

Jamaat, Shibir men among 18 held

STAR REPORT

Law enforcers in four districts have detained at least 18 people including 14 leaders and activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student front, Islami Chhatra Shibir, on different charges.

Police also recovered a cache of printed jihadi propaganda materials from the possession of the arrestees who had been accused in different cases for their involvement in activities aimed at destabilising the country, said police.

In Thakurgaon, police during separate raids in early hours yesterday at different places in Sadar upazila arrested two Jamaat leaders -- Thakurgaon upazila unit Amir Shamsuzzaman Dulal, 41, and General Secretary Abdul Mazid, 55, three Shibir activists -- Yasin Ali, 22, Shah Alam, 25, Riazul Islam, 22, and its district unit leader Abdur Rahman, 30, our Thakurgaon correspondent reports.

Our Chapainawabganj correspondent reports six Shibir leaders and activists were arrested with six home-made bombs and a number of jihadi books from a madrasa at Chandipur village in Nachole upazila of the district on Thursday.

The arrested leaders and activists were identified as Abdul Odud Shishir, 20, president of Kasba union unit of Shibir, Mobarak Hossain alias Mitul Ali, 20, Ruhul Amin, 21, of Koromja

village under Nachole upazila and Ishaque Ali, 22, Latifur Rahman, 20, and Faisal Ali, 18, of Mondikhore village under Niamatpur upazila of Naogaon district.

Police have filed a case against the six arrestees with Nachole Police Station.

In Jessore, two Shibir leaders with bullet injuries were arrested by police on Thursday from Bundalitola in Chaugachha upazila of the district, reports our Jessore correspondent.

The arrestees are Israfil Hossain, 20, son of Abdur Rahman of Swarupdah union and Ruhul Amin, 30, son of Imdadul Haque of Narayanpur village of the upazila.

The two Shibir men, riding on a motorbike, were shot by the police as they attacked a team of patrol police with sharp weapons after the police had stopped them at Bundalitola on Chaugachha-Maheshpur road at around 10:05pm on Thursday, claimed Moshir Rahman, officer-in-charge of Chaugachha Police Station.

Police seized two crude bombs, one machete, jihadi books and toll collection vouchers of Shibir from their possession and sent them to Chaugachha Health Complex, the OC added.

Ibrahim Hossain, medical assistant of the hospital, said, the two critically injured individuals were later transferred to Jessore General Hospital.

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A woman stands by her bed and other belongings on the bank of the Padma in Shibaboy upazila of Manikganj after floodwater washed away her home. Inset, a road being devoured by the river in Durgabazar Mor area of Faridpur. The photos were taken yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Two brothers murdered in Natore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

A former union parishad member and his brother were stabbed to death and another of their siblings was injured by unknown assailants in Singra upazila of Natore early yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Mojaffar Hossain, 35, former member of ward 6 of Dhahia Union Parishad and his brother, Hashem Ali, 55, of Borogram upazila and the injured is their brother Mohsin Ali, 30.

The victims were attacked following a conflict between Mojaffar and his cousin Yunus Ali, a member of Dhahia union, said Rafiqul Islam, assistant superintendent of police (Sadar circle) of Natore.

"Yunus' supporters attacked the victims at their house around 5:00am with sharp weapons, leaving Mojaffar dead on the spot and his brothers Hashem and Mohsin injured," ASP Rafiqul added.

Hashem died later at the Singra Upazila Health Complex. No case has been filed as yet but four people were

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THAI-MALAYSIA BORDER Traffickers abandon 60 people

ABC NEWS ONLINE

Police in Thailand have found 60 people from Myanmar apparently abandoned by people smugglers on the Thai-Malaysian border.

Initial interviews by local police suggest the group includes five people from Myanmar's persecuted Rohingya Muslim community.

Police say members of the group sought help after being left for a week at an abandoned house and unsure if people smugglers would return.

"All of them wanted to go to Malaysia as they have relatives there," said Colonel Pongpan Sangsa-ngar, superintendent of Padang Besar Police, in Songkhla province.

