

# 11 'JMB men' held in city

## Jihadi books, explosives, sharp weapons seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives in a raid at the capital's Uttara Monday night arrested 11 suspected members of banned militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB).

They claimed that the arrestees were recruiting fresh operatives and collecting funds by robberies and mugging.

Briefing newsmen yesterday, Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Joint Commissioner Monirul Islam said they were involved in all sorts of crimes, including mugging and robbery, for money.

The arrestees are Arif Ibne Khayer alias Rifat, Babu Munsif, Masud Rana, Khorshed Alam, Omar Faruk, Alhaj Mia, Helal Uddin, Abdul Based, Mohammad Sujat, Azhar Ali, Forhad Hossain and Mizanur Rahman.

Jihadi books, explosive materials, sharp weapons, a lock breaking machine and seven mobile phones were seized during the drive.

The DMP official said the arrested JMB men had plans to carry out attacks on VIPs, VVIPs and at important estab-

lishments in the country.

They also planned to rob an NGO in Comilla, he added.

After the arrest of JMB chief Saidur Rahman, his son Abu Talha Muhammad Fahim had been leading the organisation as its acting ameer until his detention on April 27.

Monirul said Fahim disclosed the name of one of his associates Rifat who continued organisational activities and recruitment of new members from different districts, including Gazipur, Tangail and Jamalpur.

"Some groups are trying to emerge in the country following the rise of militancy in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and Pakistan. But they failed due to our strong monitoring. The militants have no strong and organised network, and had only been responsible for carrying out some isolated incidents," he claimed.

A case was filed with Uttara West Police Station in this connection.

Meanwhile, a Dhaka court yesterday placed the arrestees on two-day remand each.



Eleven suspected members of banned militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) are paraded before journalists at the Media Centre of Dhaka Metropolitan Police yesterday, hours after they were arrested in the capital's Uttara. PHOTO: STAR

## Police arrest 5 'Shibir men' in Savar

### Seize gun, bullets, jihadi books

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Police last night arrested five suspected Shibir men, including two students of Jahangirnagar University, from a house at Genda of Savar and seized a gun, 18 bullets and some jihadi books from them.

The five are Jahangirnagar University students Md Habibur Rahman, 20, and Imam Hossain, 20; Nizamuddin, 21, Motasim Billah, 20, and Md Nur-e-Alam.

Kazi Ashraful Azim, additional superintendent of Dhaka district police, said acting on a tip off, cops raided a seven-storey building at Genda around 9:00pm and rounded up the five from the top floor of the building.

Police will produce the arrestees before a local court today and pray for their remand, said SM Kamruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Savar Model Police Station.

The arrestees were planning to carry out terrorist activities, said the additional SP.

## Obama joins Facebook

### Addresses climate change in first post

CNN ONLINE

President Barack Obama joined Facebook on Monday and said he wanted his account to be "a place where we can have real conversations," diving right in with his first post on climate change.

In that post, Obama took Facebook users on a walk through his back yard at the White House and calling on Americans in a video "to preserve this beautiful planet of ours."

"Not only do I want future presidents to be able to take walks like this," Obama said in a video post on his profile.

"I want to make sure that the American people are able to enjoy the incredible national parks, incredible beauty, the mountains, the oceans, that have been one of the greatest gifts we've ever received."

The President chose Facebook because "at a time when nearly three in four adults online use Facebook, this feels like a great place to do it," he writes.

Meanwhile, the "Barack Obama" Facebook account, which has over 45 million followers, continues to be run by Organizing for Action.

Obama, who first joined Twitter in May, has been more active on social media as his second term nears its end, hosting Twitter Q&A's, interacting with stars of the US Women's National Soccer team, inviting teen clockmaker Ahmed Mohamed to the White House, joking with Bill Clinton and even revealing his guacamole recipe preference.



## Govt asks Amnesty Int'l

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Liberation War and betrays Amnesty International's shallow reading of the history and significance of Bangladesh's Liberation War and its aftermath.

