

Rab detains four 'Neo JMB' men

Gunpowder, firearms, ammo seized in Chapainawabganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

The Rapid Action Battalion detained four people including three suspected Neo JMB operatives and recovered gunpowder, firearms and ammunition in Gomostapur upazila yesterday.

The detainees are Abdus Sakur alias Shukuddi, 43, son of Mofizuddin, Jahangir Alam, 43, son of Abdul Quddus of Balugram, Saiful Islam, 32, son of Tugu Mondal of Chwak Pustom, and Abdul Mazid Tanu.

The Rab arrested the first three in Bazarpara area of Gomostapur around 4:30am when they were returning home after a meeting. The elite force

recovered one foreign pistol, one magazine, four bullets and three kilogrammes of gunpowder from their possession.

Based on their information, the Rab men later raided four houses in Nachol and Gomostapur between 4:30am and 11:30am.

During the raids, the Rab team recovered three foreign pistols, nine rounds of bullets, two magazines and one toy pistol from Sakur's house and picked up houseowner Abdul Mazid Tanu in Nachol.

The latest anti-militancy crackdown took place barely four days after the

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A wig worth its weight in gold? Almost. Airport Customs seized this wig with 13 gold bars worth around Tk 65 lakh hidden inside. Customs officials detained Aminul Haq, the passenger from Malaysia, after he landed in Dhaka Tuesday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Gold under wig!

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs officials have often busted smugglers at the airport with gold bars stashed in unlikely places. But never have they caught someone with bars under a wig.

To hoodwink the authorities, Aminul Haq, 45, of Munshiganj, attached 13 bars, weighing about one and a half kg, to his wig.

Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate (CIID) officials could catch him on Tuesday at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka as they had received a tip off.

Soon after he arrived at the airport around 10:30pm, officials intercepted him as he was crossing the green channel, CIID Assistant Commissioner HM Ahsanul Kabir told The Daily Star.

They then frisked him but could not find the gold, he said, adding that the gold was detected in his body

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World's first robocop

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said Brigadier-General Khalid Nasser Al Razzouqi, Director-General of Smart Services for the police in Dubai.

"With an aim to assist and help people in the malls or on the streets, the Robocop is the latest smart addition to the force and has been designed to help us fight crime, keep the city safe and improve happiness levels," he said.

The announcement about plans for a robot police force was made at the 11 Best Police Practices Forum held in Dubai in March.

Brigadier Abdullah Bin Sultan, director of the future shaping centre of Dubai Police, told Gulf News: "We are looking to have more robots in future to handle policing. By 2030, we are

keen to make robots around 25 percent of the total police force."

The robot police officer has the ability to scan faces from 20 metres away and bears a touchscreen on its chest which members of the public can use to report crimes.

It also has a microphone which feeds directly to the Dubai Police call centres.

Major-General Abdullah Khalifa Al Merri, Dubai Police commander-in-chief, said 50 percent of police buildings will be self-powered by 2030 and that the police plan to build a DNA data bank.

"By 2030, there will be no mysterious or unknown crimes in Dubai and the police will have the biggest DNA data bank in the country," he added.

Waiting for relief

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Mehbuba Haque, a resident of East Rajabazar in Dhaka, got fever. Her temperature was crossing 104 degree Celsius.

"It is difficult to control children. They always run around and keep sweating," said the mother, adding that though she was staying home, she often felt unbearable heat, especially during cooking.

Usually 500 to 600 patients visit doctors at the outdoor facility of Dhaka Shishu Hospital, but now the number has gone up to 750 to 1,000 a day, said a physician at the hospital yesterday.

Day labourers, rickshaw-pullers and others working in construction

or factory sites under the sun are facing the wrath of the heat wave. Many are seen drinking water or watermelon from roadside shops.

Azharul Islam Khan, chief physician and head of the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases Research, Bangladesh (icddr;b), said drinking unhygienic water outside and eating sliced fruits sold by the roadside might cause diarrhoea.

On average, 550 to 600 diarrhoea patients are visiting the hospital every day now.

"In this peak summer season, this number is usual. But this is of course higher than that in other times," he said.

Azharul said viruses become

active in high temperature, which was why there were higher numbers of patients with fever. He suggested drinking adequate clean water, eating fresh fruits and taking rest as long as this hot spell lasts.

WORKERS FALL SICK

IN HEAT WAVE

Meanwhile, 350 workers of 11 readymade garment factories in Kashipur Industrial Area of Gazipur fell sick amid the mild heat wave.

Garment workers suddenly felt dizziness and stomach ache an hour after joining work in the morning, police and workers said. Some of them even suffered eclampsia.

Those who fell sick were rushed to

Sharif General Hospital, Popular Hospital, Konabari Clinic and Haque General Hospital.

In such a situation, other workers became panicked and left work for home. Factory owners then declared yesterday off.

Dr Babul Ahmed Sharif of Sharif General Hospital in Konabari said that while heat might have caused some workers to fall sick, others might have been victims of hysterical conversion reaction disease.