"They did not come by boat but crossed from the border on land." Local media showed men and women inside a dilapidated building, who were then put onto an immigration truck for transporting to detention.

"We are still on investigating process to identify who are trafficking victims and who are illegal migrants which will be send back to their original country," said Colonel Pongpan Sangsa-ngar.

"This is the biggest number since the crack down in this area." Thailand began investigating brutal people smugglers networks last year, after the discovery of slave camps and mass graves on the Thai-Malaysia border.

Since then, boatloads of migrants, asylum seekers and trafficking victims from Myanmar have almost completely stopped.

Missing man now wanted

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in Dhanmondi and was active until 2005. It was affiliated with Jama'atul Muslemin, a secret group formed by some members of banned organisation Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB).

Nothing more could be known about Jama'atul Muslemin. Seerat or her father could not be reached for comments.

Some of the sources said Tehzeeb went to Yemen with two brothers named Mainuddin Sharif and Rezwan Sharif -- both involved with RCUD.

Tehzeeb too had links with RCUD, the sources claimed, adding the three were arrested in Yemen.

Asked about Tehzeeb's connection with RCUD, his parents told this correspondent on Monday that it was just an NGO and he went there for a few days.

He stopped going to RCUD finding that it was not a profit-making organisation, they said.

Tehzeeb phoned his father around 5:30pm on May 17 from inside Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on his return from Bangkok. He could not be traced after that, the parents said, adding a government agency might have picked him.

"What else could have happened to him in a high-security place like Dhaka airport?" asked his father Jainul Karim.

Tehzeeb went to Bangkok on March 13 to take an advanced teaching course under Cambridge University, added the parents.

According to a BBC report published on March 18, 2011, Tehzeeb and his brother Rajib Karim "had contacted radical preacher Anwar al-Awlaki, a key figure in al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, saying they wanted to fight jihad overseas".

Besides, the London Metropolitan Police website says Tehzeeb and two others in December 2009 travelled from Bangladesh to Yemen where they contacted radical cleric Anwar al-

Awlaki.

Rajib, who worked for British Airways, was sentenced to 30 years in prison in the UK in 2011 for plotting to blow up a plane after conspiring with Awlaki, according to media reports.

Tehzeeb's friends said he along with his wife and children went to Pakistan in 2008 and returned afterwards.

Police sources say they made the trip to join jihad.

During an interview with this correspondent at his Green Road residence, Jainul Karim said his son went to Pakistan and Yemen at a young age. "He had no bad intention behind these trips."

Tehzeeb brought a lot of kurtas and panjabis from Pakistan and wanted to sell those in Dhaka. But he didn't get government permission to do the business, said Jainul.

Asked why he went to Yemen and why he was arrested there, Jainul said Tehzeeb went there to learn Arabic. He was not arrested there but was confined for several months like many other foreigners during a political turmoil.

Tehzeeb is the youngest of three brothers.

Atif Karim, the eldest, and his wife died in a mysterious accident in London in 2001.

Tehzeeb passed O- and A-level from Scholastica School. A former classmate, who knew both Tehzeeb and Seerat, said he was a jolly young man who loved to sing, play cricket and hang out with friends.

His attitude was in stark contrast to that of Seerat, who was extremely religious.

Tehzeeb and Seerat were classmates and they started to date while in A-level, friends say.

Though the friends believe Tehzeeb became strictly religious because of Seerat, his parents think the death of his brother could be the reason.

His father Jainul Karim and mother

Mumtaz Karim added it is also possible that he was "influenced by friends".

"He used to hang out with friends at home, go to mosque with them at prayer times. They used to return together," Mumtaz told The Daily Star on Monday.

Tehzeeb and Seerat completed A-level from the school and got admitted to North South University (NSU).

"He was totally a different person after he was admitted to the university and got married," said one of his school friends.

Tehzeeb and Seerat started attending religious gatherings to discuss Quran and the Hadith at Old DOHS where they lived in 2003-04, said a family friend who attended such discussions.

According to his parents, Tehzeeb in recent years started to watch TV, which he had shunned completely. His wife also began to change as she would sometimes leave the house without hijab.