"This is exactly the kind of misleading propaganda run by those who opposed Bangladesh's independence in 1971, continue to work against Bangladesh's sovereignty and independence, and remain on the side of those convicted of crimes against humanity and genocide," read the government note.

The Amnesty in its statement reiterated the organisation's principled position against the death penalty, and in the process, questioned the trials and appeals in the cases against BNP leader Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury and Jamaat leader Ali Ahsan Muhammad Mojaheed, who have been convicted of committing crimes against humanity during the Liberation War.

About the AI's stand on war crimes cases, the Bangladesh government said it is a sad reality that the perpetrators of the mass atrocity crimes during the Liberation War were allowed to gain political and economic strength over the years and make systematic attempts to change the narratives about their past.

They unleashed their full force to create an environment of terror and violence to destabilise the country and foil the trials, resort to selective murders and attacks on witnesses and campaigners of the trials, and run an international campaign through certain quarters to undermine the trials, added the note.

"The government and people of Bangladesh consider it unfortunate that Amnesty International has

enlisted itself with those quarters. It becomes obvious from its latest [as well as previous] statement that, under the pretext of opposing the death penalty, Amnesty International has resorted to projecting the trials as politically biased and motivated."

In so doing, the AI has moved away from the stand of an impartial observer and commentator, and has made a choice to repeat the arguments of the defendants as well as the local and international detractors who have a vested interest in disrupting the trials, the government said.

The fact that most of the defendants happen to be members of different opposing political parties is a mere coincidence as far as the trials are concerned. Even then, the fact that some ruling party or coalition members are also standing trials was conveniently glossed over by Amnesty, mentioned the note.

It said without going into any specificity, the AI made sweeping comments about the alleged miscarriage of justice or lack of fair trial standards. "It is unacceptable that Amnesty International assumes the prerogative to make value judgments about an independent judiciary and its conduct in a manner that reeks of utmost irresponsibility, unaccountability, and condensation."

Amnesty, said the government, opposes the death penalty, but it raises its concerns over the punishment only on a selective basis, especially for convicts with finance and international clout.

"There is thus no reason to consider Amnesty International as an unbiased arbiter of the judicial process. Any claims it makes, such as calling the ICT-BD flawed, must be viewed through that lens, and treated with skepticism," read the protest note.

## India unveils plans to open up FDI

AFP, New Delhi

India's government yesterday announced plans for a sweeping liberalisation of its foreign direct investment (FDI) regime, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeks to counter accusations his reform drive is stalling.

The government said it would undertake a raft of reforms to open up 15 areas of the economy, including lifting the caps on FDI in the critical defence, banking and construction sectors.

It said the reforms were aimed at making it easier for overseas companies to do business in India, notorious for its red tape and labyrinthine regulations.

"This exercise... is intended on the one hand to further open up sectors for more foreign investments in the country and also to make it easy to invest in India," the Commerce Ministry said in a statement.

A spokesman contacted by AFP said details of the new FDI limits for specific sectors were not immediately available, although he said further details would be announced later in the day.

The reforms come after Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party suffered a drubbing in state elections in Bihar, in a battle fought largely over development in India's poorest state.

They also appear to be a signal of intent ahead of the prime minister's

first visit to Britain as leader later this week, where he will be seeking investment from the former colonial power.

Modi stormed to power in 2014 promising sweeping reforms to revive the faltering economy.

## A father's eyes

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takes her place on the crossbar of the rickshaw that has seen better days. She has been doing this since she was five.

"I pull in somewhere around Tk 100 to Tk 150. I don't work after Maghreb, the evening prayers, said Monir.

It was Monir's elder son Sharif, now 18, who used to be his eyes before Faria grew up. Sharif is a CNG driver now.

Monir had been the subject of a TV program and it earned him one lakh taka. He used some of the money to train his son to drive the auto rickshaw. Then there were other needs. He also spent some money for treatment of his eyes, in the hope that he might see again.

