

Six JMB militants hanged

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Gazipur while another Shura member Khaled Saifullah of 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 Sohel 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 near 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 prison source.

Two 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 Sohel Ahmed were waiting in a microbus in Quarter Palli area in Jhalakathi town when Mamun blew off their vehicle.

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 plea 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.

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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 an '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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Parishad leader Tarapad Poddar in

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, Lakshmpur, 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 majish-e-sura member Nusratullah was killed, and another ehsar member Shamin 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 TARAPAD PODDAR

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.

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

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.

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SARBAHARA KILLING DRIVE IN BAGMARA, RAJSHAHI

blast at the shrine of Faillah Pagla 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 BLAST 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

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 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, Shamin, Shahid, Manir and Shafullah 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 Shamin carried out the attack.

PURBA BANGLA COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBER SHAHID KILLING IN BOGRAB

JMB killed Purba Bangla 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

JMB carried out simultaneous bomb blasts at Chittagong, and

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

CLASH WITH POLICE, WEAPONS LOOTED IN JOYPURHAT

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ATTACK ON JANAKANTHA EDITOR ATIKULLAH KHAN MASUD PLANNED

A plan of attack led by Ataur Rahman Sunny on daily Janakantha 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, Shafullah, 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 LAKSHMPUR COURTS

JMB carried out simultaneous bomb blasts at Chittagong, and

Chandpur and Laksmipur 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, Akther 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.