Trying to bring him back to "normal life", his father went to mosques with him over the last three years while his mother accompanied him to the institution where he taught.

Tehzeeb's LinkedIn profile says he is a senior teacher and trainer at an English language centre in Dhaka. And he previously taught at some other schools.

Jainul said he was involved with left student organisation Chhatra Union when he was a student. In 1991, he contested the national elections with BNP ticket but failed. Since then he had no political involvement.

He said he fought in the Liberation War under sector 2 but never sought a freedom fighters' certificate.

"I will give Tk 5 crore to anyone who can prove that my son is a militant. But I should be given the same amount if an attempt to label him as a militant fails."

Khaleda's unity bid falls flat

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Briefing reporters yesterday about the meeting's outcome, Kader Siddique said his party advised Khaleda to drop Jamaat-e-Islami from the BNP-led 20-party alliance.

"I told her [Khaleda] that I will not be involved in any initiative that includes Jamaat," he said at a press conference at the KSJL central office in the capital's Motijheel.

Asked what was Khaleda's response to his proposal, Kader said there is no need to hurry to reach a decision, and that his party would wait for her response.

In late 2005 when Khaleda was prime minister, she held a national dialogue to find ways to stop bomb attacks after militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh carried out synchronised bomb attacks across the country.

But she failed to get any positive response from most political parties, including the Awami League and its allies, because of BNP's close ties with the Jamaat.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said, "We have invited all political parties to sit with the party chief."

He, however, didn't say how many political parties responded to the BNP's

invitation.

"Discussions are going on with various political parties in this regard, and the dates of meetings with them would be fixed at a convenient time," he added.

According to BNP insiders, the party didn't get positive response from ASM Abdur Rob-led Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal and major left-leaning parties, including the Communist Party of Bangladesh and Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal, as the BNP is yet to make clear its position regarding its ties with the Jamaat.

Talking to this newspaper, JSD Chief Abdur Rob welcomed Khaleda's initiative, but said his party had also made a move to forge a national unity against militancy and would hold a meeting today with different political parties.

Gonoforum Executive President Subrata Chowdhury last night said the party wouldn't sit with Khaleda if the BNP doesn't expel anti-Liberation War element Jamaat from the alliance.

Bikolpodhara Bangladesh, led by AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, was yet to decide whether it would hold a meeting with the BNP chief, said BDB leaders.

The BDB chief and his son and party's Joint Secretary General Mahi B Chowdhury are now abroad.

A day after the deadly terror attack on a Gulshan café on July 1, Khaleda at a press conference called for forging a national unity, irrespective of party and opinion, to put up a strong resistance against militancy.

But AL leaders turned down the call, saying unity with the BNP is not possible unless it abandons the Jamaat.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina later said a national unity against militancy already exists in the country.

BNP insiders said the party high-ups are still working hard to convince Gonoforum, the BDB, the JSD (Rob) and some other pro-Liberation War parties to hold talks with Khaleda over the national unity initiative.

They said the party would keep Jamaat away from the initiative but wouldn't drop it from the 20-party alliance.

The debate on severing ties with the Jamaat recently created rifts between several pro-BNP intellectuals, including Prof Emajuddin Ahmed, and some BNP high-ups, according to them.

On August 2, Emajuddin said Khaleda had decided not to keep the Jamaat in the 20-party combine as the Islamist party had become a burden for the BNP.

But the following day, Fakhrul said Emajuddin's statement on Jamaat was his personal opinion, not of the party.

Raids on after 'shootout'

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"We took fingerprints of the youth to match them with those of missing people listed by Rab," added the official.

He said the two pistols recovered from the "shootout" spot resemble those seized from Sholakia of Kishoreganj on July 7.

The bodies of Shafiul and the unidentified youth were sent to Mymensingh Medical College (MMC) yesterday for autopsies.

Following post-mortems, the bodies would be kept at the MMC mortuary until those are handed over to their families, said Md Ataur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Nandail Police Station.

Rab and police personnel early yesterday raided several villages near the "shootout" spot, but none was arrested, the OC stated.

