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DU staff, three traders held

Charged with supplying chemicals to militants

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives on Thursday night arrested a Dhaka University laboratory assistant and three chemical traders in connection with supplying bomb-making chemicals to militants.

The arrestees admitted supplying the chemicals to Khaled alias Ifti, a detained militant operative, only for financial benefits, police said.

"We are investigating whether the arrestees have any

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ideological link or similarities with any militant organisation or Ifti," Monirul Islam, joint commissioner of DMP, told a press briefing at the DMP media centre yesterday.

On June 8, detectives arrested Ifti and eight other operatives of Jihadist Forum, a unified platform of banned militant outfits including Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami and Ansarullah Bangla Team, in the city.

After gleaning information from the nine operatives of Jihadist Forum, a DB team conducted several drives in the capital on Thursday night and arrested the four, Monirul said.

The lab assistant of the Soil Science Department at DU was identified as Gazi Mohammad Babul.

The three others are Ripon Mollah, owner of Asia Scientific, Mohiuddin, manager of Western Scientific

Company, and Nasir Uddin, owner of FM Chemical & Sons.

All of them run chemical businesses in Tikatuli area.

In the capital, there are around 350 chemical shops. They sell chemicals to laboratories of different educational institutions following due legal procedures, the DB official said.

The traders need to verify some documents before supplying the chemicals. They even need to obtain confirmation from any institution's chief over phone before selling any stuff.

But the arrestees did not follow any procedure, Monirul said, adding that Babul used to collect chemicals from these three shops and supply them to Ifti.

In the preliminary interrogation, the arrestees admitted to have sold the chemicals to Ifti. But they did not know his real identity or purpose.