

JMB den busted in Ctg

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According to Chittagong Metropolitan Police Commissioner Abdul Jalil, neither police nor Rab use this rifle in Bangladesh.

Contacted, security analyst Maj Gen (ret) MA Rashid said this weapon is not for regular military operations and Bangladesh Army doesn't use this rifle. It is mostly used by special forces or assassins.

Replying to a query, he said separatists in India and Myanmar and some smuggling rackets in the region are known to have this gun.

Talking to The Daily Star, a Rab official in Chittagong said MK-11 is an assault rifle and some rebel groups of Arakan use it.

During three and a half hours raid from 12:30am, Detectives did not find any JMB operative in the three-room flat on the ground floor of two-storey Haji Ishak Mansion just two kilometres off Chittagong Cantonment and on the main road to Chittagong University.

Searching a locked room of the den, the detectives also found two magazines of the rifle, 5kg gel explosive, 13 army uniform, a pair of badges of army major rank, 252 bullets including 186 of sniper rifle, 25 detonators, bomb-making materials and documents of the outfit.

The high-precision semi-automatic rifle is able to fire 750 rounds of bullets every minute. Its effective range 1,500 yards, said a Chittagong police press release.

The raid comes days after the discovery of JMB's "grenade-making factory" in Mirpur in the capital. Javed, a Chittagong JMB operative killed in a "grenade explosion", had received training on bomb-making from the Mirpur factory, say police.

Babul Akhtar, additional deputy commissioner of Detective Branch of CMP, who led the Amanbazar drive, said they conducted the raid following information gleaned from three JMB



Two detained alleged members of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh being taken away by police before yesterday's raid on the house in Amanbazar of Chittagong's Hathazari upazila.



PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

members arrested on Saturday evening in the city.

The arrestees -- Naimur Rahman Nayan, Faisal Mahmud and Shawkat Russell -- told police that JMB's regional commander Md Fardin had been using the Amanbazar as a den.

Nayan, hailing from Nageshwari of Kurigram, is a fourth-year student of physics department at Chittagong University. Faisal of Noakhali and Shawkat of Moheshkhali in Cox's Bazar are final-year students of the same department, said the additional deputy commissioner.

A top DB official wishing anonymity said they have found Nayan's connections with Islami Chhatra Shibir, student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami.

The official said Fardin suffered minor injuries in the "grenade blast that killed Javed" and they had information that JMB member Shawkat Russell supplied him medicine.

Fardin, who rented the flat posing as a businessman named Nafis six months ago, had left the place a couple of weeks back, ADC Babul Akhtar said.

Owner of the building Haji Ishak said Nafis moved in with his wife and a daughter. Three months back, he went

somewhere with his wife and daughter and a month later came back alone with an injury in his hands.

"He told me that it was from a motorbike accident," said Ishak, adding that later a cousin of Nafis started staying here with him.

On recovery of the arms, ammunition and the military uniform, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kusum Dewan of DB told The Daily Star that it was not unlikely that the militants had plans to attack cantonment area.

CMP boss Abdul Jalil said nowadays this kind of uniforms of both army and police are being made unlawfully and such activities must be checked.

ADC Babul Akhtar said detectives had arrested five JMB men at a flat in Karnaphuli area of Chittagong on October 5.

They were involved in mugging a manager of a local distributor company at Sadarghat in the city on September 23. Two militants -- Robiul and Rafik -- and the manager were killed in the explosion of a hand grenade thrown by the JMB men.

The JMB men were also involved in killing a pir (a Muslim spiritual guru) and his attendant on September 4, said

Outfit

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plan, any of their members might have been involved in the attack," said a Detective Branch of police (DB) official investigating the case.

On Friday, a man blew himself up inside an Ahmadiyya mosque in Bagmara during Juma prayers. The blast killed the suicide bomber and injured three people.

Just a day before that, detectives, after a drive at a building in Shah Ali area of Mirpur, claimed to have arrested the three JMB men and seized 16 improvised grenades, a suicide vest, and bomb-making materials.

Abu Sayeed alias Russell, Mohammad Elias Omar Faruk, and Mohsin Ali Rubel, alleged operatives of banned militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), were on a six-day remand each.

Quoting the trio, detectives claimed that the group had at least 20 fedayeen (suicide bombers). They said law enforcement agencies had held at least 30 JMB men and some of whom were fedayeen.

