

Alal, 62 other BNP men

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different Islamic parties to carry out subversive activities during today's hartal," Biplob said.

Sammilito Islami Dal Samuha, a platform of Islamic parties many of which are components in the BNP-led 20-party alliance, on Wednesday announced a countrywide daylong hartal today protesting the government's failure to arrest Abdul Latif Siddique who was sacked from the cabinet and the Awami League for his comments on Hajj pilgrims.

The DC's claim could not be verified from any other independent sources. The BNP, however, categorically denied the allegation.

BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir in a release claimed that police detained 80 BNP men from Alal's residence who had gone there to discuss with him different organisational activities.

Terming the mass arrest "fascist behaviour" of the AL-led government, Fakhrul demanded all arrestees be freed immediately.

Azizul Haque, officer-in-charge of Mohammadpur Police Station, said most of the detainees are Jubo Dal men and the rest are from the BNP and its front organisations. He, however, refused to reveal the arrestees' names.

Mohammadpur police yesterday lodged a case against the arrestees under the Special Power Act. They will be produced before a Dhaka court today.

This was the second highest mass apprehension of BNP men from a single spot since March 11 last year when police had arrested over 164 BNP men after raiding the BNP headquarters in Naya Paltan.

The Jubo Dal will hold a countryside demonstration tomorrow protesting the arrests.

Iran hangs woman

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on Friday, where she was told to visit her daughter for the final time before her execution at dawn on Saturday. She was granted an hour with Ms Jabbari before being made to leave.

Jabbari was arrested in 2007 for the killing of Morteza Abdolali Sarbandi, a former employee of Iran's Ministry of Intelligence who she said tried to sexually abuse her.

She was sentenced to death by a Tehran court in 2009 and her execution verdict was upheld by Iran's Supreme Court. Her case drew international outcry and sparked a petition urging her release, which collected over 240,000 signatures.

The court ruling says Jabbari, 26, stabbed Sarbandi in the back in 2007 after purchasing a knife two days earlier.

It says the execution was carried out after Sarbandi's family refused to pardon Jabbari or accept blood money.

The campaign and world-wide media attention granted her a last minute stay of execution on 30 September, although the reason for the postponement was never

officially confirmed.

Amnesty understands Jabbari admitted to stabbing the man once from the back but said another man killed Abdolali Sarbandi. The group said her claim is believed to have never been properly investigated.

Raha Bahreini, Amnesty's researcher on Iran, told The Independent: "Like many others, we are absolutely shocked by this travesty of justice. Reyhaneh's execution is a tragic moment for many people in Iran and for the members of the international community hoping for different outcome."

"Her case personifies the outrage of many in Iran and across the globe over the use of the death penalty, which is a despicable, cruel and inhumane punishment."

"Reports and online petitions have been crying for her retrial because of the many unanswered questions hanging over her case. But at the end they once again allowed the execution and justified this by saying it lies in the hands of the family of the deceased to make the decision to spare her."

British Bangladeshi

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Photos purporting to show his dead body appeared on ISIS-affiliated Twitter accounts on Friday night, with fellow militants claiming he was killed fighting in Kobani.

The Syrian border town has seen intense fighting in recent weeks, with the US-led coalition bombing Isis militants and dropping weapons to Kurdish fighters attempting to stop the group's advance.

The Foreign Office said it could not confirm Hassan's death but "was aware of reports about the death of a British national in Syria".

The news did not reach his family, who live in Southsea, until Saturday morning as gruesome pictures of his body circulated on social media.

The chairman of their local Portsmouth Jami Mosque, Abdul Jalil, said he had spoken to Hassan's relatives.

"It has been confirmed with the family that he has died. Right now they are very upset," he told the BBC.

"I am saddened and again shocked for the community about this news."

The teenager, a former pupil at the independent St John's College in Southsea, flew to Turkey and crossed into Syria instead of going to university.

His friends, Iftekar Jaman, Mamunur Roshid and Hamidur Rahman, have previously been killed in the fighting.

Roshid's death, at the age of 24, had been confirmed on Tuesday.

Hassan went by the name Abu Dujana in Syria and on social media.

He last posted on his Twitter account on 17 October, writing about the intensity of air strikes in Ayn al-Arab - an alternative name for Kobani.

"Between 20-40 us strikes daily in Ayn al-Arab. Alhamdulillah they are spending \$10's of billions...against themselves," he wrote.

He had previously written about jihad and the goal of "ultimate success in the hereafter", although his account had been deleted by Twitter several times.

Mashudur Choudhury, who left the UK with Hassan, returned to the UK after just a few weeks and was arrested at Gatwick Airport.

He has since been convicted of terrorist offences in the first such case related to the conflict in Syria.

Assad Uzzaman is believed to be the last surviving member of the "Bad Boys" still fighting there.

An estimated 500 Britons are among 2,000 foreign fighters who have joined Isis, which calls itself the Islamic State.

It is waging a bloody war across Syria and Iraq to establish a hard-line Islamic caliphate.

