

Six JMB militants hanged

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Gazipur while another Shura member Khaled Saifullah at Pabna jail.

The members of police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) carried the bodies to the slain militants' village homes at the crack of dawn yesterday and handed those to their relatives, said a prison source.

Earlier on May 29 last year, Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court, Jhalakathi condemned to death seven JMB men--the ones executed, and Asadul Islam alias Arif who is still at large, for killing senior assistant judges Jagannath Pandey and Soheli Ahmed in a suicide blast in the district town on November 14, 2005.

The JMB cadres had killed and maimed many people during their decade-long underground operations that climaxed with around 500 nearly synchronised blasts in all but one district and a public declaration of Jihad on August 17, 2005.

A spate of deadly suicide bombings following hard on the heels soon put the people's nerves on edge. The attacks left at least 30 people dead and those included judges, lawyers and policemen.

Aided and abetted by a few ruling alliance leaders, lawmakers and ministers and members in local administration and police, vigilante gangs of the JMJB had terrorised Rajshahi, Naogaon and Natore in the name of ridding the northern districts of outlawed Sarbahara and Purbo Banglar Communist Party in 2004. They killed at least 22 people and injured scores at that time.

Besides, they had claimed responsibility for the blasts at three cinemas in Mymensingh and different cultural programmes, assault on Humayun Azad and murder of Rajshahi University teacher Prof Muhammad Yunus.

On seeing the bodies in the early morning hours, the slain militants' relatives were dazed and frightened as none of them were informed of the exact time of execution.

The news media too were not allowed any specifics about the date and time. The prison authorities on March 22 officially announced that they had received a copy of the president's rejection of mercy petitions that day and according to the jail code, they would execute the militants in between April 13 and 19.

"Actually, we had received the president's decision on the mercy pleas much before the media was informed. And the executions have taken place immediately after 21 days since the receipt," a prison source said.

As per the code, death sentences have to be executed not before 21 days and within 28 days since receiving the copy of president's rejection. "We have executed the militants according to the jail code," it added.

The authorities had deliberately

misled the media so that none could know the exact date and time. This all had been done for security reasons, said sources in the prison administration.

Even the family members who in the meantime had met their convicted relatives could not get that it was their last meeting.

Zakir Hossain, brother of Khaled Saifullah, told The Daily Star yesterday that Saifullah's wife and another brother met him at Rangpur jail Sunday. They even talked to the authorities about visiting him again on April 1. "We did not know that we are never going to see him again," he added.

Zakir said his family learnt about the execution only after the law enforcers brought the body to their house at Kawkhali in Pirojpur.

Like Saifullah's, relatives of the five others did not know the time and date. "We knew that the journalists were in contact with relatives of the six. So we did not let the families know the time of execution," said the prison source.

The militants were informed of their execution just two hours before they were hanged.

Except for Mamun, the other condemned JMB leaders were calm and composed after hearing that they would be hanged soon.

Prison officials requesting not to be named said that either Rahman or Bangla Bhai had commented, "We are prepared. There's nothing to inform us."

But Mamun burst into tears as he was told that he would be hanged shortly.

The entire affair had been kept secret on orders from the government high-ups, said a prison source.

**BACKGROUND**  
On their way to the court, Jagannath Pandey and Soheli Ahmed were waiting in a microbus in Quarter Palli area in Jhalakathi town when Mamun blew off their vehicle.

Soheli died on the spot and Jagannath later at the hospital. Critically injured, the suicide bomber was arrested on the scene.

Two separate cases were filed with the Jhalakathi Police Station--one for murder and the other for explosion.

On February 20, 2006 Barisal Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal awarded Abdur Rahman, Bangla Bhai, Molla Omar (killed in Rab action in Comilla) and Khaled Saifullah each with 40-year rigorous imprisonment in the blast case.

The charge sheet in the murder case was submitted on March 21, 2006 and the court framed charges on April 23 the same year. The court delivered judgment on May 29 last year following examination of 45 witnesses and arguments from both the sides.

Besides the seven condemned, the investigators found proof of six

others' involvement in the conspiracy to kill the judges. They did not press charge against Omar as he had died in Rab action by that time.

Though the charge against Mehedi, Moaz, Talha and Mahmud was proved primarily, they were not charge-sheeted, as their full address could not be found. The investigators said they would submit a supplementary charge sheet later if they could collect the addresses.

Of the charge-sheeted accused, Sultan Khan was acquitted, as the allegation against him could not be proved.

Immediately after the verdict, the government took steps for quick disposal of the death reference case against a backdrop of some 500 cases awaiting paper-book preparation (history of the case) and death reference hearing at the HC.