Sanwar Hossain, additional deputy commissioner (south) of Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said they were scrutinising the information gleaned from the trio during remand.

DB officials said the JMB faction had no bomb experts since the law enforcement agencies arrested Boma Mizan in 2009.

The group opted for Mustafizur Shakil, known as Boma Shakil, who had a diploma in engineering.

Shakil and JMB second-in-command in Dhaka region Sohel Rana Hiron slipped through police fingers blending with the tenants who were being taken out of the building during the drive in Mirpur.

Under Shakil's supervision in Mirpur, several JMB operatives trained on producing bombs and homemade grenades. Two of them became experts on producing homemade grenade while seven to eight people worked as their aides, the officials said.

Meanwhile, family members and neighbours of Abu Sayeed claimed that police had picked him up from his home in Dinajpur nearly a month ago, our Dinajpur correspondent reports.

"Everybody knows that law enforcement agency members picked him [Sayeed] up from home a month ago," said a family member seeking anonymity.

Gonorrhoea

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said gonorrhoea was "rapidly" developing resistance.

A highly drug-resistant strain of gonorrhoea was detected in the north of England in March. That strain is able to shrug off the antibiotic azithromycin, which is normally used alongside another drug, ceftriaxone.

In her letter, the chief medical officer said: "Gonorrhoea is at risk of becoming an untreatable disease due to the continuing emergence of antimicrobial resistance."

But while an injection of ceftriaxone and an azithromycin pill are supposed to be used in combination, this may not always be the case for all patients.

Earlier this year, the British Association for Sexual Health and HIV warned that some online pharmacies were offering only oral medication.

Using just one of the two drugs makes it easier for the bacterium to develop resistance.

The letter, which is also signed by chief pharmaceutical officer Dr Keith Ridge, stated: "Gonorrhoea has rapidly acquired resistance to new antibiotics, leaving few alternatives to the current recommendations."

"It is therefore extremely important that suboptimal treatment does not occur."

The disease is caused by the bacterium called Neisseria gonorrhoea. The infection is spread by unprotected vaginal, oral and anal sex.

Smugglers

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Ali also claims the syndicates which organise the trade have reached an understanding with law enforcement agencies in both countries.

Aware of the prevalence of cross-border drug smuggling, the commanding officer of 15 BGB battalion in Lalmonirhat Lieutenant Colonel Bajlur Rahman Hayati says special drives are conducted by the BGB in the open border areas, which also include the Angarpota-Dahagram, Sree Rampur, Shamsnagr, Panbari and Burimari areas of Patgram upazila.

"To defeat the drug smugglers, we have proposed to set up additional camps with greater manpower in these open border areas," says the Lieutenant Colonel. "The proposal is currently under consideration."

Ten journos

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Swedish Ambassador Johan Frisell, present at the ceremony as special guest, noted how diversity in societies should be accepted with an open mind. He suggested reporting on homosexuality along with transgender issues.

AL to face debacle

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election survey [by AL] will be of no use. I know the actual findings of that survey. It indicates their [AL's] debacle," she said, alleging that the "false campaign" aims at covering up government corruption.

Khaleda was addressing a biannual council of the pro-BNP faction of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists at the Supreme Court Bar Association auditorium in the capital yesterday.

On December 20, the ruling party assessed that AL-nominated mayor aspirants were ahead in around 200 municipalities out of the 234 going to polls on December 30. Sources said the AL central organising secretaries presented the data on party's overall progress before the central leaders at a meeting.

The BNP chief yesterday claimed that her party would secure 80 percent of the total votes in the upcoming polls.

She urged the voters to exercise their franchise in a festive mood on that day. "People are waiting to cast their votes in favour of BNP's electoral symbol sheaf of paddy," she said.

Khaleda alleged that the government had prepared evil designs to prevent the BNP from joining the local polls.

"But they [the government] made a big mistake by arranging polls on the party lines. Joining the elections, the BNP has proved that it's a party that favours elections and believes in a fair and participatory poll," she said.

Pointing to the recent media reports that journalists will not be allowed to stay inside the polling stations during the voting, she said the main objective of the move was "transparent".

"Journalist will come under restrictions so that vote rigging could go on. Journalists must have access to the polling stations."

She requested the media to present the real scenario inside the centres to the people on voting day.

