

# A man with shady past

*Banani rape accused Nayem made a fortune allegedly by swindling jobseekers out of hefty amounts*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Son of a hawker from Sirajganj, a cunning Nayem Ashraf, one of the prime accused in the Banani rape case, made his fortune by swindling hefty amounts from unemployed youths and leaking question papers, police interrogators said.

Identifying himself as a Dhaka University graduate and a member of a respected family, he married at least four girls from well-off families.

However, none of the marriages lasted as his wives later came to know about his real background.

Nayem is now on seven-day police remand.

His event management firm organised a concert of a renowned foreign singer in Dhaka in 2014. He reportedly made a profit of Tk 75 lakh from the event.

According to his social media profiles, he also owns a restaurant in Gulshan which was opened in November 2015.

Ahmed Shafat, son of Dildar Ahmed Selim, one of the owners of Apan Jewellers, and Nayem allegedly raped two private university girls at The Raintree Dhaka hotel in Banani on March 28.

Shafat's driver Billal Hossain filmed the rape, his bodyguard Rahmat Ali intimidated the girls while Shadman



Sakif, who introduced the girls to the "rapists" 15 days before the incident, refrained from informing the hotel authorities and the police about the incident, one of the victims alleged, adding that all the five accused were "drunk".

One of the girls filed the rape case with Banani Police Station on May 6 and all the five fled the capital.

The Women Support and Investigation Division of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) is investigating the case.

Meanwhile, one of the victims yesterday alleged that some people were trying to spread misleading information through a few fake social media accounts by posting some close-up pictures of Shafat and a victim.

**CHEAT SINCE SCHOOL DAYS**  
Nayem told interrogators that he first met Sakif at a programme in the capital and later came to know Shafat. He used to follow Shafat's instructions as the latter was rich and influential.

According to police and a relative of Nayem, the accused first got involved in criminal activities by leaking questions of his school exams in 2003. As he was in class X, the school authorities didn't expel him and allowed him to take the Secondary School Certificate exams.

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A road leading to Ahsan Manzil at Sadarghat is littered with garbage. The building, on the bank of the Buriganga river, is a historic site and a tourist attraction. But, locals and commuters say, such a dirty road will surely drive away visitors. *Left*, the situation is same near the footbridge in front of Dhaka Collegiate School in the area. The photos were taken around noon yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

**HELLO MAYOR**  
...  
**IS THIS OUR STREET**

## Foreign ministry

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The foreign ministry requested the heads of missions to take up the matter "seriously" so that Bangladeshi journalists were monitored.

Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali on Thursday said journalists would face no obstacle during their travel abroad and performing professional duties there.

He, however, said it was necessary to monitor whether anybody was doing anything while travelling abroad that went against the country's image and interest.

The minister also said monitoring was necessary not only for journalists but also for all citizens, and that was in the interest of the country.

Earlier yesterday, Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) urged the foreign ministry to immediately withdraw its notice.

Expressing deep concern over the notice, DRU President Sakhawat Hossain Badsha and General Secretary Mursalin Nomani in a statement said, "DRU thinks such a circular will hamper journalists' freedom of expression and freedom of movement which is a barrier to establishing free mass media."

They said the legal provision allows the authorities to take action if any journalist is found involved in any crime. "But this directive is insulting for the entire journalist community. At the same time, it has become a fear factor."

## New axis of terror

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respective Rohingya communities to find individuals willing to carry out attacks on their own," warns the report, released on May 8.

Bangladesh, which plays a perennial host to Rohingya refugees for decades, has been witnessing a rise in elements of militancy along the borders it shares with Myanmar.

Some 32,000 registered Rohingyas are sheltered in two refugee camps of Bangladesh, and about 65,000 others entered last year alone. If undocumented Rohingyas are taken into account, the figure would be 300,000 to 500,000.

"The new Rohingya [insurgent] group is very active with an increasing number of youths joining the platform. It gets fund from Malaysia and Saudi Arabia through mobile money transfer," a police officer based in Cox's Bazar told The Daily Star on the basis of their intelligence.

"The government is aware of the development but we find it very difficult to track its international link," he said, on condition of anonymity.

The IPAC report says links between Bangladeshi and Southeast Asian extremists appear to be growing amid increasing population movements across the region.

Southeast Asian groups, like Jemaah Islamiyah in Indonesia and Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines, find it easier to connect with Bangladeshi network through stints with IS fighters

in Syria and Iraq and solidarity initiatives for Rohingyas in Myanmar and also through a few overseas workers and students who develop sympathies for global terror groups.

The 13-page report also stated that developments since 2013 in Bangladesh and Syria, and later in Myanmar, put the relationship of South and Southeast Asian extremists on a much more dangerous footing.

