



## Ansar Al Islam leader had links with Hefajat

### Investigators claim

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

The spiritual leader of Al-Qaeda-inspired militant outfit Ansar Al Islam had connections with Qawmi madrasa-based organisation Hefajat-e-Islam, said counterterrorism officials.

Ali Hasan Osama, 27, who was arrested by Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit from Rajbari on May 6, took his oath from a top Hefajat leader. The investigators have also got the official photo of the oath-taking ceremony, they said.

Osama is now on a five-day remand in CTTC custody. Saiful Islam, deputy commissioner of CTTC unit, said, "We have got some information about the connections between Hefajat leaders and Osama."

"We have also recovered some digital devices and communication details from Osama. These have been sent for forensic analysis. We may say clearly about it after getting the forensic report," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Besides the Ansar Al Islam, investigators also claimed to have found some other militant outfit links with Hefajat, including Harkat-ul-Jihad (Huji).

According to an intelligence report obtained by this newspaper, at least eight Huji leaders held posts in the 249-member Hefajat committee that had recently been dissolved.

Mahbub Alam, joint commissioner of DB police, said, "In our investigation, we have got evidence of Hefajat's

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A huge number of shoppes seen on the escalators of Bashundhara City shopping mall. Even with the Covid-19 scare, and that too with the new Indian variant entering the country, people are not paying any heed to health restrictions and have been carrying on Eid shopping as usual. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Cops detain Covid patients who fled

STAR REPORT

Seven of the 10 Covid-19 patients, who fled Jashore General Hospital on April 23 and 24, were held by police for almost five hours yesterday.

Police arrested them at the hospital after the doctors discharged them around 11:30am, said Mohammad Touhidul Islam, additional superintendent of Detective Branch Police in Jashore.

The three others are still being treated at the hospital.

Judicial Magistrate Mahadi Hasan granted them bail around 4:30pm, Inspector Kamruzzaman told The Daily Star.

On Saturday, police filed a petition with a local court seeking permission to arrest them under the Contagious Diseases (Prevention, Control and Eradication) Act 2018.

The court then issued the arrest warrant for them, said Mohammad Touhidul Islam.

The 10 patients were admitted to the hospital between April 18 and April 24 with Covid-19. Seven of them had just returned from India. But soon afterwards, they sneaked out of the isolation ward where they were being

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## 10 RMG workers hurt as police fire on their demo

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ten garment workers were critically injured when police shot at demonstrators in Tongi, Gazipur.

The workers of Ha-meem Group's Creative Collections Ltd and That's It Garments Ltd were demonstrating near their factories around 11:00am, reports our correspondent in Gazipur.

"The workers have not been taking a day off for one and a half months... They protested after the management declared that the Eid holidays would only be for three days," said Joly Talukder, general secretary of Garment Workers Trade Union Centre (GWTUC).

"There was a meeting between the government, labour leaders and manufacturers' associations at the Sram Bhaban where the state minister for labour said the workers will be given their due holidays as long as they don't leave their work-stations. However, these two factories announced that the holiday would only be for three days," she said.

Police and locals said several hundred workers gathered on the streets in Tongi yesterday morning and started marching towards the highway.

Policemen told our correspondent that

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ROAD TO FREEDOM  
THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

### Weekly Jai Bangla launched

MAY 11, 1971  
SHAMSUDDOZZA SAJEN

SWISS HELP TO REPATRIATE STAFF ACCEPTED  
India and Pakistan agreed to accept Swiss help to repatriate their respective mission staff from Dhaka and Calcutta. This was the first time the two governments accepted a mediation offer by a third country for resolving the deadlock.

The latest development indicated that Pakistan had given a rebuff to the Soviet Union which, on May 5, had kept ready two Soviet planes at Tashkent to transport Indian and Pakistani personnel from Dhaka and Calcutta respectively.

The main purpose of the use of the good offices of the Swiss was to help resolve the dispute between Pakistan and Bangladesh missions in Calcutta headed respectively by Mahdi Masud and Hossain Ali. The problems arose over the insistence by Masud that he must interview individually every one of about 70 members of the Pakistan deputy high commission in Calcutta who gave up their loyalty to Pakistan in favour of Bangladesh, in order to find out how many of them wanted to be repatriated to Pakistan.