Khaleda urged the local administration to play a neutral role without any fear.

She also called upon the government to immediately release all arrested journalists and reopen all the media outlets that have been closed.

Lambasting the government for enacting the national broadcast policy and its move to introduce online registration for online news portals, Khaleda also blamed the administration for shutting down the media outlets for "writing against government misdeeds".

KHALEDA'S FB POST

In a Facebook video post, Khaleda Zi-yesterday asked people to cast their votes for the BNP in the upcoming municipal elections.

A 38-second video was uploaded on the BNP's official Facebook page in the early hours of yesterday and will be there until the election campaign ends at 12:00 midnight on Monday, Emran Saleh Prince, an assistant publicity secretary of the party, told The Daily Star.

Clad in a green sari and with some "sheaf of paddy" on the left side of her table, Khaleda asked people to vote for her party candidates for "protecting democracy".

KHALEDA'S EMERGENCY BRIEFING
The BNP chief will hold an emergency press briefing this afternoon at her Gulshan office, the party said in a press release yesterday.

Party insiders say Khaleda for the last time will reiterate her call to the voters to vote for BNP-backed aspirants as the campaign ends at midnight.

The BNP chief is likely to explain the reasons behind her party decision to join the municipality polls, added the insiders.

Bomber

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Azad of Bagmara Police Station, the investigation officer of the case, said they were busy listing the evidence, taking court orders for sending the evidence to respective departments for tests, sending those, and burial of the body.

The bomber before the attack told the mosque's muezzin Shaheb Ali Talukhdar that he studied at Rajshahi Polytechnic Institute (RPI) and that he hailed from Mohonpur upazila of Rajshahi.

He also told the muezzin that he had been visiting a relative in the village.

"We could not visit the polytechnic institute, but we requested respective police stations for the enquiry," said Inspector Azad.

Principal Abdur Rezzak of RPI said they had seen his photograph on newspapers and television channels and that he was aware that the bomber claimed to be a student of RPI.

"None of our teachers and students could recognise him. We can check our registers if we could get his name or other details," he said.

US-based SITE Intelligence Group said Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack.

The claim could not be verified independently.

The body of the bomber was buried yesterday at Hatimkhan graveyard in Rajshahi by Quantum Foundation after police handed the body over to them.

Central Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat leaders yesterday termed the Bagmara blast an international conspiracy and directed Ahmadiyyas to find the attackers.

Mobasserur Rahman, national amir of the Jamaat, and national muballigh Abdul Awal Khan Chowdhury from Dhaka went to the village yesterday afternoon and talked to the Ahmadiyyas there.

"The communal mentality revealed in the attack was not typically Bengali. It [the mentality] is imported from another place outside the country," said Awal.

They called upon the police to find the perpetrators without delay and bring them to justice. They also sought security for the Ahmadiyyas at the village.

Meanwhile, security has been beefed up at Chandtara village of Ghatail upazila in Tangail where around 30 Ahmadiyya families live, our Tangail correspondent reports quoting local police.

Two killed

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house hurled homemade bombs injuring a Rab-1 member, claimed Rab Deputy Director Major Maksudul Alam.

The Rab-1 team retaliated with gunfire and cordoned off the area, he said.

Following the gun battle, Rab during its sweep of the area found two bodies, explosives, grenades, a pistol, bullets of the pistol, and books on jihad, the Rab official said.

Rab could not ascertain the identity of the deceased immediately.

During an impromptu press briefing at the spot early today, Rab Legal and Media Wing Director Commander Mufti Mahmud Hasan did not say whether the two suspects were killed in gunfire or bomb explosion.

Electioneering ends tonight

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Star that Rafiqul felt embarrassed as his daughter-in-law filed a case against him and other family members under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act on December 24.

On Saturday, two of his business partners sat with him and told him that they would negotiate with his daughter-in-law if he quit the race.

"To get rid of the false case and to save my leaders and activists [from harassment], I am withdrawing myself from the election," he said at a press conference.

However, with the nomination withdrawal deadline expired on December 13. His electoral symbol will still be on the ballot papers.

The other mayor aspirants in the municipality are AL-endorsed Mohammad Jobayer and Jatuya Party-backed Md Yusuf Chowdhury.

