

Six Ansar al-Islam members arrested

Says Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rab claimed to have arrested six members, including a key leader, of the banned militant outfit Ansar al-Islam from different areas in Dhaka.

Two laptops and copies of Jihadi literature were seized from their possession during a joint drive conducted by Rab-1 and the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence on Monday night.

The arrestees are Mesbah Uddin Chowdhury alias Abu Masrur, 50, chief of Dawah wing of the outfit's Dhaka region; Sheikh Ashiqur Rahman alias Abu Afifa, 49; Sadi Md Zulkarnain, 35; Kamrul Hasan Sabbir, 40; Masum Rana alias Masum Billah, 26; and Saieed MRizvi, 35, said a Rab press release.

In primary interrogation, they said they joined the outfit through fellow members and are now engaged in militant activities in different areas.

According to the release, Mesbah went to a European country in 2004 for higher education and got permanent residency. After joining the outfit through Ashiqur, he used to circulate video clips on social media to encourage Bangladeshi youths to join militancy.

In primary interrogation, they said they joined the outfit through fellow members and are now engaged in militant activities in different areas.

In 2022, he returned to Bangladesh at the behest of the top militant leaders and started recruiting fresh youths for the group, the release said.

Like Mesbah, Ashiqur was also in a European country after completing an MBS degree from a university in Bangladesh. He was one of the advisors for the group's Dhaka region and a key fund provider.

Sadi, a civil engineer, used to work at a garment factory and later joined the militant group through Mesbah, while Kamrul, who completed his BSc in engineering from a public university, joined the group through Ashiqur.

Saieed, a doctor by profession, got radicalised while staying in a Middle Eastern country in 2021. He later joined Ansar al-Islam through Mesbah, while Masum, a master's student, joined the group through Sadi, Rab officials claimed.

Country has been turned

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court, and the court subsequently sends us to jail. This situation cannot continue."

Leaders and activists of the party and its associate bodies from adjoining districts gathered to join the road march with posters, banners, festoons, party flags, and national flags.

The march, which is part of the BNP's 15 day programme, began at 11:45am.

After marching different streets in Jhenidah, Magura, Jashore, and Khulna, the rally concluded in Khulna's Shibbari, where Abbas once again addressed the gathering.

Hundreds of party leaders and activists joined the rally to press home their demand for elections under a non-partisan caretaker government.

[Our Jhenidah and Khulna correspondents contributed to this report]

EC to invite

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governance, elections, democracy, peace building, and human rights in order to be observers.

The organisations should be registered with the authorities of their countries, add the guidelines.

The observers must submit their election observation reports by email or in print to the EC secretary within 30 days after the polling day.

The reports should be based on observations made before, during, and after the polls.

The observers should ensure that the observations and reporting are impartial, objective and reflect the highest standards of accuracy.

Individuals and entities willing to be the observers are required to apply to the EC for accreditation.

Applications from individuals convicted of an electoral offence, fraud or dishonest conduct will not be considered by the EC.

The EC last month began amending the 2018 guidelines for international observers.