The HC later granted permission for preparing the paper book of the case on a priority basis. On completion of that, hearing of the death reference began on August 1 and ended on August 23, after 10 working days.

The HC on August 31 last year upheld the trial court's verdict.

Following the judgment, the convicts repeatedly said they would neither accept any verdict of a 'worldly court' nor appeal it. But in a U-turn after the HC verdict, they appealed to the Supreme Court against the death sentences on November 28 last year.

The prison authorities received the copy of the apex court's rejection order on January 21 this year and primarily, they had fixed February 17 as the date for execution. But it was cancelled when the militants petitioned the president for clemency at the end of January. On March 4, the president rejected the petitions.

In the letters sent to SC registrar after the August 31 judgment, Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhai once again sought to rationalise killings of the people for establishing Islamic rule. All judges, who conduct trial under Taguti (non-Islamic) laws disregarding the Shariah, deserve death, the letters read.

The SC registrar took the letters as appeals through the jail authority.

Blasting the judges for handing them death sentences "through a farcical trial on the basis of British laws and false witnesses", Bangla Bhai had said, "I think you [judges] have shown that you are disloyal to Allah. It's you who should be condemned to death."

Trail of terror attacks

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barrier to establishing its Islamic state. The group killed its victims with bomb attacks, by slitting of throats and by indiscriminate beatings.

There are several hundred victims of JMB's brutality, many of whom have become crippled due to physical torture.

JMB also had a plan to kill Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus. It made an attempt on the life of venerated academician, poet, novelist and essayist Prof Humayun Azad, injuring him severely.

It carried out a countrywide series of near simultaneous bomb blasts on August 17, 2005. It also carried out bomb attacks on different courts in Chittagong, Lakshmipur, Gazipur and Chandpur, blasted bombs at cinema halls in Mymensingh and Satkhira, and at religious shrines in Joypurhat and Tangail.

It tried to thwart the people's secular cultural expressions by carrying out bomb attacks on Jatra (a form of traditional Bangla theatre) stages in Gaibandha, Bogra, Sherpur, Tangail and Rajshahi.

JMB operatives looted offices of different NGOs including Brac and Grameen Bank.

The following is a chronological account of JMB atrocities and its leaders' repeated lease on life until yesterday's executions.

**JMB MEN ARRESTED FROM PARBATIPUR WITH PATROL BOMB IN POSSESSION**  
Local people captured some 10 to 12 JMB men with 12 petrol bombs in their possession in a village of Parbatipur in Dinajpur and handed them over to police in early 2000. The JMB team led by its ehsar member Shahabul were in the village to take part in a training session on petrol bombs. They were freed after serving a year in jail as the case was dismissed.

**BOMB BLAST IN RANGAMATI**  
JMB majlish-e-sura member Nasrullah was killed, and another ehsar member Shamim Hossain Galib was injured when a bomb went off by mistake in a hotel room in Rangamati in mid 2001. Galib was arrested but freed on bail after about five months.

**ATTEMPT ON THE LIFE OF BAGHERHAT UP CHAIRMAN TARAPADPODDAR**  
JMB chief Abdur Rahman, its sura members Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai and Hafiz Mahmud, its district chief Liton, and ehsar members Ekhtiar, Sharif and Abdul Matin carried out an attack on Bagerhat Union Parishad Chairman and Hindu, Bouddha, Christian Oikya

Parishad leader Tarapad Poddar in his home in late 2002. Local people captured five JMB men including Bangla Bhai and handed them over to police, but they were released on bail after five months.

**BOMB BLASTS AT CINEMA HALL AND CIRCUS TENT IN SATKHIRA**  
A number of people were killed and scores were injured in two separate but simultaneous time-bomb blasts at a cinema hall and a circus tent in the district in mid 2002. JMB ehsar members Zahidul Islam Sumon and Mizan, and its district chief Saifullah carried out the attacks.

**ACCIDENTAL BOMB BLAST IN JMB HIDEOUT IN DINAJPUR**  
A JMB activist Badal was injured and later died in an accidental bomb blast in a JMB hideout at Choto Gurgula in the district in mid 2002. Police arrested JMB sura member Khaled Saifullah in connection with the incident, but he was freed on bail in July 2005.

**BOMB BLASTS IN MYMENSINGH CINEMA HALLS**  
Nineteen people were killed and 100 others were injured in a series of near simultaneous bomb blasts in four cinema halls in Mymensingh on December 7, 2002. Salahuddin led the attack.

**TWO JMB EHSAR MEMBERS ARRESTED WITH WEAPONS IN POSSESSION IN SATKHIRA**  
Two JMB ehsar members Mizan and Lokman were arrested with two 'one shooters' and some bomb making materials in their possession in Satkhira in 2002, but were freed on bail in 2004.