It was Pakistan who first approached Switzerland for this after the country had decided to deliver a riposte to the Soviet Union indirectly.

WEEKLY JAI BANGLA STARTS OFF  
The first issue of Weekly Jai Bangla, the publicity organ of the Bangladesh government in exile at Mujibnagar, was published today. The Bangla weekly aimed at highlighting the progress of the war, success and achievements of the freedom fighters, creating

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## Lebanon detains 60 migrants in foiled Med crossing

AFP, Beirut

The army said yesterday it has foiled an attempt to smuggle 60 people, mostly from Syria, out of Lebanon, days after dozens of Syrians were caught trying to cross to Cyprus.

"A naval force unit stopped a boat detected by radar 10 nautical miles off the city of Tripoli" in northern Lebanon on Sunday, it said in a statement.

It said the vessel had been trying "to smuggle 60 people, 59 Syrians and one Lebanese".

Their intended destination was not specified but neighbouring Cyprus is the most popular sea smuggling route.

On Saturday, Lebanese police said they stopped 51 Syrians who planned to make the crossing to

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## Mexico City sinking

### Land depressing up to 20 inches a year

MAIL ONLINE

Mexico City is sinking at an "unstoppable" rate with some parts decompressing up to 20 inches a year over the past decades.

A new report highlights centuries of pumping water from the aquifer under North America's most populous city that has caused its foundation to compress at an alarming rate.

The city was built on what was once Lake Texcoco and the lake bed acts as an infrastructure

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PRAYER TIMING MAY 11

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 3:54 12:45 5:00 6:36 8:00  
JAMAAT 4:04 1:15 5:15 6:46 8:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	MAY	SEHRI	IFTAR
28	11	6:36	
29	12	3:49	6:36
30	13	3:48	6:36

## 38 more die of Covid, 1,514 infected

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh's coronavirus fatalities are nearing another grim milestone with 38 more people dying from the virus in 24 hours until yesterday morning.

With this, the total number of fatalities reached 11,972.

However, the mortality rate remained static at 1.54 percent for the last four days, said a handout of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Meanwhile, 1,514 new cases were detected in the 24-hour period after testing 16,848 samples, pushing up the total case count to 775,027.

Bangladesh has so far carried out 5,647,742 tests. The daily infection rate rose to 8.99 percent from 8.19 percent a day ago.

After a massive upsurge, the number of daily cases fell below 2,000 since May 1.

However, the number of tests as well as new cases has declined from May 4, according to corona.gov.bd.

The DGHS handout said

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People gathered around Narayanganj's Digu Babu Bazaar as plumes of black smoke were billowing from a fire that began in a polythene factory and then spread to the wholesale market in the area. The photo was taken yesterday. Inset, a man consoling his relative after the latter lost his general store -- his source of income -- in the fire.

PHOTO: STAR

## COVID-19 CRISIS IN INDIA

### Cases hold close to record highs

Dozens of suspected Covid corpses found in Ganges river; 'black fungus' complication adds to patients' woes

AGENCIES

Coronavirus infections and deaths held close to record daily highs yesterday, increasing calls for the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to lock down the world's second-most populous country.

The 366,161 new infections and 3,754 deaths reported by the health ministry were off a little from recent peaks, taking India's tally to 22.66 million with 246,116 deaths as hospitals run out of oxygen and beds and morgues and crematoria overflow.

Experts have said India's actual figures could be far higher than reported.

Sunday's 1.47 million tests for Covid-19 were this month's lowest yet, data from the state-run Indian Council of Medical Research showed. The figure compared with a daily average of 1.7 million for the first eight days of May.

The number of positive results from the tests was not immediately clear, however.

Many states have imposed strict lockdowns over the last month while others have placed curbs on movement and shut cinemas, restaurants, pubs and shopping malls.

But pressure is mounting on Modi to announce a nationwide lockdown as he did during the first wave of infections last year.

"A failure of governance of epic and historic

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