Petrobangla counts

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begin its field works before late next year due to slow bureaucratic process within the company to get approval for the tasks. "We expect the ONGC to drill one well in 2017 in that area," mentioned the Petrobangla official.

The ONGC's blocks also include Kutubdia where a small gas field was discovered long ago. The area had three to four potential gas reserves. A detailed survey of the area and more drilling can make a viable commercial discovery there.

If enough gas is found in Kutubdia, again, the Sangu platform could be utilised, he pointed out.

Australian company Santos had bought Sangu from Cairn at the fag end of its life and tried its best to keep it operative. Santos had proposed that the government allow it developing the Kutubdia field and installing a 50-km pipeline to bring in gas up to the Sangu platform and thus save cost. However, the proposal was turned down.

Santos, along with KrisEnergy and Bapex, is currently working in block SS-11 beyond Teknaf under a new PSC signed in March this year. The company is set to conduct a seismic survey from December and aims to complete it by March next.

Ebola cases

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Nigeria, where there were 20 cases and eight deaths, and Senegal, where there was one case and no deaths, that the WHO has deemed to be over. It also included isolated cases in Spain, the US and a single case in Mali.

However, the totals are still likely to be an underestimate because many people in the worst-affected countries have been unable or too frightened to seek medical care. A shortage of labs capable of handling potentially infected blood samples has also made it difficult to track the outbreak.

The latest figures show no change in the total number of cases in Liberia, suggesting that they may not reflect the real situation.

A total of 450 healthcare workers are known to have been infected with Ebola: 80 in Guinea; 228 in Liberia; 11 in Nigeria; and 127 in Sierra Leone; one in Spain; and 13 in the US. A total of 244 have died from the virus.

WHO said on Friday that Ebola vaccine trials will start in west Africa in December, a month earlier than planned, and hundreds of thousands of doses will be available by mid-2015.

Authorities in Mali have taken action to calm fears over Ebola as the disease claimed its first victim: a toddler who was contagious while travelling more than 1,000km on public buses with her grandmother before being treated.

The WHO is treating the situation in



The four Huji suspects shown to the media at the DB head office on Minto Road yesterday. The law enforcers also seized explosives and materials for making bombs from their possession.

PHOTO: STAR

Banned militant groups united

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suspected members of the outlawed Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (Huji) early yesterday.

"We have got some documents that confirm the formation of the new jihadi platform," said Monirul Islam, joint commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, at a press briefing at the DMP media centre.

Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), Hizbullah, Allahar Dal and Hizbut-Tahrir are the other members of the umbrella organisation.

The arrestees maintained connection with outfits like Ansarullah Bangla Team and Hiz-but Tauhid that are not banned yet, Monirul said.

The Detective Branch (DB) of police detained Md Rafique Ahmed alias Sajid,

34; Md Omar alias Faizul alias Robi, 25; Md Nadim Ahmed alias Sumon, 30; and Md Salahuddin Ahmed, 29, in night-long raids in Uttara and Tikatuli of the capital and Fatullah of Narayanganj.

During the raids, detectives also unearthed a laboratory facility at Fatullah. The Huji men were using the facility to make "powerful bombs", Monirul said.

"Huge amounts" of explosives and materials for making detonators were recovered from their possession, he said, adding that at least 300 powerful detonators, which are used to trigger an explosion, could be made with the recovered materials.

At one point, Monirul also said that the arrestees were working on instructions of Moulana Abu Syed alias Mufti

Zafar, an accused in August 21 grenade attack case, who is now in jail.

Despite several attempts, the DMP official could not be reached for further comments on this.

Among the detainees, Rafique is the operational leader while Omar, a final year student of Chemistry Department at Prime University, is an explosives expert. Omar was running the lab with the help of Nadim and Salauddin, Monirul said at the press briefing.

"The Huji recruited Omar when he was a sixth grader and wanted to prepare him as an explosive expert," said the senior DMP official, claiming that the militants had plans for simultaneous bomb attacks in Dhaka, Chittagong and Rajshahi this month.

"They were also planning to attack some noted personalities," he said, adding that the militants also wanted to attack recently expelled Awami League leader Abdul Latif Siddique for his derogatory comments on hajj and Tablighi Jamaat.

In primary interrogation, the arrested four said they had no problem with funds but did not disclose the sources. "We will come to know about the sources of funds and explosives in further quizzing," Monirul said.

The arrestees were presented before the media but police did not allow pressmen to talk to them.

About India's claim of Bangladeshi militants' involvement in some recent bomb blasts in India, Monirul said they were yet to find any such link.

RMCH interns confine journo

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

A group of intern doctors and staff of Rangpur Medical College and Hospital yesterday confined three journalists of two private TV channels for half an hour as they were shooting footage for a special story on its paediatrics department.

They are Shah Bayejid Ahmed, Rangpur district correspondent of Ekattor television channel, and its videographer Shaheen Alam and Rtv videographer Dalim.