**ROBBING OF NGOS**  
JMB men carried out at least 12 robberies and thefts in branches of non-governmental organisations Brac and Grameen Bank in Bogra, Natore, Chapainawabganj, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Thakurgaon, Sirajganj and Narayanganj between 2002 and 2005. They also robbed a local NGO in Tangail. The robberies and thefts involved several crores of taka.

**MURDER OF FIVE JOYPURHAT CHISTIYA SHRINE EMPLOYEES**  
A team of JMB operatives led by Bangla Bhai killed five employees of Chistiya Shrine in Begun village under Kalai upazilla of the district, and looted valuables and money from the shrine. JMB operatives Shahid, Shahidullah, Mamun and Habil, and some local people took part in the attack.

**BOMB BLAST AT SHRINE OF FAILLAH PAGLA IN TANGAIL**  
In early 2003, a team of JMB operatives led by its sura member Ataur Rahman Sunny carried out a bomb

blast at the shrine of Faillah Pagla in Safipur of the district killing a few people and injuring many. The attack was carried out with bombs made by Shakil and Mollah Omar. JMB ehsar members Shahid, Maruf and five others took part in the attack.

**CLASH WITH POLICE, WEAPONS LOOTED IN JOYPURHAT**  
JMB on August 14, 2003 clashed with police at Khetlal after the law enforcers had raided the house of JMB activist Mantaz on the basis of a tip off that some 50 to 60 JMB members had gathered in the house for a training programme. JMB men snatched away two shotguns and a wireless set from police. On the same night, police arrested 21 JMB men including Ataur Rahman Sunny, Abdul Awal and Salahuddin. They were however released after five months in early January of 2004.

**ATTEMPT ON THE LIFE OF PROF HUMAYUN AZAD**  
Unconventional writer and poet Prof Humayun Azad came under a brutal JMB attack in a bid to kill him near the Bangla Academy premises while he was returning home from Ekushey Book Fair on February 27, 2004. Led by Ataur Rahman Sunny, JMB ehsar members Minhaz, Shamim, Shahid, Manir and Shafiqullah Shad carried out the attack with knives and machetes.

**ONE KILLED IN TANGAIL ON SUSPICION OF BEING AN INDIAN SPY**  
JMB killed writer Manir Khan, who had written a book titled 'Nari Tumi Kar', at Delduar Bazar in March 2004, on suspicion of being an Indian spy. Led by sura member Hafiz Mahmud, Ataur Rahman Sunny, Minhaz, Shahid and Shamim carried out the attack.

**PURBA BANGLAR COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBER SHAHID KILLING IN BOGRA**  
JMB killed Purba Banglar Communist Party member Shahid in Adamdighi upazila of the district in April 2004. Abdul Awal slit his throat with the help of Bangla Bhai and Hafiz Mahmud.

**THREE KILLED IN GURBARIA CAMP IN NAOGAON**  
JMB chief Abdur Rahman slit the throats of two persons, and sura member Abdul Awal killed another person in Naogaon. Two of them were operatives of outlawed underground armed organisations commonly known as Sarbaharas, and they were Hindus. The other one was killed on suspicion of being an agent of Indian counter intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (Raw).

**SARBAHARA KILLING DRIVE IN BAGMARA, RAJSHAHI**

Led by Bangla Bhai, JMB launched a drive in Bagmara to kill outlawed Sarbahara operatives in the region between April and May 2004. Three camps were set up for the drive -- Hamir Kutsha camp was led by Bangla Bhai, Gurbaria camp was led by Abdul Awal, and Bashbaria camp was led by Hafiz Mahmud.

**KILLING OF TWO CONVERTED CHRISTIANS IN JAMALPUR**  
A six to seven-member JMB team led by its sura member Salahuddin killed Rhidoy Roy in Sharishabari of the district in 2001, who had converted to Christianity from Hindu religion.

Salahuddin, Hafiz Mahmud, Shahid and Belal killed another converted Christian -- Abdul Ghani Gomez at Hazipur Bazar of the district in 2004.

**BOMB BLASTS AT VARIOUS JATRA STAGES**  
In 2004 JMB carried out at least nine bomb blasts at Jatra (a form of traditional Bangla theatre) stages in various districts including Gaibandha, Bogra, Sherpur, Tangail and Rajshahi. JMB is virulently opposed to performances of Jatra for its alleged 'anti-Islamic tilt'.

Rajshahi division JMB chief Abdul Awal led most of the attacks while Ataur Rahman Sunny led the attack in Tangail.

