

Indonesia court jails radical cleric

AFP, Jakarta



An Indonesian court yesterday jailed radical Islamist cleric Abu Bakar Bashir for 15 years for funding a terrorist group that was planning attacks against Westerners and political leaders.

The 72-year-old preacher showed little emotion as judge Herri Swantoro read out the guilty verdict and sentence at the end of a four-month trial in the South Jakarta district court.

Traped in his customary white robes and skull-cap, the man seen as the spiritual leader of regional terror network Jemaah Islamiyah immediately promised to appeal the sentence, which he called the work of the devil.

"This is haram (forbidden in Islam). I reject this because it is cruel and disregards Islamic sharia law. This ruling is by the friends of the devil and it is haram for me to accept it," he said in response to the judge.

About 500 radicals erupted into shouts of "Allahu akbar" (God is great) outside the court as the verdict was read. Some 3,000 police backed by armoured vehicles and snipers were on hand in the event of violence.

Abu Bakar Bashir has been proven guilty of planning and misleading other people to fund terror activities ... and is sentenced to 15 years in jail," the judge said, triggering a gasp from the cleric's supporters in the court.

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EU mulls new sanctions on Syria

AFP, Brussels

The European Union yesterday began work to tougher sanctions against Syria, looking at adding firms and a dozen people to a blacklist which already includes President Bashar al-Assad and key allies.

Several diplomatic sources said experts from the 27-nation bloc were discussing ways of "widening sanctions" against Damascus.

"The idea is to move up a level," said a diplomat who asked not to be identified. "Talks are focusing on new names and entities."

The EU to date has slapped two sets of sanctions against Assad's regime over its savage crackdown on protesters.

Sources told AFP the new proposals were unlikely to be ready for approval by foreign ministers meeting in Luxembourg next Monday.



PHOTO: AFP

A Turkish Arab family arrive at Boynuyogun Turkish Red Crescent refugee camp yesterday. Turkey yesterday announced to supply humanitarian aid to thousands of Syrian refugees who fled fearing a crackdown by the Damascus regime.

Yemeni protesters meet Saleh's deputy

AFP, Sanaa

Protesters in Yemen, who are calling for President Ali Abdullah Saleh to make way for an interim council, have met with the embattled leader's deputy, they said yesterday.

Vice President Abdrabuh Mansur Hadi had "expressed his understanding of our demands," said the Supreme Coordinating Committee of the Yemeni Revolution in a statement following the meeting late Wednesday.

Hadi requested a period of two weeks to put "security and economic situations in order," it said.

The committee said it would press ahead in talks with "revolution components" to form a transitional ruling council, and urged protesters to escalate their "peaceful revolution" until the council is declared.

Protesters had on Monday given Hadi 24 hours to declare his position of their call for him to join the proposed council which they said would lead the country for a maximum of nine months.

Masked gunmen attacked buildings near the southern Yemeni city of al-Hota yesterday, residents said, amid a wave of militant attacks in the region.

The group, which Yemen's military described as al-Qaeda militants, temporarily took over a security forces administrative building and council offices in Masameer district, residents told Reuters by telephone.

Three guards were shot dead on Wednesday when gunmen stormed three other state buildings in neighbouring al-Hota. Southern separatists and al-Qaeda militants are both active in the region.

JS body

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and waterways held at the parliament.

Referring to a study, member of the parliamentary watchdog Saber Hossain Chowdhury said about 85 percent roads of the capital will be jam-packed with vehicles by 2020. "The average traffic speed will be five kilometres per hour on 65 percent roads of the city."

On preventing water pollution, the committee urged the government to promulgate "clean water act".

Under the law, different watershed bodies like Dhaka watershed management authority can be formed to stop pollution of rivers and other water bodies, proposed the committee.

On waste management of the capital, it recommended giving importance to integrated solid waste management.

Abdul Momin Talukder, a BNP lawmaker and also chief of the parliamentary committee, said the current status of Dhaka watershed is dismal. The quality of the surface water reflects pollution of a very high level. With that the wetlands and rivers are literally dying pushing the fauna and flora to the edge of extinction.

One eye blinded

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remand in an attempt to murder case filed against him.

Metropolitan Magistrate Shahriar Mahmud Adnan passed the order after the Detective Branch (DB) of Police produced him before the court with a 10-day remand prayer.

The court rejected the bail petition submitted by the defence counsel.

Investigation Officer (IO) of the case Sub-inspector of DB Bahauddin Faruki in his remand prayer said Sumon needs to be remanded because his interrogation is required to find out the reasons behind Rumana's torture.

In the bail petition along with a prayer for cancelling the remand, defence lawyer Advocate Manoarul Islam said Sumon did not attack Rumana premeditatedly.