"If one feels dizziness and collapses, someone close to him/her can do the same. Even it can happen in the case of heat stroke."



Speakers at a roundtable discussion on "Bangladesh and UN Peacekeeping: Challenges and Prospects" at The Daily Star Centre in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Peacekeepers

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Haiti to East Timor and from Lebanon to Democratic Republic of Congo. Bangladeshi peacekeepers are in almost everywhere and committed to remaining so in the days to come, the speakers noted.

Bangladesh began its peace support mission in 1988 with a contribution of 15 army officers as military observer to the UN peacekeeping operations in the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG).

Mentioning that peacekeeping has grown from monitoring ceasefires to multi-dimensional tasks, the speakers highlighted some challenges ahead, including countering terrorism. Bangladesh armed forces need rigorous training on the methods and mechanisms for peace-making and peace-building, they observed.

The discussants pointed out that peacekeeping is part of Bangladesh's constitution. Article 25(1) states the importance of promoting international peace and security.

The armed forces and police have fulfilled the dreams of Bangabandhu's declaration of Bangladesh's commitment to international peace, said Maj Gen (ret'd) Kazi Ashfaq Ahmed in his keynote presentation.

There are currently 16 peacekeeping operations led by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations. As of April 30, Bangladesh was the fourth largest contributor to UN peacekeeping missions with armed forces and police personnel standing at 6,815 in eight missions.

Currently, Ethiopia, India and Pakistan are the top three troop providers.

Bangladesh topped as a troop contributing nation for couple of times, including in 2015.

During yesterday's discussion, two other keynote papers were presented by Air Commodore (ret'd) Anisur Rahman and Commodore (ret'd) MN Absar.

Twenty speakers, including former chiefs and senior most officials of three forces, former foreign secretaries and diplomats, police personnel and a university teacher, took part in the five-hour long discussion.

Former army chief Lt Gen (ret'd) M Nooruddin Khan said they had to go through many difficulties at the beginning of the missions. Even it was a critical decision for the country to send troops to the UN mission in Kuwait against Saddam Hossain, the then Iraqi president who had good relations with Bangladesh, he said.

Narrating various hostile situations he faced during his deployment as a peacekeeper in Georgia, former army chief Lt Gen (ret'd) M Harun-Ar-Rashid said they fared extremely well in any situation during the peacekeeping operations.

He suggested conducting an analysis of the peacekeeping operations participated by the Bangladeshi troops. "We don't think we have done everything. We have to think and analyse how we could do better in future."

Air Commodore (ret'd) Anisur Rahman said the Bangladesh Air Force

(BAF) has earned a good reputation in the UN, but it faces a number of difficulties in operating and maintaining its forces in mission areas.

UN missions might get increased in future and the BAF should be ready to undertake any mission with its competence.

Former navy chief Rear Admiral (ret'd) Shah Iqbal Mujtaba said the participation of the navy was limited compared to the army and the air force. "Nowadays, we have gained momentum and we will progress Inshallah," he said, adding that naval ships joined the UN mission in 2010.

Rear Admiral (ret'd) ASMA Awal stressed the need for more vigorous diplomacy so that Bangladesh could get higher positions in UN headquarters and peacekeeping missions.

Highlighting the foreign ministry's crucial role in negotiating in UN Security Council and other bodies regarding the country's participation in UN missions, former foreign secretary Hemayet Uddin said, "To uphold the legacy of Bangladesh, it is necessary that our professionals develop their skills on key areas of international diplomacy that go hand in hand with the peacekeeping operations."

The former secretary said the country's women peacekeepers played an exemplary role in peace-making by providing comfort to the victims of gender-based violence in war-ravaged countries. Bangladesh became the world's first all-woman UN peacekeeping contingent, he said.

Maj Gen (ret'd) Fazle Elahi Akbar said there were allegations of sexual abuse involving peacekeepers, but Bangladeshi troops have good reputations in this regard.

Dhaka University teacher Niloy Ranjan Biswas said the experience of peacekeepers must be documented systematically so that the future generation of peacekeepers could learn from those and develop themselves accordingly. He also said there must be a comprehensive peacekeeping strategy in the country.

Praising their contribution, The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam said, "As soldiers, you are trained to serve your country. But when you go to another country and serve the people of those countries, then it really shows your humanity."

"You have served the people of other countries with great intensity, devotion, humanity and empathy."

Brig Gen (ret'd) Shahedul Anam Khan, associate editor of The Daily Star, moderated the discussion while former Navy chief Admiral (ret'd) M Farid Habib, Lt Gen (ret'd) Md Mainul Islam, Lt Gen (ret'd) Abdul Hafiz, former ambassador and foreign secretary Shamsur M Chowdhury, Commodore (ret'd) MN Absar, Brig Gen (ret'd) Abdul Hakim Aziz, Maj Gen (ret'd) Rezanur Rahman Khan, former additional IGP AMB Bazulur Rahman, DIG of police Mahbubur Rahman, Rear Admiral (ret'd) ASMA Baten, former ambassador Rashed Ahmed, Air Commodore (ret'd) Ishfaq Ilahi Choudhury, Brig Gen (ret'd) Khondokar Kamaluzzaman, Brig Gen (ret'd) Salim Akhtar, and former ambassador Shamim Ahmed also spoke.

