

# **Jamat-e-Islami's link with Islamic militancy**

**Shahriar Kabir**

**General Secretary**

**South Asian People's Union against Fundamentalism & Communalism**

**Acting President**

**Forum for Secular Bangladesh**

## **How much more evidence does Jamat require of its militancy link?**

In writing about the militancy link of Jamat-e-Islami and the coalition government for the last six years, we have not only become sick and tired, but some of us also served prison terms. Whenever an allegation of militancy link was labelled against Jamat-e-Islami, whenever a grenade/bomb attack was launched, whenever opposition politicians or intellectuals were subjected to militant assaults, Jamat chief Motiur Rahman Nizami and his cohort invariably blamed it on Awami League or smelled an Indian connection in it. They denied outright the existence of dreadful militants like Bangla Bhai and said they were all concocted – creations of the media. During interrogation after their arrest, these militants divulged important information regarding their link with Jamat. This underlies the reason why Nizami et al were hell bent on disowning their responsibility by denying the existence of militants.

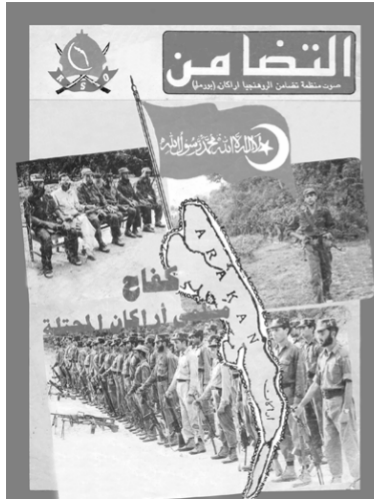
However, right after his arrest, Lutfozzaman Babar – the former state minister for home affairs – disclosed how the coalition government aided the rise of militancy and prime minister Khaleda Zia herself acted as a shield for Jamat-e-Islami. Should the government debar itself from filing lawsuits as regards the militancy link of Khaleda Zia and Motiur Rahman Nizami despite the confessions made by Babar, the nation would be given to understand that the very foundation of the on-going anti-terrorism/corruption drive is seriously flawed.

In a write-up published in the Daily Janakantha last month, I revealed some documentary evidence regarding militants' financial transactions with the IBBL, a bank wholly owned and operated by Jamat-e-Islami stalwarts. It was all about how Harkatul Jihad al-Islam (HUJI) Myanmar leaders, staying in the capital of Bangladesh, were maintaining accounts with IBBL. Then I went abroad for two weeks. On my return home, I saw an IBBL rejoinder in the newspapers protesting my writings. It went, 'In the backdrop of our protest against Shahriar Kabir's write-up on IBBL's militancy link that appeared in the 3 May 2007 issue of the Daily Janakantha, the writer has written another article under the caption 'Recent examples of Jamat's falsehood' that appeared in the 7 May 2007 issue of the same daily. The writer has remarked that IBBL is a bank owned by a group of people who subscribe to a particular political ideology, and made an effort to invent a link between the bank and militancy by reproducing the cover page of a newspaper, an advertisement and the last page of a book. We would like to assert in the strongest of the term that the said organization does not have an account with IBBL, which is a scheduled bank under the control of Bangladesh Bank. We would like to further assert that IBBL does not have a political connection and the writer's remarks are gravely unjustified. Besides, he mentioned a bank account in the name of one Abdul Quddus by referring to some newspapers, which did not come to our notice.

'It is to be mentioned that the said account holder (Abdul Quddus), like an ordinary client, opened a savings account with IBBL on 17 November 1994 after having complied with all the rules and regulations of Bangladesh Bank and the said account has remained 'inoperative' since 2005.' (Janakantha, 11 May 2007)

My simple response to IBBL's rejoinder is that nowhere in the world do militants open a bank account in the name of a militant organization. They open it in the name of an ordinary person.

It is worth mentioning that the very first mouthpiece of HUJI in Bangladesh was monthly *Jago Mujahid*, whose prime objective was to motivate the youths to participate in jihad and get them to fight against, and bring down, legitimate governments in different countries including Bangladesh.



It was through IBBL that all the financial transactions of the publication were carried out. Particulars of the bank account published regularly in this jihadi journal are as follows:

Monthly Jago Mujahid  
Current Account Number:

5319

Islamic Bank Bangladesh Ltd

2nd page of 'Al Tadamun, Arabic journal of RSO, an Islamic militant organization of Arakan, Burma. The chief of this group is Islami Bank of Bangladesh run by Jamat-e-Islami

An announcement of 'World Assembly of Muslim Youth' (WAMY), which was published in 'Al Tadamun with a call for jihad and to contribute money for jihad through the Islami Bank

Local Branch, Motijheel, Dhaka  
Besides using it for the publication, HUJI has used this bank account for other militant purposes and published various notices from time to time.

Not only has IBBL facilitated transactions of the rebellious journal but it has also provided financial assistance to it through advertisements. Does the bank believe that *Jago Mujahid* is not a mouthpiece of a militant outfit and the said financial transactions are not part of militant activities?

There is jihadi organization called 'Rohingya Solidarity Organization' (RSO) in Bangladesh and Myanmar. It has recruited a large number of *madrassa* (Islamic seminary) students and dispatched them to Pakistan, Middle East and Libya for training on jihad. Published in Arabic, *Al Tadamun* is the international mouthpiece of RSO. The August 1991 issue of the journal published on its back cover a notice from the World Assembly of Muslim Youths (WAMY) under the caption 'Call from the Arakan crusaders' imploring the Muslim world to send generous financial assistance for jihad in the name of Islam in Arakan. Given at the end of the notice were the bank particulars of the RSO chief.