Sumon got upset when he found some SMS from an Iranian national in her cellphone, when he confronted Rumana, they got into a scuffle, during which Rumana got injured, the defence lawyer claimed.

The court should allow Sumon's bail prayer and cancel the IO's remand prayer, argued Manoarul.

Rumana, an assistant professor of international relations at Dhaka University (DU) was brutally

attacked by her husband Sumon on June 5. The husband allegedly pushed his fingers into Rumana's eyes, and then dragged her by the hair and threw her on the floor in Rumana's parents' house in the capital.

She went to India on Tuesday for better treatment, after being hospitalised in Dhaka for more than a week.

Meanwhile, three police officers concerned appeared before the High Court (HC) yesterday in connection with the case as per the court's order.

The police officers are Assistant Commissioner (Dhannodi Zone) Sharifur Rahman, Officer-in-charge of Dhanmondi Police Station Md Moniruzzaman, and investigation officer of the case Sub-inspector Mokbul Hossain.

As Sumon was not being arrested even after 10 days of the assault, the High Court on Wednesday summoned the police officers to appear before it yesterday for explaining why they had not been able to arrest the accused.

Just two hours into the issuance of the HC order, police arrested Sumon.

Yesterday the officers informed the court that they had already arrested the accused.

The HC bench of Justice A H M S h a m s u d d i n

Chowdhury Manik and Justice Gobinda Chandra Tagore directed the police officers to submit a progress report of the investigation in a month.

Meanwhile, a group of Dhaka University students in a media briefing yesterday demanded exemplary punishment for Sumon under the Speedy Trial Act.

The students under the banner of -- Students and Teachers Against Repression -- also demanded strong security for Rumana as well as for her family members, and urged the university administration to bear her treatment cost.

Deputy Commissioner of Detective Branch (DB South) Monirul Islam told reporters yesterday that Sumon, during primary interrogation, admitted to assaulting Rumana.

But the accused did not disclose the reason behind the attack, said Monirul.

He also claimed they have information that Sumon had tried to kill Rumana earlier.

In an email sent to a professor of the international relations department of DU, President of the University of British Columbia Stephen J Toope expressed his sympathy and support for Rumana, a master's student at the Canadian university.

HC refrains

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incident and submit a report to the court within one month.

It ordered the law secretary to suspend public prosecutor of Bogra district and sessions judge's court Abdul Matin, Additional Public Prosecutor Khoda Box and Assistant Public Prosecutor Khairul Bashar during the period of investigation.

The court also cancelled Mofizul's order that dismissed the case filed for killing Dr MM Yeatimul Haque alias Shuvro.

Mofizul Islam and Public Prosecutor Abdul Matin appeared before the court yesterday as per the court's directive on Wednesday.

A Bangla daily on Wednesday reported that Shuvro was killed in Isabpur Tupipara area of Kahalu Upazila in Bogra on December 29, 2007.

Shuvro's second wife Angura Begum filed a murder case in this regard accusing his first wife Julekha Khatun and some others. Later, Julekha lodged a separate case accusing the witnesses of the case filed by Angura, the report said.

On June 1, Mofizul dismissed the case on the ground that it has been settled through compromise outside the court.

HC blocks way

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executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela), who filed a petition with the court in this regard.

The court also passed a rule on the government to explain why its failure to stop advertisements of illegal housing projects should not be declared unlawful and against public interest, said a Bela press release.

The HC bench comprised of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik and Justice Gobinda Chandra Tagore passed the order following a writ petition jointly filed by Bela, Ain O Salish Kendra, Bangladesh Paribesh Andolan, Institute of Architects Bangladesh

and Paribesh Banchao Andolan.

The court ordered Rajuk to provide the electronic mass media with the list of illegal housing projects so that they refrain from airing commercials of those projects.

Rizwana yesterday said they would issue a letter to Rajuk chairman informing him of the HC order.

This group of organisations also served a legal notice on the government and the real estate developers' association Wednesday asking them not to allow adverts of unauthorised housing projects at the fair.

The HC in a judgement on June 8 declared a total of 77 private housing projects

in and around the capital illegal and ordered immediate removal of the projects, their ads, signboards and halting of earth-filling and sale of plots.

Rajuk had provided the court with the list.

Nurul Huda, chairman of Rajuk, yesterday told The Daily Star that he would be able to say the measures they can take after receiving the court order.

The state minister could not be reached for his opinion.

The list of the 77 illegal housing projects can be found with this link:

http://www.thedailystar.net/supplements/2011/illegal_real_estate_project/illegal_real_estate_project.pdf

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