The militants in Indonesia and Philippines were encouraged by series of terror attacks in Bangladesh from early 2013 to last year's July 1 Gulshan cafe attack and they wanted to follow the model of the attacks in their home countries, it said.

The report explores the historical links between extremists of the two regions going back to the Darul Islam and Jemaah Islamiyah training camp on the Pakistan-Afghan border in the late 1980s.

"Arrests in Malaysia in January and February 2017 of Bangladeshi fugitives hoping to get to Mindanao [in the Philippines] and Malaysians and Filipinos helping them in Sabah [in Malaysia] suggests a deeper web of interaction," reads the report speculating that Bangladeshis wishing to return home from Syrian warzone might try to find a temporary safe haven in Southeast Asia through contacts with Indonesian and Malaysian friends.

A Bangladeshi researcher based in Singapore believes ARSA will gain strength gradually as Rohingyas have

now good bases in Malaysia and some Middle Eastern countries, especially Saudi Arabia.

"From Malaysia, ARSA members are maintaining contacts with militants in Philippines and Indonesia," he told this correspondent, unwilling to be named.

The IPAC report mentioned, "The new militancy among the Rohingya could be a serious headache for Malaysian authorities, given the huge size of Rohingya population."

It referred to the interaction between Harkat-ul Jihad al-Islami, Bangladesh (Huji-B) and Rohingya groups in 1990s and also the arrest of one Rohingya militant along with 40 other extremists.

Formed in 2013 under the leadership of Sidney Jones, IPAC presses for strengthening cooperation on counterterrorism between Bangladesh and Southeast Asian countries in order to address the concern over cross-regional violent extremism.

Jones previously worked for International Crisis Group, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

"The urgent task now is for governments, journalists and NGOs to better understand cross-regional interaction among violent extremism organisations and look for interventions that could strengthen local resistance," said the Indonesia-based organisation that works on six kinds of conflict: communal, land and resource, electoral, vigilante, extremist and insurgent.

## Hasina may meet Trump in S Arabia

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Convention Centre tomorrow.

Trump and the world's Islamic nations' leaders would meet at the summit to find the way of building more strong and effective security partnerships to counter and prevent the growing threats of terrorism and violent extremism.

Hasina is expected to highlight Bangladesh's recent success in combating terrorism and extremism and her country's stance against this global problem.

The sources say there have been efforts from Bangladesh to hold a brief bilateral meeting between Hasina and Trump on the sidelines of the event.

However, a Bangladeshi diplomat in Riyadh told The Daily Star yesterday that there was no separate meeting

with Trump as of now. "In fact, there is no space. All leaders will meet each other at the summit anyway," the diplomat added.

Asked about any possible meeting with Trump and other world leaders on the sidelines of the summit, Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali on Thursday said, "Let's see."

During the three-day event, there will be three summits in Riyadh -- Saudi-US Summit, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)-US Summit and Arab-Islamic-American Summit.

The Saudi king had earlier invited the leaders of the member countries of the Saudi-led 41-nation Islamic Military Alliance to Fight Terrorism (IMAF) to those summits.

Bangladesh is one of the founding

members of IMAFT but announced not to send ground troops to fight against any country. However, Dhaka gave the commitment to Riyadh that it would remain ready to send troops to the Kingdom if the security of the two holy mosques is threatened.

The recent appointment of former army chief of Pakistan General Raheel Sharif in command of the coalition has apparently frustrated Bangladesh.

Highly-placed government sources say most of the government policymakers have strongly opposed to joining the IMAFT under a Pakistani general.

"It's a bit premature to call it a coalition. It's still evolving. Nothing is done in written yet. It's still under discussion," the foreign minister told a press

conference in Dhaka on Thursday.

He maintained that Bangladesh was talking about centre -- Global Centre for Combating Extremist Thoughts -- not coalition.

Besides the summits, Saudi Arabia would also host an event of the Riyadh Forum on Countering Extremism and Fighting Terrorism today. The King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies brings together researchers and institutions to sustain, produce and disseminate academic work as well as to enrich the cultural and intellectual life in the Kingdom.

Sponsored by the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC), the forum would explore the nature of terrorism and the future of extremism.

## Antarctic turning green

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Celsius each decade -- much faster than the global average.

And growth rates of moss after about 1950 have been running at four to five times the level before that year, according to a study by UK-based researchers who studied three sites across a 1,000km stretch of the peninsula.

Scientists are currently considering whether to formally adopt 1950 as the start of a new geological epoch called the Anthropocene because of the

astonishing global effects that modern humans are having on the Earth.

In addition to climate change, the extinction of animal species, plastic waste -- there could be more of that than fish in the sea by 2050 -- ash from fossil fuels and radioactive particles from nuclear bomb tests will all leave a permanent record in the planet's future rocks.