At the moment, seeing again is too ambitious for Monir. Getting his second child --- Swarna Akhter, 16 --- married off is more pressing for him.

Monir has managed to be the blind rickshaw-puller for 28 years now.

"I won't be able to do anything better than pulling a rickshaw," he sighed. I will end my life this way."

## 5 lakh expats face trouble

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own accounts, grossly violating its contracts. It was supposed to regularly deposit the money to the bank accounts of Bangladesh missions in Saudi Arabia and the UAE and submit statements to the DIP.

In Saudi Arabia, the Malaysian company enrolled 1.5 lakh expatriates. For each enrolment, it took SR 125 as fee and SR 35 as service charge, which means the company realised a total of Tk 50 crore from the expatriates.

"Only a small fraction of the amount was deposited and that too before May this year," a mission official told The Daily Star, adding that IRIS did not deposit the huge amount of Bangladesh government's money, despite repeatedly being warned.

Bangladesh Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Golam Moshfi said the Malaysian company does not deposit money as per the contract and that he had informed the DIP about it. However, he could not say the exact amount yet to be realised from IRIS.

Same was the case in the UAE, IRIS collected about Tk 8 crore as passport fees and service charges enrolling about 30,000 expatriates. Only a small portion of it was deposited, said a DIP official.

Ambassador to the UAE Muhammad Imran declined to comment.

The DIP and Bangladesh missions in the two countries said IRIS did not give any bottom line of the money it had collected from expatriates and thus they did not know the exact amount IRIS owes Bangladesh.

However, they said it would be over Tk 50 crore.

In a letter to IRIS' Deputy Managing Director Dato Hamdan on September 17, the DIP asked the company to deposit all the money it had collected

from Saudi Arabia. "This is a huge financial irregularity," it read.

The DIP issued another letter on October 21, asking the same IRIS official to deposit the money collected in the UAE.

Director General of DIP Zeaul Alam said IRIS has to pay the money. "We asked them to come to Dhaka to settle the issue.

"How much they [IRIS] actually owe Bangladesh has to be determined," he added when asked if the amount was more than Tk 70 crore.

MISSING MRPS

Although the company closed its activities in Malaysia in August, it is yet to provide 1,075 MRPs to Bangladeshi expatriates there.

"Holders of the passports waited months for getting their passports. Desperate, they are running between Bangladesh High Commission and IRIS offices for their passports," said a DIP official.

"We held several meetings, asked IRIS to hand over the passports but they have not been moved," he regretted.

DIP Deputy Director Zakir Hossain, who is in Kuala Lumpur, said he along with three other officials were trying to get the MRPs. "We are also trying to know the whereabouts of 1,320 MRP applications which IRIS did not process with the DIP for passport issuance," he said.

The DIP chief failed to explain why the Malaysian firm seized those passports and why it was not punished for risking the fate of so many Bangladeshis.

"We will take up the matters with IRIS officials who are coming to attend a meeting to be held at the home ministry on Wednesday [today]," he told The Daily Star.

DEADLINE AND CONSEQUENCES

At least five lakh expatriates, majority of them in Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and the UAE would not get their MRPs within the November 24 deadline, as per assessments done by the officials of Bangladesh missions.

The blame goes to IRIS, which got the MRP enrolment job for expatriates in those countries but failed to do its job properly. This forced the Bangladesh government to build capacity in the missions for issuing MRPs to the expatriates.

Worried about their jobs and scared of being deported, many migrant workers returned to Bangladesh just to get their MRPs.

Of the 15 lakh Bangladeshis staying in Saudi Arabia, 10-11 lakh would get their MRPs before the deadline. In the UAE, some 50,000 out of eight lakh, would not get the passports while among six lakh in Malaysia some 30,000-40,000 would be left out, according to assessments of the missions.