**ATTACK ON JANAKANATHA EDITOR ATIKULLAH KHAN MASUD PLANNED**  
A plan of attack led by Ataur Rahman Sunny on daily Janakanatha Editor Atikullah Khan Masud was under way at the end of 2004, but the plan was not implemented.

**KILLING OF RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY TEACHER YUNUS**  
Led by JMB's Rajshahi zone commander Abdul Kalam, Shafiqullah, Tareq and its ehsar members Jayed and Ibrahim killed Rajshahi University teacher Prof Mohammad Yunus in December 2004.

**COUNTRYWIDE SERIAL BOMB BLASTS**  
Two people were killed and 104 were injured in a series of bomb blasts carried out by JMB in 63 districts (except Munshiganj) on August 17, 2005.

**PLAN TO KILL US CITIZENS AND PEACE CORPS MEMBERS**  
JMB had a plan to kill US citizens and members of the US Peace Corps in Gazipur district in March 2005. But the plan did not materialise as the Peace Corps members left the area.

**BOMB BLASTS AT CHITTAGONG, CHANDPUR AND LAKSHMIPUR COURTS**  
JMB carried out simultaneous bomb blasts at Chittagong,

Chandpur and Lakshmipur courts on October 3, 2005 killing two people and injuring 34 others. Members of a JMB suicide squad carried out the attack on the Chittagong court.

**BOMB BLAST AT JHALAKATHI**  
On November 14, 2005 JMB carried out a suicide bomb attack at Quarter village area under Jhalakathi Sadar upazila killing two district judges and injuring three others.

**BOMB BLAST IN SYLHET**  
JMB planned to carry out an attack on a judge of a speedy trial tribunal in Sylhet in May 2005. A member of a suicide squad, Akhter of Jamalpur, threw a bomb at the judge, but the judge escaped unharmed as the bomb did not explode.

**BOMB BLAST IN GAZIPUR**  
On November 29, 2005 a suicide bomb attack was carried out by JMB in a room of the office of the district's lawyers association housed in the court building, killing seven and injuring many.

Another suicide attack was carried out at the district administrator's office on December 1, 2005 killing one and injuring 35 others.

**BOMB BLAST IN CHITTAGONG**  
Two people were injured in three bomb attacks at a Chittagong court on October 3, 2005.

On November 29, 2005, two people including a suicide bomber were killed and many were injured in another suicide attack by JMB on Chittagong District Judge's Court.

**BOMB BLAST IN NETROKONA**  
JMB carried out a suicide bomb attack in front of an office of a cultural organisation, Udichi, in the district town killing eight people and injuring many on December 8, 2005.

Doctors' consultancy fees, charges for medical tests to be fixed soon

Says health adviser

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Health and Family Welfare Affairs Adviser Major General Dr ASM Matiuir Rahman on Thursday said the government is going to form a committee soon to fix consultancy fees of doctors and charges for medical tests to help bring the treatment facilities within the reach of the common people.

A greater number of people will have access to medical treatment, if the consultancy fees of the doctors in private practice, charges for various diagnosis at diagnostic centres, and other charges private clinics and hospitals are fixed at a reasonable rate, observed the health adviser to the caretaker government.

The health adviser was speaking as the chief guest at a meeting with the doctors at Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

Heads of various departments and senior teachers were present at the meeting with CMCH Director Brigadier General Abedur Rahman in the chair.

Adviser Dr Rahman said the doctors would be allowed to do private practice after they complete official duty properly.

He urged the doctors to serve the patients with the spirit of serving ailing humanity and win the heart of the people.

The health adviser sounded warning against any sort of commission some private practitioners are reportedly taking from private diagnostic centres through referring

the patients requiring medical tests.

He stressed making best use of the existing resources, including valuable machineries at different hospitals.

Earlier, CMCH director in his speech informed the adviser about the extreme shortage of workforce, equipment and accommodation in the CMCH.

He said the 1010-bed hospital is serving around two thousand patients every day with the workforce, which may be sufficient for a 500-bed hospital.

CMCH director urged the adviser for steps and facilities required for upgrading the hospital into 1500-bed one.

Director General of Health Department Dr Md Shahjahan Bishwas, Principal of Chittagong Medical College Professor Dr MA Wahab and Civil Surgeon Dr Abdul Jalil were present at the ceremony.

Meanwhile in the morning, the health adviser launched the operation of a 31-bed hospital at Sultanpur under Raojan upazila in the district.

He expressed his disappointment over the delay in starting activities of the hospital that was built around three years ago at the cost of around Tk four crore.

The health adviser also inaugurated construction work of a 20-bed hospital at Fatikchhari.