Dr. Muhammad Yunus  
Account Number - 4297  
Islamic Bank Bangladesh Ltd  
Agrabad Branch, Chittagong, Bangladesh

Dr. Muhammad Yunus is the advisory editor of *Al Tadamun*. Published on the cover page of the said issue of the journal was the picture of armed RSO chief along with other militants.

The Urdu mouthpiece of RSO is *Insaaf*, whose January 1991 issue mentioned that it has a bank account with IBBL and another one with Dubai Islamic Bank (DIB) in the name of its secretary Mohammad Ali. The IBBL account number is PLS-DA 12655, Local Branch, Dhaka, and the DIB account number is 5040906.

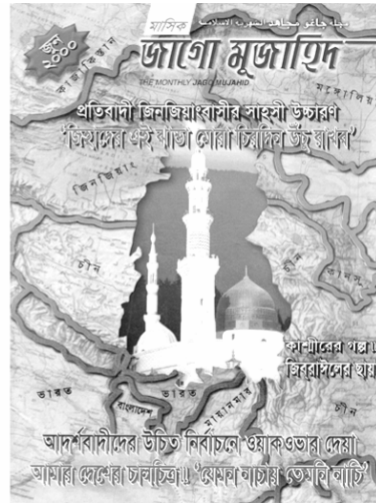
Would the IBBL board still pretend not to know of a militant organization called RSO, or claim that it had never had an account with their bank?

In a rejoinder published on 11 May (07), Islamic bank said, 'IBBL has no relationship whatsoever with any political parties, and hence labelling a 'party' tag against it is utterly uncalled for'.

The Bangladeshi press has published scores of reports on the link between IBBL board and Jamat-e-Islami on countless occasions. Here I would like to quote parts of a report published in a journal of Jamat-e-Islami, Pakistan. A delegation of Jamat-e-Islami, Pakistan came to visit Bangladesh in January 2004 at the invitation of Jamat-e-Islami, Bangladesh. Besides joining the annual convention of Shibir (Jamat's student wing) and meeting with top Jamat leaders including notorious war criminals Golam Azam and Nizami, the delegation visited a number of commercial concerns of Jamat-e-Islami, Bangladesh. Upon return to



Publication of RSO's Urdu mouthpiece 'Insaaf' is patronized by Islami Bank of Bangladesh. Each issue contains bank account number with Islami Bank



Islami Bank is the main patron of 'Jago Mujahid', Bengali organ of HUII Bangladesh. Since HUII was banned in 2005 'Jago Mujahid' appeared with a new name 'Rahmat'

Pakistan, Munim Zafar Khan, a member of the delegation, wrote a long report titled 'Central committee's visit to Bangladesh: An eyewitness account' that appeared in the October 2004 issue of *Hankadam*, mouthpiece of Jamiat-e-Talabye-Islam, student wing of Jamat-e-Islami, Pakistan. The report speaks of a strong link between Jamat-e-Islami and IBBL, saying,

'... After prayers and lunch, the hosts took us to the residence of Shah Abdul Hannan, who is a top executive of IBBL and regarded as one of the

prominent intellectuals of Bangladesh. He has also served as a secretary to the government of Bangladesh. It is worth mentioning that IBBL, which is run by Jamat-e-Islami, Bangladesh, is regarded as one of the largest and most important commercial banks in Bangladesh. There are as many as 141 branches of the bank spread across the country. On its Board of Directors are affluent merchants from Dhaka as well as financial sector experts. Such successful operation of IBBL and the overflowing confidence of general people in it will undoubtedly go a long way in sustaining Islamic movements. Shah Abdul Hannan inquired about the well-being of Khurshid Sahib and Muhtaram Qazi Sahib, and informed us of IBBL in detail. ... We stayed there for about an hour. On our way back to the hotel, our hosts showed us the 15-storied head office of IBBL situated in downtown Dhaka.

Would the IBBL management still assert that their chairman Shah Abdul Hannan and other members of the Board of Directors have no links with Jamat-e-Islami? The Pakistani Jamat leader has only lied? Officials of private commercial banks are free to join any political parties. Being the chairman of IBBL, Shaha Abdul Hannan can become an advisor for Jamat-e-Islami, and nobody can object to it. However, what we object to is IBBL's militancy link.

Quarters with close connection with the incumbent caretaker government say that our intelligence department is on the look out for probable link of Jamat-e-Islami with terrorism and corruption, and will nab Nizami et al once the link is found. Quoting eminent economist Prof. Abul Barakat, a report published in the 5 June (07) issue of the Daily Janakantha said that Jamat-e-Islami, having ascended to power, illegally grabbed 16.8 million acres of vested

properties (lands) of the Hindus between 2001 and 2006. The current market price of these properties is more than TK 20 billion. A thorough investigation will not only let the cat out of the bag, but tigers and lions will also come out. If the incumbent government is sincere about combating terrorism and corruption, it should arrange to look into these matters without further ado.

Numerous proofs of Jamat's militancy and corruption link are there; not just in newspapers and our research reports, but in the files of the intelligence department as well. To put top Jamat leaders in the dock, all we need is sincerity and patriotism.

6 June, 2007