The Daily Star talked to a number of migrant workers who are yet to get their MRPs.

"My working days will be numbered as my employer asked for my MRP to get my work visa extended after November 24," said a migrant over telephone.

Gazi Rasel of Brahmanbaria is another who works for a construction firm in Penang. "I am scared of losing my job if I don't get my MRP soon."

The Malaysian company hasn't been held responsible for risking the jobs of a large number of expatriates, not depositing the money it collected and failing to hand over passports in Malaysia.

The reason is, some top officials of the home ministry and the DIP are reportedly working in favour of the company.

## Military police stabbed

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around 20 minutes, say police and witnesses.

The identity of the detainee aged between 30 and 35 could not be known immediately.

The victim was identified as Samidul Islam, 27, by his fellow members of military police.

Samidul suffered injuries in the neck, cheek and fingers, and was under treatment at the Combined Military Hospital in the capital, said hospital sources.

In a press release yesterday, the Inter Service Public Relations Directorate (ISPR) said a member of military police sustained minor injuries as a pedestrian attacked him with a sharp weapon while on duty in the Kafrul area at 9:45am.

Other members of military police, who were on duty there, detained the suspected attacker. A probe into the incident was underway, it added.

Witnesses said a bearded man, wearing a shirt and lungi, suddenly attacked Samidul while he was talking to a rickshaw-puller.

The attacker hacked Samidul indiscriminately with a machete. It all happened in less than a minute, according to the witnesses.

"Soon, two army members, who were on duty at the checkpoint, chased the attacker," said sergeant (ret'd) Talukder Golam Sarwar, who along with several locals joined the chase.

After running a few yards, the attacker stopped and threatened to stab whoever came near him. He then entered a five-storey building near Uttar Kafrul High School.

He pressed the door bell of an apartment on the building's third floor. As the occupants of the house opened the door, he entered the flat.

"The man asked for a glass of water. He sought shelter, saying some people were following him," said a resident of the flat.

One of the occupants then asked the attacker to follow him. As the attacker got out of the apartment, the occupant ran back to the flat and locked the door from inside, leaving the attacker outside.

In the meantime, members of military police and law enforcers cordoned off the building. They warned the attacker that he would be shot if he did not surrender.

The man then came down after hiding his machete under a doormat on the staircase.

The building's owner Abdur Rashid Khan told The Daily Star that law enforcers picked up the caretaker of the house, Haroon, and a tenant of the flat on the third floor for questioning.

Kafrul police said no case was filed as of 12:15am today over the incident.

Talking to the BBC Bangla last night, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said law enforcers were interrogating the detainee to find out who ordered him to carry out the attack and also the source of their funding.

A conspiracy is going on at home and abroad to create anarchy in the country. Attacks are being carried out to prove that the country is now unstable, he said.

The IS (Islamic State), Ansarullah Bangla Team and the JMB are tied together, and if one gets to the root he will find that they are from the Jamaat-

e-Islami and the BNP, said Kamal.

On November 4, unidentified assailants hacked to death a police constable, Mukul Hossain, and injured another at a checkpoint in Ashulia on the outskirts of the capital.

Another policeman, Ibrahim Mollah, assistant sub-inspector of Darus Salam Police Station, was stabbed to death at a checkpoint in the capital's Gabtoli area on October 22.

## Nitish's Bihar CM oath likely on Nov 20

PTI, Patna

Though the official announcement is awaited, Nitish Kumar in all likelihood would take oath as the new Chief Minister of Bihar on November 20.

"People are busy with Diwali and after that comes the Chhath festival, which ends on November 18. So oath of the new government in all likelihood will be administered after Chhath," State JD(U) president Basistha Narayan Singh said.

Though the decision to this effect will be taken by the Chief Minister but the date seems likely, he said.

Two senior ministers of Kumar's outgoing Cabinet have also indicated November 20 as the likely date and talks are on among top leadership of the three constituent parties of the Grand Alliance on government formation.