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JMB patron Aminul jailed

24 others also handed 31 years behind bars for helping militants

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Former post and telecommunications minister barrister Aminul Haque and 24 others were yesterday sentenced to 31 years and six months' imprisonment in the first-ever judgment of a case for patronising Islamist militants.

The convicts also include Rajshahi district BNP Secretary Shish Muhammad.

The Second Additional Sessions Judge's Court, Rajshahi convicted them for aiding and abetting the militants of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) in extorting and torturing people in Bagmara upazila of the district in 2004.

The convicts were also fined Tk 25,000 each and in default they will have to suffer three years more in jail.

Two accused union council chairmen--Besharatullah and Rafiqul Islam--were acquitted in the

case.

Judge Rezaul Islam delivered the judgment amid tight security in the absence of 17 accused including Aminul and Shish.

JMB adviser professor Lutfar Rahman, a teacher of a madrasa in



Aminul Haque

Justice delivered

PINAKI ROY

With nine bolts and a stainless-steel rod inside his legs and all fingers broken and permanently bent, Fazlur Rahman still suffers the pain but the justice he received yesterday gave him some compensation.

"I thank God as I was able to see justice delivered in my life time," Fazlur Rahman, the plaintiff of the

Atrai of Naogaon, Bagmara upazila JMB leader Abdus Sattar, JMB activists Killer Mostak, Korban Ali, Afzal, Akram, Amzad, Nazrul and Mizanur were present in the court during the verdict.

Other absconding convicts are

Siddiq, Monayem, Jahangir, Abdul Jalil, Latif, Mostafizur Hitler, Bulbul, Mokles, Halim, and Juta Mantu.

The state employed no lawyer for the absconding accused in the case since there was no charge against them for capital punishment.

The convicts were sentenced to 30 years' rigorous imprisonment--10 years each under section 326 for injuring grievously, section 307 for

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years in prison under section 26 (2) of the ACC Act, 2004 for concealing in his wealth statement the information about six fixed deposits worth Tk 1.17 crore.

Judge Shahed Noor Uddin of the Special Court-3 set up at the MP

Hostel in Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban complex delivered the judgment a few minutes past 1:00pm.

Earlier, the ex-state minister for planning was brought to the courthouse from Kashimpur jail at 10:30am. In a Mujib coat, he looked tense but smiled at times listening to the judge reading out the decision.

"The judgment does not reflect justice. It came even after the case was not proved beyond doubt, and Mohiuddin will move to a higher court," said defence lawyer Syed Rezaur Rahman.

"I've nothing to say. At this moment, I presume I can't distinguish if it's justice or a farce. If this is the way of establishing democracy, I hope and pray that the country gets rid of this," said Dr Borhan Uddin Khan Jahangir, a Dhaka University teacher and younger

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MK Alamgir handed 13 years over graft

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special tribunal designed to try the graft cases yesterday sentenced former state minister Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir to 13 years in prison and fined him Tk 10 lakh.

It also ordered the government to confiscate the assets that do not tally with the known sources of his income.

MK Alamgir, also a presidium member of Awami League (AL), was given 10 years' rigorous imprisonment under section 27 (1) of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Act, 2004 for amassing around Tk 3.27 crore through misuse of power.

The court also fined him Tk 10 lakh and in case of a default in payment he would have to serve one more year of rigorous imprisonment.

Alamgir was sentenced to three

years in prison under section 26 (2) of the ACC Act, 2004 for concealing in his wealth statement the information about six fixed deposits worth Tk 1.17 crore.

Judge Shahed Noor Uddin of the Special Court-3 set up at the MP



Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir

Dulu given 8 years for arson, looting

88 others including his relatives also jailed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A Natore court yesterday sentenced former deputy minister for land Ruhul Kuddus Talukdar Dulu to eight years in prison for guiding and abetting arson and damage of houses at three villages in Naldanga upazila in 2004.

The Court of Additional District Magistrate (ADM) also sentenced Dulu's cousin Atikur Rahman to eight years in jail and 87 others including his brothers, cousins and nephews to rigorous imprisonment for seven years.

It fined all the convicts Tk 10,000 each, and in default ordered them to suffer one year more in jail.

The judgement delivered by ADM Rawnak Mahmud in presence of Dulu is the first in 22 cases filed

against him and also the first one in the country by a magistrate's court punishing a former minister.

The convicts include Dulu's

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Ruhul Kuddus Talukdar Dulu

JMB ruled supreme with their blessings

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

Barrister Aminul Haque, ex-BNP minister sentenced to a 31-year term yesterday, not only blatantly patronised Islamist militants using the police and administration during the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition government but also barred local authorities in Rajshahi to take action against the militants in 2004-05.

Since the open rise of Bangla Bhai-led militant organisation Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) in northern Rajshahi in 2004, The Daily Star in its continuous investigation in the past few years has revealed Aminul's role from the forefront as one of the key patrons of the militants.

Aminul, also former lawmaker of Rjsah-1 constituency, and Ruhul Kuddus Talukdar Dulu, former

lawmaker of Natore-2 and former deputy minister for land, jointly patronised the JMB in the region.

Dulu was sentenced to eight years imprisonment yesterday in an arson case.

Dulu and Aminul also talked Rajshahi Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu, fellow MPs Nadim Mostafa of Rajshahi-4 and Alamgir Kabir of Naogaon-6 into their JMB game.