VIOLENCE CONTINUES
At least 30 people, including a journalist, were injured in election violence at Sujanagar in Pabna, Hatiya in Noakhali, Trishal in Mymensingh, and Sitakunda in Chittagong.

In Daudkandi municipality of Comilla, AL lawmaker Subid Ali Bhuiyan's nephew Iqbal Bhuiyan allegedly assaulted the BNP's mayor candidate in the upazila complex area.

Police detained Iqbal but released him a few hours later.

2 MPs GET NOTICE
The EC sent letters to AL lawmakers Dharendra Debnath Shambhu (Barguna-1) and Showkat Hasanur Rahman Rimon (Barguna-2) asking them to leave electoral areas "within the shortest possible time", said EC officials.

Otherwise, the EC might take actions against them, they said.

The electoral code of conduct does not allow ministers and MPs to stay in the polls areas from the announcement of the polls schedule until the voting was done.

In the first week of December, Rimon received a show-cause notice from the EC for violating the electoral code. He apologised and pledged not to breach elections laws again.

ADDITIONAL LAW ENFORCERS
Apart from BGB members, mobile and strike forces comprised of police, Ansar, the Armed Police Battalion, and the Rapid Action Battalion have been deployed in municipalities from this morning.

The additional law enforcers will stay there until Thursday.

Instead of BGB, Coast Guard members have been deployed in six coastal municipalities -- Muladi and Mehendiganj of Barisal, Patharghata of Barguna, Ramgati of Laxmipur, Sandwip of Chittagong and Hatiya of Noakhali.

BNP'S DEMAND
BNP yesterday urged the EC to take necessary measures to hold the municipality polls in a free and fair manner "for the sake of country's democracy".

"Many BNP leaders and activities have come under attack by the ruling party men in different municipalities," said BNP Standing Committee Member Moyeen Khan after a five-member delegation led by him met Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad yesterday.

The CEC later told reporters that the commission has taken every step necessary to hold fair polls.

OFFICIALS WITHDRAWN
The EC has asked the authorities to withdraw the OCs of Pabna's Jagannathpur, Noakhali's Hatiya, and Mymensingh's Ishwarganj police stations, accusing them of working in favour of the AL-nominated candidates there.

The commission also warned the OC of Phulpur Police Station in Mymensingh on the same ground.

On December 14, the police authorities were asked to withdraw the OCs of Uttar Matlab in Chandpur, Kultura in Moulvibazar, and Kalkini in Madaripur.

The commission has decided to change the RO of Joypurhat municipality following allegations of irregularities, said EC officials.

Earlier, the RO of Kalarao municipality in Satkhira was suspended on December 20 for the same reason.

RESTRICTIONS
Outsiders will not be allowed to stay in the areas going to polls after midnight today and until the voting ended.

The EC has placed restrictions on the movement of all motorised vehicles -- including auto-rickshaws, taxis, human hauliers, minibuses, cars, pick-ups, buses, trucks, launches and speedboats -- in the polling areas for 24 hours from 12:01am on Wednesday.

Besides, motorcycle movement in the polling areas has already been restricted from 12:01am today and it will stay in place until 6:00am Thursday.

14 militant

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told the court that the accused were directly or indirectly involved in criminal activities and making attempts to create anarchy in the country from Singapore.

"So, they should be kept in jail until the investigation completes," he said.

On the other hand, lawyers of the accused submitted separate petitions, seeking their client's bail.

On December 22, the court placed the accused on a four-day remand each a day after they were arrested from the capital's Uttara area. They were shown arrested in the case lodged under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

Singapore police sent them back home, saying they were involved in militant activities. The accused were working in Singapore.

The 14 militant suspects are Aminul, Abdul Alim, and Shah Alam, of Tangail, Golam Zilani, Nurul Amin, and Mahmudul Hasan, of Comilla, Jafar Iqbal, of Brahmanbaria, Akram Hossain, of Jhenidah, Abdul Ali, of Chuadanga, Ashraf Ali, of Pabna, Saiful Islam, of Dhaka, Alam Mahbub, of Kurigram, Dalar Parvej, of Chapainawabganj, and Mohammad Jasim, 33, of Munshiganj.

According to the case statement, it was alleged that the accused used to discuss militant activities and collect funds at Angolia Mosque near Mostafa Market of Singapore for carrying out militant activities in Bangladesh. There they made speeches on jihad every Sunday.