The hospital sources said the interns and staff of the paediatrics department prevented the journalists from entering the department and shooting footage of its patients around 10:00am as the journalists did not take permission from the hospital authorities.

They were locked in an altercation with the journalists and damaged the video camera of Rtv. There was also a scuffle between the two groups, the sources said.

They confined the journalists to the same department as the journalists wanted to meet the hospital director for lodging a complaint in this connection, the sources added.

Hearing the news, other journalists rushed to the hospital and rescued their colleagues.

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Shot by cops, woman loses leg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman's leg had to be amputated after police allegedly shot her when she tried to stop the law enforcers from arresting her brother in Chittagong 10 days ago.

Shazuara Begum Shazu, 35, of Satkania upazila's Koechia village is now undergoing treatment at Ibn Sina Hospital in the capital.

Police said her brother Mohammad Osman is a Shibir operative and accused in a couple of cases.

According to Shazu, a team of Chittagong's Satkania police went to their home on October 16 to "take away" Osman.

"As I along with my two sisters and our mother tried to stop the police, one of them suddenly shot in my left leg," she said.

She was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital and later shifted to the capital's National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (Nitor) where doctors amputated her leg from above the knee two days later. She is now undergoing treatment at the Ibn Sina.

Officer-in-Charge Khalid Hossain of Satkania Police Station said police

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Asia leads

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"Developing Asia remains the fastest growing region globally. So, Asia's reform momentum must be maintained to ensure the region's position as the global leader," said Bangladesh President M Abdul Hamid, who inaugurated the conference at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

He hoped the conference would open up a window of opportunity for exploring the potential of Asian countries and taking proper initiatives for a better Asia.

The ICCB said the global economy appears to have reached a far stronger place than two years ago, and is now showing signs of bouncing back.

China's growth would open the door for achieving higher growth in Bangladesh and its neighbouring countries, including India and Myanmar, it said in a publication brought out on the occasion.

It is imperative that the Asian countries give top priority to the development of an integrated global strategy for sustaining the projected world growth momentum, said the chamber that has organised the conference to mark its 20th year in Bangladesh.

There is a need for regulatory reforms and higher infrastructure investments in India, ASEAN, and other parts of Asia, financial system liberalisation, labour and product market reforms in Japan, and tax and spending reforms in many economies.

These reforms are critical not only to sustain Asia's growth leadership over the medium term, but also to maintain investor confidence and secure financial stability in the near term, said ICCB President Mahbubur Rahman in his speech.

Policy complacency would be penalised due to the risk of further bouts of volatility ahead, the ICCB said.

With a possible tightening of global liquidity in the coming days, Asia will face higher interest rates and potential bouts of capital outflow and asset price volatility.

In a message, read out by Chief Conference Coordinator Asif Ibrahim, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said that as developing Asian countries continue to grow, they face the daunting challenges of providing employment and ensuring that income disparity does not widen.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon also sent a message in which he said

Asian economies proved resilient during the global financial crisis, leading the recovery of the world economy for the past five years.

"Prospects for the region are bright. At the same time, the region faces a number of challenges," he said in the message read out by ICCB Vice President Latifur Rahman, also chairman of Transcom Group.

"While most Asian economies are in a strong position to withstand potential financial market instability, further efforts are needed to address existing domestic and external imbalances.

"In the longer-run, Asia's continuing success will depend on the ability to transform the current growth model into a model of sustainable development: across the region, economic growth needs to become more inclusive, more equitable, and more environmentally sustainable," said the UN chief.

In another message, Roberto Azevedo, director general of the World Trade Organisation, said the topic of the conference could hardly be more important, and there is no doubt that Asia would have a very important role to play.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith said many had stated that the century belongs to Asia. "Asia has taken up the challenge to take the world forward. So far, we have done well."

"Asia's lead has to be maintained in the global economic recovery in the coming years."

The minister termed trade a key element for growth.

Victor K Fung, chairman of ICC Research Foundation, said the conference was very timely, as it focused on Asia. "It is pertinent because of Asia's rising economic importance."

Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed said Bangladesh had done miracles in the last four decades.

Ridding itself of the ignominious tag "bottomless basket", Bangladesh has become a classic example of development.

He praised the businesses and industries for being the driving force in the country's success story.

On the last day of the conference today, trade experts, economists and policy makers will sit in three separate sessions at Sonargaon Hotel, and discuss key issues relating to global economic recovery, challenges for Asia and the WTO's Bali outcome.

Holy Ashura

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meeting of the National Moon Sighting Committee at the Islamic Foundation conference room.

Religious Affairs Minister Matiuur Rahman chaired the meeting, attended among others by Religious Affairs Secretary Babul Hasan and Islamic Foundation Director Shamim

Mohammad Afzal, said a PID hand-out.

Ashura is observed on the 10th of Muharram to commemorate the Korbala tragedy in which Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA), grandson of Prophet Muhammad (SM), and his family members and followers embraced martyrdom.