

6 'Al Qaeda-inspired' men held in Dhaka, Chattogram: CTTC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit has arrested six suspected militants who, the unit claims, were inspired by the international terrorist outfit Al Qaeda.

The unit said after training, the arrestees planned to "wage jihad" for establishing Islamic rule in Bangladesh. They got the idea after seeing extremist posts and videos online.

CTTC Additional Commissioner Md Asaduzzaman said they arrested Abdur Rob, 28, Md Shakib, 23, Md Shamim Hossain, 18, Md Nadeem Sheikh, 19, Md Abshar, 20, and Md Sayeed Uddin, 18, from the capital's Syedabad Bus Terminal, Chattogram and Teknaf on Sunday.

Based on initial interrogation, the CTTC chief said the arrestees formed a team by communicating on social media and different apps.

"They migrated to Teknaf and stayed there for militant activities, after training with local collaborators. They have more associates. An operation is underway to arrest them," Asaduzzaman told journalists at a press briefing at Dhaka Metropolitan Police's media centre yesterday.

He said Abdur Rob is the coordinator among the six.

Rob went to Saudi Arabia in June 2019. During his stay there, he was inspired to carry out militant activities by seeing various extremist posts and videos online, he added.

Rob got introduced to Sayeed through a comment on a video on social media. In a similar way, he contacted Shamim, Shakib, Nadeem and some others.

Asaduzzaman said being the coordinator, Rob would

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Used pieces of polythene are being dried under the sun after washing, so they can be recycled again. Those will be distributed to the vendors of Karwan Bazar wholesale fish market. While the authorities claim they are vigilant against use of polythene bags, such "colourful" exhibitions question the authenticity of their claims. Dumping of polythene often leads to land infertility. They also block sewage outlets and sources of water.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

NAYAPALTAN CLASH Fakhrul, Abbas seek bail again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and the party's standing committee member Mirza Abbas yesterday sought bail from the High Court in a case filed over the December 7 clash between party activists and police.

Their lawyers submitted a petition to the HC seeking their bail in the case, saying that the lower courts concerned have not granted bail to Fakhrul and Abbas though their names were not mentioned in the first information report (FIR) of the case and other FIR named accused have been granted bail.

The HC bench of Justice Md Salim and Justice Md Riaz Uddin Khan may hold hearing of the bail petition today.

Details of the contents of the bail petition could not be known immediately as the accused petitioners'

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Loans or bribes?

Ex-Sylhet district council member sues 66 councillors to get his money back after losing polls

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A lawyer who lost his membership for Sylhet zilla parishad in the elections held last year has filed a case accusing 66 local council members of not returning the money they borrowed from him.

However, some of the accused said the candidate, M Mujibur Rahman, actually gave the money as bribes to secure votes.

Mujibur was member of ward-7 until he lost in the zilla parishad polls on October 17 last year, securing only 31 votes while the winning candidate got 69.

Mujibur said the money was given as loans and had no connection with the polls.

Mentionable, there are 66 councillors in total for the zilla parishad and a member is elected through their votes.

On Sunday, Mujibur filed the case with the court of Sylhet's Senior Judicial Magistrate Shakila Farzana Chowdhury, said his lawyer Debobrotha Chowdhury Liton.

He said the court accepted the case and summoned all the accused.

In the case statement, Mujibur mentioned that three accused borrowed Tk 40,000 each, one borrowed Tk 30,000, another Tk 25,000, while the rest borrowed Tk 20,000 each.

A total of Tk 13.85 lakh was loaned to them, the case statement read. Contacted, Mujibur said, "Some are saying that I bribed them to secure votes in the election, but this claim is false."

"As I was a member of the zilla parishad, I had close relations with all representatives in the upazilas, and they used to take loans from me. The amounts are such that they are not willing to return," he said.

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DENGUE FEVER 38 hospitalised in 24 hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 38 dengue patients were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

A total of 228 patients have been released till the second day of the new year, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

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PRAYER TIMING
JANUARY 3

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5:30	12:45	4:00	5:30	7:00
JAMAAT 6:05	1:15	4:15	5:35	7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

LEAVING 2 SEATS FOR ALLIANCE MEMBERS

AL's efforts to revive a fading friendship

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Awami League's decision to not compete for two of the recently vacated seats, rather letting its allies vie for them, is aimed at strengthening its relations with partners ahead of the 22nd national election, slated for January 2024.

On the other hand, AL's decision to not give the party symbol to anyone competing in the upcoming Brahmanbaria-2 by-polls is an effort to keep the main opposition, Jatiya Party, in its fold, according to AL insiders.

AL's parliamentary board on Sunday decided to leave two seats — Thakurgaon-3 and Bogura-4 — for Workers Party and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu), respectively.

In the last election held in 2008, AL left Thakurgaon-3 for Workers Party, Bogura-4 for JSD-Inu, and Brahmanbaria-2 for Jatiya Party, but BNP won those seats.

The ruling party has decided to contest for three of the six seats that remain vacant since the recent resignation of BNP lawmakers. The election of those six seats will be held on February 1.

On December 11, a day after BNP's rally in Dhaka, seven BNP MPs, one from reserved seat, tendered their resignation letters to the JS speaker as part of their party's anti-government movement. And so, six seats — Brahmanbaria-2, Thakurgaon-3, Bogura-4, Bogura-6, Chapainawabganj-2 and Chapainawabganj-3 — were vacated.