According to Rab officials, Shafiul had been receiving treatment at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital under Rab custody since he was arrested on July 7. On that day, some suspected militants attacked policemen near the Sholakia Eid congregation ground. The attack left two policemen, a local woman and a suspected

attacker killed.

Following Shafiul's release from the hospital on Thursday, the Rab team was taking him to Kishoreganj to hand him over to police, said Lt Col Shariful.

When the team was crossing Nandail, some criminals tried to snatch away Shafiul by hurling bombs and firing shots at law enforcers, claimed Rab sources.

The "gunfight" ensued when Rab men fired back, leaving the two hit by bullets. Three Rab members suffered splinter injuries during the "encounter" and they were admitted to Nandail Upazila Health Complex, the sources mentioned.

Police said the "gunfight" happened around 11:00pm near a brickfield in Dangri Ghoshpala area of Nandail, some four kilometres east of the upazila headquarters.

Arif Mohammad Ziauddin, emergency medical officer at the health complex, said the two were brought dead around midnight.

Shafiul, also known as Saiful, was from Dinajpur. He was allegedly involved in at least two other targeted killings in Kurigram and Panchagarh.

High demand

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detectors are also in high demand, according to sellers.

The use of modern technologies for security measures has increased significantly in the city after the Gulshan café attack, they added.

The sale of CCTV cameras and other security equipment saw an upward trend in the wake of rising terror attacks in the last couple of years.

Private organisations, shopping centres, restaurant owners, building owners and police are buying security products.

Police said curbing petty crimes like theft and burglary by enhancing surveillance was also under their consideration as they wanted to improve overall law and order.

Some shop owners at Bangabandhu National Stadium Market and Baitul Mukarram New Super Market said CCTV cameras were available at only 15 to 20 shops in these markets a year ago.

Now, it is available in about 100 shops there and adjacent Gulistan area, they added.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police and officials of both the city corporations have been encouraging city dwellers to install security cameras in their surroundings to avert any untoward incidents.

The use of CCTV cameras proved to be crucial when investigators identified the killer of Jubo League leader Riazul Haque Khan Milky after scrutinising CCTV footage in 2013.

Footage showed that prime accused SM Zahid Siddique Tarek, clad in a white punjabi, shot Milky in front of a market in the capital's Gulshan area.

Tarek, who was joint secretary of Dhaka city (south) unit Jubo League, the youth wing of ruling Awami League, was killed in a "shootout" between criminals and Rab within 18 hours of his arrest.

Investigators dealing with the deadly militant attack on the Gulshan café said CCTV cameras installed at buildings and on roads in the area provided them some important clues to the crime, which would help them investigate the incident.

The DMP now monitors 650 secu-

rity cameras installed in Gulshan area, police sources said. Besides, there are many CCTV cameras there.

The Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) recently installed several CCTV cameras in Karwan Bazar area to enhance security measures, said sources at the DSCC.

Law enforcers said they were relying on CCTV cameras, considering it as an important tool to gather clues.

"Whenever a crime happens, we first try to collect security camera footage to get clues," said Nur-e-Azam, officer-in-charge of Dhanmondi Police Station on Thursday.

The police official said the use of CCTV cameras in Dhanmondi area doubled in the last few months.

At Bangabandhu National Stadium Market and Baitul Mukarram New Super Market, shop owners said different brands of security camera were available with them.

Prices are cheaper than a year ago, they added.

"Sales go up as people belonging to different tiers, including police officials, building owners, shop owners and private organisations, are buying these equipment," said a staff of Camera Museum at the National Stadium Market.

Abdus Salam, employee of a private agro-based firm in Dhaka, was looking for security cameras at the market.

He said security cameras at his surroundings would give him a better feeling of security.

"It is now an essential equipment for security measures," said Salam.

44 Nepalese

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All of the jobseekers were staying on 1st to 5th floors in a six-storied building they had rented together at DOHS (Defence Officers' housing Society) of Mirpur, he said adding that the residents of the building hardly had any other belongings in their rooms except a few mattresses.

The Special Branch of police have informed the Embassy of Nepal in Dhaka of the detained Nepalese citizens and process was underway to send them back to their home country, the OC said.