

Shibir's secret training of DU students

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A group of 13 Dhaka University (DU) students were awakened at dead of night on May 4 in a shabby two-storey building near the Kantaban slope in the capital to swear their allegiance to militant Islamist ideology.

With Qur'an in their hands, they were forced to utter, "Under no circumstances we will denounce our allegiance to

Islami Chhātra Shibir We will wage an armed struggle to establish Islamic law in Bangladesh."

They were sworn in as members of the student front of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh after nearly three weeks of indoctrination, during which they had been forced to study Islamic literature on jihad and shariah, they had also been instructed in how to run a clandestine organisation.

In the second week of April, they were picked from different residential halls of DU by some leaders of Islami Chhātra Shibir (ICS) partly with promises of accommodations in university dorms and partly with dreams of better careers.

Md Abrar Ahmed, a first year student of the history department at DU, is one of those thirteen students who were allured by the assurance of getting an

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accommodation in Sgt Zahurul Huq Hall.

After his admission into DU, he needed a residential accommodation in Zahurul Huq Hall. ICS leaders of the hall offered him an accommodation in the dorm in exchange for his allegiance to their cause. The Shibir leaders then formed a group of thirteen students and sent them to a mess house near the Kantaban slope, for necessary indoctrination.

The students were Bacchu of the anthropology department, Afzal Hossain of sociology, Asadullah of social welfare, Jashim Uddin of history, Jahirul Islam of Pali, Aminul of world religion, Mahmudur Hasan, Ayatullah and Fayzullah of law, Md Ruhul Amin of philosophy and two other students, said Abrar. Abrar also said all of them already had Shibir backgrounds.

During their stay in the house in Kantaban, they had to attend mandatory daylong classes on militant Islam, on strategies of running clandestine organisational activities, and read Qur'an and Hadith. And at night they had to recap all the lessons they had learnt during the day.

"All day long, we had to stay in the house. Hardly did they allow us to attend our classes at the university," said Abrar adding, "On most days we were awakened at 3:00am and would be forced to perform religious activities."

"After the indoctrination period, you all will have to be Shibir men and then you will get accommodations in your halls," Abrar quoted Abdul Quddus, one of the ICS leaders who sent them to the mess house, as saying.

"We all have good connections with the house tutors and provosts of the halls and without our recommendations none of you will get accommodations in the halls," Abrar quoted Tofazzel Hossain, president of Zahurul Huq Hall unit of ICS, as saying.

The process of indoctrination came into light when Abrar refused to take any benefit at the cost of being indoctrinated in militancy, came out of the mess house and

and carrying out their activities from there.

Shibir activists rent houses around the DU campus and provide lodgings to students who agree to become activists of the organisation. There are more than 50 houses in Shahbagh, Paribagh, Kantaban, Palashi, Nilkhet and the adjoining areas, the sources said.

Armed Shibir activists who have relations with Islamist militants took shelter in those houses, the sources added.

Different intelligence sources said some former Shibir activists and leaders of DU turned cadres of Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), a militant Islamist organisation which is currently banned in the country, and they used Shibir activists for militant purposes.

It is also alleged by the intelligence sources that with the help of a faction of Jatiyatabadi Chhātra Dal (JCD), the student front of BNP, and a section of the university administration, Shibir gained strength on the DU campus during the last five years of BNP-Jamaat-led alliance government's rule, and now is operating there clandestinely.

Members of ICS have also managed to occupy high positions in different committees of JCD in the university and in residential hall committees by planting themselves in JCD since they are not allowed by the university administration to operate on the campus under the banner of ICS.

Shibir activists have been advancing with the same strategy in other educational institutions across the country too, and have become successful in establishing their hegemony on university campuses in Rajshahi, Chittagong, Sylhet and Kushtia. They are also trying to establish their supremacy on the campuses of Dhaka Medical Collage Hospital (DMCH) and Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), the sources said.

ICS leaders usually target needy students as they are impression-