Awami League's decision came after Workers Party and JSD wrote letters to the ruling party to sacrifice those two seats for them.

According to insiders, as AL

is trying to expand its alliance by taking pro-liberation political forces on board, the party's latest decision is to satisfy its alliance and electoral partners.

The ruling party is now working on its relations with its partners, belonging to the 14-party alliance, and has already sat with them several times. It is also closely maintaining relations with Jatiya Party, said sources.

AL took part in the 2008,

As AL is trying to expand its alliance by taking pro-liberation political forces on board, the party's latest decision is to satisfy its alliance and electoral partners. The ruling party is now working on its relations with its partners, belonging to the 14-party alliance, and has already sat with them several times. It is also closely maintaining relations with Jatiya Party.

2014 and 2018 elections under the banner of the 14-party alliance, which was treated as AL's ideological alliance. Besides, Jatiya Party was an electoral partner of AL in those elections.

When AL formed the government in 2009, Jatiya Party became the main opposition in the House, while AL ignored its partners. But leaders of the allies were inducted into the government formed in 2009 and 2014, they said.

A gap started forming between partners of the 14-party alliance and Awami League. This gap has widened day by day due to AL ignoring its partners.

This friction was exposed on December 8, when AL convened a meeting with its partners. The ruling party drew heavy flak from its left-leaning allies for ignoring them while taking crucial political decisions and for starting "electioneering" for the next national polls by keeping its partners in the dark.

Leaders of the leftist parties told AL leaders that they are disappointed, as the ruling party does not give them space in the government nor give the alliance much importance.

On the other hand, relations between AL and JP have lately strained, as the former believes JP Chairman GM Quader has reached an understanding with BNP leaders about a simultaneous anti-government movement, sources said.

Things appeared to have soured when several JP leaders started talking about "government misrule" a few months ago and last month. GM Quader said his party does not belong to any alliance with AL.

Under such circumstances, the ruling party started trying to strengthen relations with its partners.

AL President Sheikh Hasina, also the prime minister, held a meeting with two top leaders of Jatiya Party, while top leaders of AL had several meetings with its left-leaning

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Not worried about next polls, it'll be held on time Says foreign minister

UNB, Dhaka



Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen yesterday said they are not that much worried about the next national election, noting that the election will be held timely and fairly.

Momen said the government is committed to holding a "free, fair, transparent and inclusive" election. He said it would be good if all the parties join the next elections, if not, that

is okay. Asked whether the government could assure the foreigners about a fair election, Momen said, "It's not our headache, it is your headache. Why should I assure foreigners? If we work accordingly, they will understand."

He said the next election is still far away and in other countries they see election-related events just two months ahead of the scheduled election. "Here we see election-centric noises one year ahead of the election. This is very sad."

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IRREGULARITIES, GRAFT Three DSCC officials removed from posts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Three officials of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) were removed from service due to irregularities and corruption yesterday.

DSCC Secretary Akramuzzaman signed three different office orders removing the officers and employees from different levels of the corporation.

The orders contained details of instances of their irregularities and corruption, DSCC Public Relations Officer and Spokesperson Abu Naser, told The Daily Star.

Naser said the personnel removed from their posts were: Rabiul Karim Khan, excise officer of region-1; Ruhul Alam, Dhaka Metropolitan Children's Hospital store keeper; and Mohammad Ramzan Ali, region-4 rent assistant.

Form polls-time govt Demands Islami Andolon Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Islami Andolon Bangladesh yesterday placed a 15-point demand including formation of an election-time government comprising of leaders of all registered political parties.

IAB ameer Syed Mohammad Rejaul Karim came up with the demands while speaking at the national council of the Islamist party at the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan.

Information Minister Hasan Mahmud, BNP vice chairman Barkatullah Bulu, AB party convener AFM Solaiman Chowdhury, Bangladesh Kalyan Party Chairman Maj Gen (ret'd) Syed Muhammad Ibrahim

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A truck carrying newly printed textbooks was spotted moving through the Old Airport road yesterday, in a mission to deliver the books to different schools of the capital. However, a worker was sitting on top of the pile of books in the moving truck, which can cause an accident any time.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

CID arrests four human traffickers

STAR REPORT

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) yesterday arrested four members of a human trafficking racket from Satkhira's Kolaroa area.

The four are Mokhlesur Rahman, Shahiduzzaman Babul, Anarul Islam and Kazirul Islam.

CID found the arrestees' involvement in human trafficking while investigating a case filed with Fatullah Police Station of Narayanganj in March 2021.

The four accused are active members of a gang, who trafficked women and children to India, said CID's Special Police Super (Serious Crime) Nazrul Islam.

One Anwar Hossain, who is now behind bars in India, is the mastermind of the gang, he added. CID on December 19 last year arrested accused Abdus Sattar from Keshabpur in Jessore after another accused Fatema revealed his name in her confessional statements.

Later, Sattar confessed to the magistrate that he, along with other accused — Mokhlesur Rahman, Babul, Anarul and Kazirul — took the victims to Satkhira from Jashore and trafficked them to India with help of their associate Nazrul.