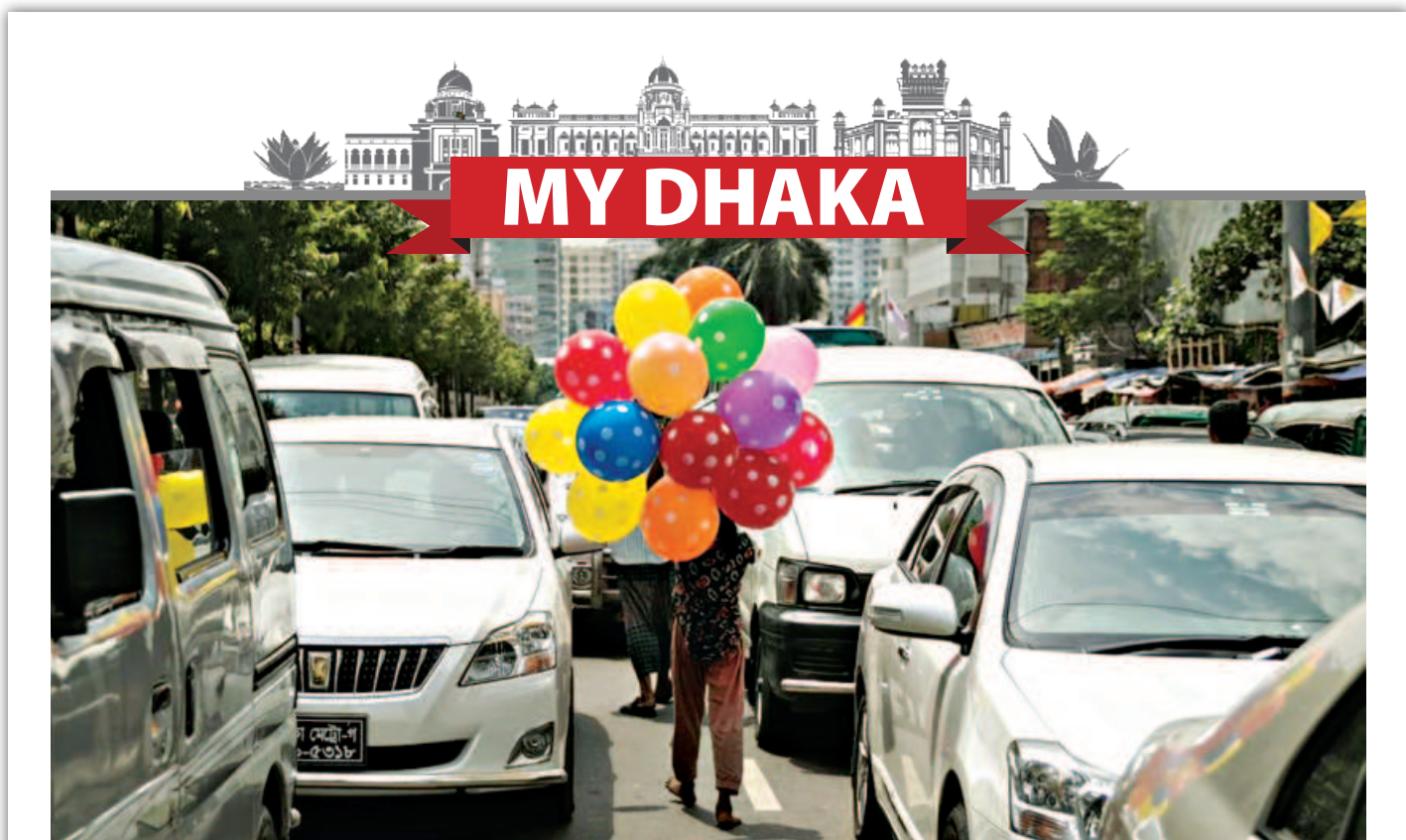


PHOTO: SAZZAD IBNE SAYED

A Sri Lankan's memory of Dhaka

DASTAQUIR ISMAIL

Over the course of my career, I have spent a significant amount of time in Dhaka, Bangladesh and various other locations in the country. However, Dhaka holds a special place in my heart, as it has been witness to more than half of my professional journey. From my first flight to the bustling capital in the 90s, where immigration questions were tediously typed on a piece of paper, to the present day, I have seen this city transform into a thriving metropolis, representing the progress of the entire nation.

One of the things that struck me from the moment I arrived was the warm and friendly nature of the people of Dhaka. They loved Sri Lankans! No matter where I went, I was greeted with smiling faces and a genuine willingness to help. Their hospitality and obliging nature made me feel at home, even in a place far from my own.

And then there's the food. Oh, the food! Dhaka is a culinary paradise, with its rich and diverse cuisine that never fails to tantalise the taste buds. And



during the holy month of Ramadan, the city comes alive with an array of delicious iftar treats, creating a unique atmosphere of celebration.

While the people and the food are undeniably remarkable, there is one aspect of Dhaka that can be a challenge for both residents and visitors alike: the traffic. The city's roads are notorious for their congestion, and navigating through the sea of vehicles can be quite an adventure. However, over time, I have come to accept this as a part of the city's charm. In fact, it has become a sort of rite of passage for anyone living or working in Dhaka. Once you learn to navigate the traffic, you truly feel like a part of the city.