The militant patrons made it mandatory for all to send public and private jeeps, cars, microbuses and motorcycles to the processions of Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai. Police cars would stay within 500-1000 yards of the operation area to back up Bangla Bhai and officers-in-charge of different police stations were also compelled to be there.

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An Indian railway worker hammers home a track mount close in the Bangladesh-bound railway line close to the Indian border station at Gede, some 120kms northwest of Kolkata yesterday.

Hasina gets another week to submit wealth report

UNB, Dhaka

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday extended the deadline by another seven working days for submitting wealth statement of detained Awami League President and former prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

The former prime minister now has to submit her wealth statement to the ACC by August 8.

The commission extended the deadline in response to a petition by Sheikh Hasina, seeking seven more days to collect necessary papers to prepare her wealth statement.

On July 17, the ACC served notices on the two former prime ministers--Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina--asking them to submit their wealth statements within seven working days. Khaleda's notice was sent to her cantonment

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Bush welcomes roadmap to polls by 2008

UNB, Dhaka

US President George W Bush has welcomed the roadmap to general elections in Bangladesh and praised the caretaker government's commitment to hold the elections in 2008.

He assured of US government's cooperation in holding the elections.

Bush made the remarks when newly appointed Bangladesh Ambassador to the United States M Humayun Kabir presented his

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Electoral talks with parties to start in September

CEC hopes restructuring of political parties would be complete by that time

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday said the Election Commission (EC) will definitely start holding talks with the political parties on electoral issues in September and hoped restructuring of the parties might be completed by this time.

"An atmosphere is definitely

required for holding talks with the political parties. We must be able to talk with them in September and an end result will come from the ongoing restructuring of the parties," the CEC said in a press briefing.

The EC had planned to hold dialogue with the political parties in last April, but it could not proceed with the plan due to the indefinite ban on indoor politics since March

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Circular for NGOs to spend 50pc fund on visible dev cancelled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday cancelled a circular of Non-Government Organisation (NGO) Affairs Bureau issued on July 17 directing NGOs to ensure transparency in receiving and spending foreign funds.

The circular issued in light of a notification from the army headquarters on July 9, directed NGOs to spend at least 50 percent of their foreign funds on visible developments like building and upkeep of roads, schools and culverts and excavation or re-excavation of canals.

The circular triggered criticism and NGO activists even raised

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More areas go under flood waters

STAR REPORT

The flood situation across the country worsened yesterday as heavy rain continued raising the water level in almost all the major rivers including the Jamuna and Padma.

In the next couple of days, it is likely to take a more alarming turn in the districts adjacent to the rivers.

Many fresh areas went under water forcing more and more people to leave their houses and head themselves to a higher ground. Ferry service on Aricha-Nagarbari route remained snapped due to floods.

Collapse of levees in some districts including Sirajganj and river erosion in Bogra have also contributed to inundation of new

areas.

According to Flood and Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC), the Brahmaputra and Jamuna continued rising at all points and were flowing over danger level at Sirajganj and Aricha.

Low-lying areas in Gaibandha, Bogra, Jamalpur, Sirajganj, Pabna and Tangail are likely to go under water by the next 24 to 72 hours, it said.

The Ganges-Padma too kept rising at all points and was flowing 30 cm and 11 cm above danger level at Goalunda and Bhagyaluk, threatening to submerge areas in Manikganj, Munshiganj, Faridpur, Rajbari, Madaripur, Sharaitpur districts and Dohar and Nawabganj

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Manju, family sued for graft

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two graft cases have been filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) against former communications minister Anwar Hossain Manju, his wife Taslima Hossain, their daughter Shima Hossain and another person.

The cases were filed with Dhanmondi and Ramna police stations in the capital on Wednesday accusing them of taking Tk 1 crore and Tk 75 lakh in bribe from two construction firms.

The other accused in the cases is Mahmood Hossain, executive director of Aegis Textile Mills Ltd.

In the case filed with Ramna Police Station, ACC Assistant Director Sheikh Faizal Alam said the accused persons in connivance with each other took Tk 75 lakh in bribe from two construction firms.

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Charges pressed against Minu in extortion case

UNB, Rajshahi

Charges have been pressed against Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) Mayor and former BNP lawmaker Mizanur Rahman Minu and ten others in an extortion case.

Police submitted the charge sheet to the Court of Additional District and Sessions Judge AS Sheikh Zahirul Haque yesterday.

The case was filed by Shamsul Alam Khan, a member of the managing committee of Evergreen Model School and College in the city, with Rajpara Police Station on April 21.

In the case, the complainant alleged that Mayor Minu and his ten associates demanded Tk 4 lakh in toll from him.

The joint forces arrested Minu on June 1 in connection with the case.

Later, he was produced before the court that sent him to jail on a three-month detention.

Fugitive Dipjol gets 17 yrs in arms case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced Dhaka City Corporation Ward Commissioner and BNP leader Monwar Hossain Dipjol to 17 years' rigorous imprisonment for possessing illegal firearms and ammunition.

A court issued arrest warrant against Harris Chowdhury, political secretary to former prime minister Khaleda Zia, in connection with a graft case.

DIPJOL'S CONVICTION

Judge Nuruzzaman of the Metropolitan Special Tribunal-9 handed down the sentence in the case in Dipjol's absence.

The charges brought against Dipjol for possessing illegal firearms and ammunition were proved beyond doubt and so he was given the punishment, the judge said in

the judgement.

The punishment of the fugitive will be effective from the day of his arrest or surrender, the judge said.

Earlier, the prosecution and the