will look into the matter," he added.

Fashion house

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Bismillah Handicraft and Fashion in Mirpur, was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with two bullet injuries in his left leg.

Russell's cousin Riazul Islam Jewel told reporters that Russell was returning home in a rickshaw after withdrawing the money from the branch of a bank around 10:45am.

When the rickshaw reached Janata Housing in Mirpur-1, four armed muggers on two motorbikes intercepted the rickshaw and took away the money after shooting two rounds of bullet at his leg, said a rickshaw-puller who witnessed the incident and was among the locals who took the victim to DMCH.

The muggers also fired blank shots at locals who came forward to assist the victim, he said.

Kazi Wazed Ali, officer-in-charge of Mirpur Police Station, told The Daily Star that Russel claimed they also snatched a cheque for Tk 6.03 lakh from him.

The petitioner claimed that Asif had commented at a talk show on Banglavisión on March 12 that if the prime minister and the opposition leader were asked who would next come to power, they would perhaps say that a third power would.

During a hearing on the matter on April 15, Rokanuddin Mahmud, another counsel for Asif, told the HC that the quotation made by Nawsher Ali in the petition was not an accurate reproduction of what Asif Nazrul had said at the talk show.

Asif Nazrul to appear before it on that day.

Asif yesterday went to the court, but he did not enter the courtroom during the hearing.

On March 15, the HC issued the rule on the government and Asif following a writ petition by Nawsher Ali Mollah, a Supreme Court lawyer.

The court in its rule asked them to explain why the government should not be directed to file a sedition case against Asif for making a "provocative statement" about the next government.

Dr Kamal taken aback by court

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"I have not seen in my 52 years of practice that a court keeps the respondents of a writ petition standing before it," said Kamal, chief counsel of Asif, while placing arguments before the bench hearing a rule on his client.

Justice Manik said the bench would hear the rule with an open mind, saying the bench had already requested some eminent lawyers to place their opinions as amici curiae (friends of court) on limits of freedom of expression.

But Dr Kamal said the defence would approach the chief justice for transferring the case against Asif Nazrul to another bench if the current bench further keeps his client standing.

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