Dhaka, a city where the old and the new seamlessly blend, showcases a unique tapestry of culture and colours. The architectural wonders of the past proudly stand alongside modern skyscrapers and vibrant rickshaws, reflecting the resilience and adaptability

of its people.

Rooted in a rich heritage, Dhaka's vibrant culture shines through its colourful festivals, and traditional music. Every corner of the city exudes history and tradition, leaving visitors enchanted by its charm.

It is a city that has undergone tremendous transformation, both physically and culturally. From a place where immigration questions were typed on an Excel-like sheet to a thriving metropolis, Dhaka has come a long way. Its people, make the city welcoming and inviting. The diverse cuisine tantalises taste buds, while the traffic challenges become a part of the adventure. And above all, the vibrancy of Dhaka, coupled with its rich culture and colours, leaves an indelible mark on the hearts of those who experience it.

Dhaka truly is a city that captivates and enchants all who have the pleasure of calling it "my Dhaka".

10 injured in AL factional clash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chattogram

At least 10 Awami League activists were injured yesterday in a clash between two of its factions in Chattogram's Mirsarai upazila.

The clash broke out between supporters of MP Mosharraf Hossain and former upazila parishad chairman Gias Uddin around 4:00pm at a community centre, said locals and police.

Gias Uddin told reporters that the MP's supporters, headed by Mirsarai Upazila Chhatra League President Masud Karim, ambushed his supporters during a meeting organised to plan an upcoming rally.

Contacted, Masud Karim denied the attack and instead blamed Gias Uddin for the attack on his activists.

"On information, we sent a police team to the spot to bring the situation under control," said Kabir Hossain, officer-in-charge of Mirsarai Police Station.

"No one filed any complaint yet. Additional police have been deployed in the area to keep the situation under control," the OC added.

Cousin held over gang-rape of sixth-grader

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Police yesterday arrested a young man, one of three accused in a case filed over the gang-rape of a 12-year-old schoolgirl in Savar.

The 21-year-old arrestee, the victim's cousin, was arrested early in the morning after the girl's mother filed a case with Savar Model Police Station Monday night, said Dipok Chandra Saha, officer-in-charge of the police station.

Police also arrested two other accused, both aged around 13.

Quoting the case statement, the OC said that on Sunday the arrested youth took the victim, a student of class six, to a house in Manikganj's Singair from Savar and raped her.

Later, the two other accused also raped her and left her next to her house in Savar around midnight.

The victim's family disclosed the matter to police last night and filed the case accusing the trio, he said.

UP member stabbed to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

A union parishad member died after being stabbed allegedly by his neighbour while settling a quarrel in Gaibandha's Polashbari upazila Monday night.

Badsha Mia, 50, of Noyonpur village in Palashbari, was a member of Betkapa union's ward 8, said Inspector of Palashbari Police Station Dibakar Adhikari.

Betkapa UP Chairman Mostafizur Rahman said, "Due to an alarming increase of theft incidents in the area, we appointed some local youths as guards and it was announced that no one will be allowed to stay outside the house after 10:00pm without any emergency."

Last night, one of the newly appointed guards named Khairul Islam was patrolling Noyonpur Bazar.

When he saw a local around 11:30am, Khairul asked him why he was outside at that time, which triggered an altercation between them.

Tamim dropped after drama

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According to BCB sources, in the meeting, Shakib wanted to step down from captaincy as he did not want unfit players to go to the World Cup. It is understood that Shakib was referring to Tamim's current injury situation.

As the news spread yesterday morning, it caught everyone by surprise. It also delayed the announcement of the World Cup squad, which according to the BCB's official social handles, was scheduled for the innings break of the day-night third ODI against New Zealand.

The board circulated the final squad on its social media platforms at 8:14pm even though it has been a tradition for the selectors to announce a squad at a press briefing, which eventually took place after the match against New Zealand.

