

Marzan was a Chhatra Shibir activist at CU

Last year, a probe at Chittagong University found his active involvement in Shibir politics

MD ABBAS from Ctg and AHMED HUMANIYUN KABIR TOPU from Pabna

Nurul Islam Marzan, who police claimed was "in charge of Gulshan attack", was a Shathi (associate) of Chittagong University unit of Islami Chhatra Shibir, student wing of the Jamaat-e-Islami.

His fellow militants knew him as Marzan and his classmates as Fahad.

His academic name is Nurul Islam, and he was a student of Arabic department at



CU in 2012-2013 session, Proctor Ali Asgar Chowdhury told The Daily Star yesterday.

In a joint drive by the university authorities and police on November 11 last year, 15 ICS activists were detained from Shaheed Abdur Rab Hall over their alleged involvement in subversive activities.

The team also seized a laptop from which they found a list of ICS leaders, and Nurul Islam's name was on the list as a

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Marzan

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Shathi of the ICS unit, said the proctor.

Later, the university authorities ran an investigation through police and found his active involvement with the ICS, he added.

Despite repeated attempts, The Daily Star couldn't reach any of the ICS unit leaders.

On Friday, police released a photo of Marzan, saying he is a "top-level militant organiser" and was the "operational commander" of the July 1 Gulshan café attack which left 22 people, mostly foreigners, dead.

On Monday, Marzan's family in Pabna confirmed his identity.

Marzan got admitted to CU in 2013. He passed his first year final examinations with CGPA 3.48 the following year. But he attended only a few classes in his second academic year, said the proctor.

In the second year final exams, he appeared in six of the 10 tests. He was last seen on the campus on February 14 last year when he came to attend an exam, added Ali Asgar.

Asked, CU Vice Chancellor Iftekhar Uddin Chowdhury said Nurul Islam's studentship was cancelled automatically as he neither got re-admitted to the third academic year nor sat for improvement tests for the second year exams.

Nurul Islam's classmates think he got involved in militant activities from his second academic year as they saw some changes in him at that time.

"He regularly attended classes in the first year but started skipping classes from the second year," said Touhidul Islam, one of his former classmates.

His batchmates are now fourth-year students of the department.

Some of them said he used to attend classes wearing panjabi and pyjamas. But he put on shirts and pants outside the class.

They also said he stayed with other students at "Al Hera Cottage" in Zero Point area of the university in 2013. He left the place in 2014 and moved to the city area.

The students now residing at the cottage couldn't provide any information on him.

MARZAN'S BACKGROUND

Nurul Islam Marzan passed Dakhil (equivalent to SSC) from Darul Uloom Markazia Madrasa in 2010 and Alim (equivalent to HSC) from Arifpur Fazil Madrasa in Pabna in 2012.

He was a student of Darul Hadis Qawmi Madrasa at Banshbari in Pabna town. But he sat for Dakhil and

Alim exams from the Alia madrasas as the Qawmi madrasa is not a government-affiliated educational institution, according to Madrasa sources.

Nurul Islam had close ties with Mushfiqur Rahman, a suspended teacher of Darul Hadis Qawmi Madrasa and follower of Asadullah Al Galib.

Galib is the ameer of Ahle Hadith Andolok Bangladesh, many of whose members have alleged links with banned militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB).

"Mushfiqur was a follower of Galib. For this reason, he was suspended from the madrasa in September 2013. We don't know where he is now," said Abdur Rahman, superintendent of Darul Hadis Qawmi Madrasa.

Contacted, Motiur Rahman, superintendent of Arifpur Fazil Madrasa, confirmed that Nurul Islam was a student at his institution. He, however, said Nurul took the Alim exams from his institution as an "irregular student".

"Actually, he was a Qawmi Madrasa student. But he got his registration through my institution and then appeared in the Alim examinations," Motiur said.

Jahid Hasan, superintendent of Darul Ulum Markazia Madrasa, said that while a student at Qawmi madrasa, Nurul took Dakhil exams from his institution in 2010 and got GPA-5.

JAMAAT-SHIBIR'S ALLEGED LINKS WITH MILITANTS

Jamaat-Shibir's alleged involvement in militant activities came to the fore when militancy saw a sharp rise during the rule of the BNP-led four-party alliance of which Jamaat was a key component.

JMB chief Abdur Rahman and his father were Jamaat activists. Abdur Rahman joined Islami Chhatra Shibir when he was a student.

Siddiqui Rahman Bangla Bhai, head of the killing squad of banned Islamist outfit Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB), was an active Shibir member till 1995.

Former Habiganj Jamaat ameer Maulana Saidur Rahman alias Zafar took over as the JMB chief in mid-2006 after JMB kingpin Abdur Rahman was arrested in February 2006.

On July 23 this year, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said Jamaat's link was found in the Sholakia attack near the Eid congregation in Kishoreganj on July 7. Four people, including two policemen, a local and an attacker, were killed in the incident.