Researchers from Exeter and Cambridge universities and the British Antarctic Survey studied a 150-year

period of moss growth in the Antarctic Peninsula by taking samples from the material laid down each year.

Dr Matt Amesbury, who took part in the study, told The Independent: "What we found were these large, dramatic changes occurring in all of our cores.

"On average, in terms of the growth rate of moss before and after 1950, there has been a four to five-fold increase in average growth rates."

He added that change had kicked in at different times depending on the

location between 1950 and 1980.

"Between 1950 and 2000 in the Antarctic Peninsula, temperatures increased by half a degree per decade on average," said Dr Amesbury, of Exeter University.

"The reason we are so confident our mosses are responding primarily to temperature is because of the very wide-scale response we see in our moss banks ... from three different sites 1,000km across the Antarctic Peninsula."

## Roadside bomb kills 11 of Afghan family

AFF, Kabul

Eleven members of an Afghan family, mostly women and children, were killed yesterday when their vehicle hit a roadside bomb while they were travelling for an engagement ceremony in the country's volatile east.

The attack occurred in the Mohammad Agha district of Laghman province but no militant group has so far claimed responsibility.

"The bomb struck their Toyota sedan when they were going for an

engagement ceremony," said Logar Governor Mohammad Halim Fida.

"The victims included five women and five children."

Provincial authorities blamed the Taliban, who launched their annual "spring offensive" last month, for the killings.

The Taliban were not immediately reachable for comment, but roadside bombs have been the militants' weapon of choice in their war against foreign and Afghan security forces.

## MPs may come under fire

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Ahead of the meeting, The Daily Star spoke with 10 district leaders.

They said the issue of infiltration would be one of the major talking points.

Most grassroots leaders are against such infiltration, they said, adding that many MPs were doing it to strengthen and enlarge their own circle.

After the AL took office in 2009, several thousand BNP-Jamaat men are believed to have joined the ruling party apparently to have their names off politically motivated cases and avoid police harassment.

Many of these BNP and Jamaat men stand accused in dozens of cases filed against them over the street violence during the BNP-led alliance's movement since 2013, and those who have no cases against them face harassment by law enforcement agencies just because of their political identities, sources in the AL said.

By joining the AL, many of these opposition men not only got respite from police harassment, they also got AL nomination in recent local government elections, frustrating the party grassroots, insiders said.

On various occasions, several partners in the AL-led 14-party alliance also expressed their reservation about the infiltration.

In many cases local MPs harbour BNP-Jamaat men accused in various cases.

Shahin Chaklader, general secretary of Jessore district AL, said if he got a chance to talk, he would talk the PM through the role party lawmakers play in all this and also in the local politics.

"Those who became MPs through the January 5 elections, have no relations with grassroots leaders and activists. They have become opponents of the party's tested leaders and activists by creating their own circle," he said.

Chaklader said the party lawmakers were helping BNP-Jamaat men to join the AL to strengthen their influence, which created division in the party.

"These infiltrated people will never stand for the Awami League during elections. The party men are also frustrated over the MPs' role and such a situation will make the next election challenging for the party. I want to raise these issues," he said.

"If I get to talk, I will raise our party's organisational weakness and the MPs' role in the party," said Syed Shamsul Alam Hiru, president of Gaibandha district AL.

He said most of the MPs in his district were isolated and they were working against the party's tested leaders and activists. "Because of them, local people and party men are frustrated with the Awami League. The MPs don't maintain relations with the organisation."

Matiur Rahman, president of Sunamganj district AL, said he planned to talk about the division between the party and the government.

"Bypassing the party men, MPs are maintaining relations with ministers and administration and they have little ties with the party. I am going to talk about this," he said.

Joypurhat district AL General Secretary SM Solaiman Ali would like to talk about organisational activities and the infiltration by the BNP-Jamaat men, who he said were using AL's internal feud to their benefits.

At the meeting, Hasina would inaugurate the party's membership collection and renewal programme after seven years by renewing her own membership, said AL Deputy Office Secretary Biplab Barua.

The party last held such a programme in 2010.

Hasina has already warned that the lawmakers unpopular in their constituencies would not get party tickets in the next election and that she already made a list of who would get nomination.

At a meeting on May 7, she also asked the party MPs to work to narrow the gap between the grassroots leaders and activists and to build a strong relationship with the party men. She is expected to renew the call today.

The party will hand over its new declaration and constitution, which were amended in the party's 20th triennial council held on October 22-23 last year, to the grassroots leaders.

Contacted, AL Presidium Member Lt Col (ret) Muhammad Faruq Khan said Hasina would give instructions to grassroots leaders for preparation for the next polls as well as to reduce the gap between MPs and grassroots leaders.