Appearing at the press briefing, Chief Selector Minhazul Abedin said, "The squad prepared after discussing with the medical department, team management, players, the skipper, and the head coach as well. We followed the same procedure for Tamim as we normally do in the case of any other player."

It was a little curious that following such turmoil, Tamim's injury was the sole reason offered for his omission. After all, the very fact that he was played for the first two ODIs against New Zealand, in a series talked about as a final chance to get the World Cup combination right, strongly implies that the medical department and all those other stakeholders had deemed Tamim a risk worth taking.

If his injury took a sharp turn for the worse, there was no word of it over the past three days.

Those associated with the game said the injury issue was just a smokescreen to hide the bigger problem plaguing the national team.

They said the whole episode is disturbing for a team heading to a global showpiece event, which will commence in India on October 5.

It also once again exposed a lack of cohesion in the national team and the board's inability to handle such

situations professionally, they said.

An official with knowledge of Tamim's medical condition said the left handed batter's back injury is known to everybody.

"It was not an issue that can prevent him from playing provided that he manages it properly. He was so fluent in the game against New Zealand. It could have been good for his confidence had he played the third ODI," said the official.

Tamim sat out the last game, with the team management saying that he had opted out to take rest. But insiders say Tamim's decision had to do with a longstanding rift involving him, Shakib and coach Hathurusingha.

Tamim and Shakib have not been on talking terms for a long time and a board official, preferring not to be named, said, "The relationship has become so complicated that nobody knows how to solve it."

The board president has also admitted it publicly, but has done little to neutralise it."

Allegations have also been rife that Hathurusingha has not done enough to play the peacemaker's role. Since his return as Bangladesh coach in February this year, Hathurusingha has so far failed to build the team as a unit.

His inability to create harmony in the team was one of the six reasons that the Sri Lankan cricket board cited for his termination as coach in 2019, after the national team's poor run of form.

Tamim announced his retirement from all forms of cricket, in dramatic circumstances, after playing Bangladesh's first match against the touring Afghanistan team on July 5 in Chattogram.

Insiders had then said an emotional Tamim, who has often been criticised for not handling pressure well off the field, took the decision from a concern that the team management had not kept faith in him while he was playing through pain.

At that time, he had reversed his decision after an intervention from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

This time, though, there was no return for Tamim.



Children stand next to cars as refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh region arrive in the border village of Kornidzor, Armenia yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Tigers opt for mix of youth and experience

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"We have seen a number of openers. Tanzid was in our HP unit. He did well in the Emerging Cup. He is just getting a few opportunities [on the international stage]. We are hoping he can show his worth with more opportunities in the World Cup," came Minhajul's reply yesterday at the press conference.

Aside Mahmudullah, the other two veterans in the squad are skipper Shakib Al Hasan and Mushfiqur Rahim. Najmul Hossain Shanto will be Shakib's deputy at the World Cup, his ongoing purple patch with the bat ushering him onto the role, while another youngster Tawhid Hridoy would continue as a key batter in the showpiece event.

Despite the dramatic atmosphere ahead of the squad announcement, the 15-member squad did not have much of a surprise factor. The Tigers included five pacers, a much debated topic among the BCB think-tank ahead of the squad selection.

Without Tamim in the squad, Mehedi Hasan Miraz may now likely be the backup opener and it opened up a spot for bringing in a fifth pacer into the squad. Tanzim Hasan Sakib, who impressed against India in the Asia Cup, got the nod ahead of pacer Khaled Ahmed. The other regulars of the pace attack -- Taskin Ahmed, Mustafizur Rahman, Hasan Mahmud and Shoriful Islam -- all

made the squad as expected.

Miraz, Nasum Ahmed and Mahedi Hasan would provide the spin options at the World Cup, with Mahmudullah also carrying part of the responsibility. In absence of a genuine number seven, Bangladesh eventually decided in favour of Mahedi, who put in an all-round performance in the Asia Cup game against India.

Bangladesh team are scheduled to fly to India this afternoon and before their World Cup opener against Afghanistan on October 07, the Tigers will play two warm-up matches against Sri Lanka and England on September 29 and October 02, respectively, in Guwahati.