Humiliated a year ago, now in jail

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made derogatory comments about religion while meting out corporal punishment to a student. The teacher has been rejecting the allegation.

Salim Osman, lawmaker from Narayanganj-5, was then seen making Shyamal hold ears and do squats in public, sparking outrage across the country.

A video clip of the incident went viral on social media, triggering a firestorm of protests in the social networking sites and public outrage with a cross section of people demanding trial of Salim Osman and his accomplices.

The incident also prompted many to stage a unique protest by posting their photos on Facebook where they were seen holding their ears and standing or sitting next to placards that read "Sorry Sir".

A few days later, the managing committee of the school forced Shyamal to resign over an allegation that he had hurt "religious sentiments" of the Muslims.

But an education ministry probe found the allegation false and Shyamal was reinstated as headmaster of the school. He underwent treatment in the capital and joined duty on July 10. The

school managing committee was dissolved subsequently.

Interestingly, just four days after his return to work, three complaints were filed against him with the Narayanganj Judicial Magistrate court.

One Rina Begum of Kallyandi area in Bandar filed a case against the headmaster for torturing her son Rifat, a student of the school, on May 8 and May 13 while Samsul Haque Samsu filed another case for hurting "religious sentiments" of the Muslims.

The third one was filed by Morsheda allegedly for taking bribe from her.

The court scrapped the first two cases on the very day as an investigation was going on into the same incidents following a High Court order. But the Narayanganj court ordered police to investigate the bribery charges.

SM Siddiqur Rahman, the plaintiff's lawyer, alleged the headmaster took bribe of Tk 1.35 lakh in cash in two phases promising to get her listed in the government's MPO scheme. But Shyamal did not make any effort for this.

On April 17 this year, police pressed charges against him and submitted the charge sheet to the court. Yesterday, the

court took cognisance of the case and issued the arrest warrant for Shyamal.

It fixed July 13 for the next hearing.

Talking to The Daily Star on the court premises before issuance of the arrest warrant, Shyamal said, "I am being framed. The case is false and fabricated... and it will be proved in the court."

His wife Shabita Rani Halder echoed his words. "He was made accused in a false case. Everything started after May 13, the day when my husband was humiliated publicly."

She said Shyamal had been suffering from several diseases, including diabetes, and he suffered a brain stroke in 2014.

Shyamal's lawyer advocate Shakhawat Hossain said he was saddened and frustrated. "He [Shyamal] is an old person who is suffering from several diseases. We have submitted documents citing his illnesses. Yet, he has been sent to jail. We didn't expect it."

Shakhawat said, "People of the country know why he had to go to jail".

"Shyamal Kanti Bhakta is an example that a lawmaker can make anyone suffer, if he wants," the lawyer said.

HUMILIATION AND STEPS FOLLOWED

Following media reports, the High Court in May last year ordered Narayanganj's deputy commissioner and police officials to submit separate reports specifying the steps taken against those involved in humiliating Shyamal.

Although the HC expressed satisfaction over a report submitted by the DC, it rejected the police probe report which described the MP as "innocent".

The court then ordered a judicial probe, rejecting "carelessly made" report by police.

The judicial inquiry found untrue the allegation against the teacher of criticising Islam. It also found that Shyamal was forced to do squats holding ears on Salim Osman's instructions, a reliable source said.

The HC also directed the chief judicial magistrate of Narayanganj to immediately transfer the general diary lodged for the public humiliation of the headmaster to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka.

Acting on an order of the Dhaka court, Salim Osman surrendered before it on May 14. He got bail on Tuesday.

Philippines grapples with wave of terror

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The Abu Sayyaf, based on the most southerly islands of Mindanao, has kidnapped hundreds of Filipinos and foreigners since the early 1990s to extract ransoms.

Security analysts say Hapilon has been trying to unite Filipino militant groups behind IS. These include the Maute group, which is based near Marawi.

Separately, Muslim rebels have been waging a rebellion since the

1970s for an independent or autonomous homeland in Mindanao, with the conflict claiming more than 120,000 lives.

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump praised Duterte for doing an "unbelievable job on the drug problem" during a telephone conversation last month, the New York Times reported, quoting a transcript of the call.

The two leaders also talked about North Korea and China's potential

influence, the New York Times said, quoting parts of a Philippine transcript of the April 29 call that was circulated on Tuesday, under a "confidential" cover sheet, by the Americas division of the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs.

The Times said a senior Trump administration official in Washington, who was not authorised to publicly discuss the call and insisted on anonymity, confirmed the transcript was an accurate representation of the

telephone call.

Almost 9,000 people, many small-time drug users and dealers, have been killed in the Philippines since Duterte took office on June 30. Police say about one-third of the victims were shot by officers in self-defence during legitimate operations.

"I just wanted to congratulate you because I am hearing of the unbelievable job on the drug problem," the New York Times quoted Trump as saying, based on the transcript.