

## Verdict on

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Abdul Hashem Mridha -- prayed for upholding the HC verdict that acquitted his clients.

The other four were executed in 2010 in the Bangabandhu assassination case.

In 2004, the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka awarded death penalty to three of the accused for the jail killings and life imprisonment to 12 others for abetting to 12 others for abetting the killings.

The three sentenced to death are Risalder (retd) Muslemuddin, Marfat Ali Shah and Abdul Hashem Mridha.

In 2008, the HC upheld the death penalty of one, acquitted six of the convicts and did not say anything about the eight others.

The case was filed for killing four national leaders -- Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmad, AHM Quamruzzaman and Captain Mansur Ali -- inside Dhaka Central Jail on November 3, 1975.

The metropolitan court had awarded life term to Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Farooq-ur Rahman, Lt Col (retd) Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, Maj (retd) Bazlul Huda, Lt Col (dismissed) Khondaker Abdur Rashid, Lt Col (relieved) Shariful Haq Dalim, Lt Col (retd) SHMB Noor Chowdhury, Maj (Retd) AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed, Lt Col (retd) A M Rasheed Chowdhury, Maj (relieved) Ahmed Shariful Hossain, Capt (retd) Abdul Majed, Capt (relieved) Kismat Haseem and Capt (relieved) Nazmul Hossain.

The HC upheld the capital punishment of Muslemuddin and acquitted Marfat and Hashem. It also acquitted Farooq, Shahriar, Mohiuddin and Bazlul Huda, and did not say anything about the eight others.

In 2011, the SC exempted Farooq, Shahriar, Mohiuddin and Bazlul Huda from the case as they were already executed in the Bangabandhu assassination case.

## Mahmudur

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three cases.

In one filed with Tejgaon Police Station on December 13 last year, he faces sedition charge for publishing Skype conversations between Justice Md Nizamul Huq, former chairman of International Crimes Tribunal-1, and Ahmed Ziauddin, an expatriate Bangladeshi legal expert.

Yesterday, Mahmudur appointed several lawyers to defend him in the cases. The lawyers submitted two petitions to the court seeking first class division in the jail for the arrestee and his proper treatment.

Defense counsels told the court that their client was tortured inhumanly during interrogation at the Minto Road office of Detective Branch of police.

Moreover, Mahmudur had been fasting for three days demanding withdrawal of a "false" case filed against his mother, release of 19 Amar Desh staff and lifting a ban on publishing the daily immediately, added the lawyers.

The court ordered the jail authorities to provide proper treatment and first class division to the arrestee according to the jail code.

The acting editor was shown arrested in two other cases filed last month with Tejgaon Police Station for acts of violence and assaulting police during hartals.

Meanwhile, another Dhaka court yesterday rejected bail petitions of 19 Amar Desh staff arrested for printing the daily without government permission.

## SANGRAM EDITOR SECURES BAIL

The High Court granted anticipatory bail to daily Sangram Editor Abul Asad for six weeks yesterday, four days after he was sued in a case with Motijheel Police Station for illegally printing daily Amar Desh at his newspaper's press in the capital's Moghobazar.

On Tuesday, the same High Court bench granted anticipatory bail to Mahmuda Begum, acting chairman of Amar Desh Publication Limited, in the case.

Aided by Ramna police, the Dhaka district administration on Saturday night raided the Al-Falah Printing Press and office of Bangla daily Sangram and rounded up the 19 staff. The team also seized copies of Amar Desh from there.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia meets ambassadors of Arab countries at her Gulshan office last night.

## 1,320 MW POWER PLANT AT RAMPAL Dhaka, Delhi to sign deals on April 20-21

## DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and India are going to sign three agreements soon to set up a 1,320 MW coal-fired power plant at Rampal in Bagerhat under a joint venture company of the two countries.

The agreements will be inked during the April 20-21 visit of Indian Power Secretary P Uma Shankar to Bangladesh. The power plant's name is Bangladesh-India Friendship Power Company Ltd.

During his stay here,

three agreements, namely Power Purchase Agreement, Implementation Agreement and Supplementary Joint Venture Agreement will be signed, said a press release of Indian High Commission yesterday.

According to the officials concerned, Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB) and Indian National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) will implement the \$1.5 billion project on a 50:50 equity basis. Of the total project cost, 70 percent will be arranged through loans and the rest 30 percent

will be shared equally by PDB and NTPC.

The Rampal project will

cost Tk 1,200 crore and it will add 1,320 MW of electricity to the National Grid by 2016. Per unit cost of electricity will vary from Tk 5-7 if the existing international market price of coal is taken into account.

Earlier, on January 29 last year, Dhaka and New Delhi signed a joint venture agreement to set up Bangladesh's biggest power plant at Rampal. The NTPC has already completed feasibility study and other preparations to install the plant.

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## Judge holds himself

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the infraction.

Judge Raymond Voet has a posted policy at Ionia County 64A District Court stating that electronic devices causing a disturbance during court sessions will result in the owner being cited with contempt, the Sentinel-Standard of Ionia and MLive.com reported.

On Friday afternoon, during a prosecutor's closing argument as part of a jury trial, Voet's new smartphone began to emit sounds requesting phone voice commands. Voet said

he thinks he bumped the phone, and the embarrassment likely left his face red.

"I'm guessing I bumped it. It started talking really loud, saying 'I can't understand you. Say something like Mom,'" he said.

Voet has used a BlackBerry mobile phone for years, and said he wasn't as familiar with the operation of the new touchscreen, Windows-based phone.

"That's an excuse, but I don't take those excuses from anyone else. I set the bar high, because cellphones are a distraction

and there is very serious business going on," he said. "The courtroom is a special place in the community, and it needs more respect than that."

Over the years, the judge whose court is about 110 miles northwest of Detroit has taken phones away from police officers, attorneys, witnesses, spectators and friends. During a break in the trial, Voet held himself in contempt, fined himself and paid the fine.

Judges are humans," Voet said. "They're not above the rules. I broke the rule and I have to live by it."

## Jamaat readies another terror

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On February 28, immediately after the pronouncement of a verdict sentencing Jamaat leader Sayeedee to death on war crimes charges, Jamaat-Shibir activists had unleashed unprecedented violence in many parts of the country.

In the violent protest that continued for more than a week, armed cadres of Jamaat-Shibir clashed with law enforcers leaving more than 70 people, including eight policemen, dead.

In March, the tribunals did not deliver any verdict.

"Our leaders are being convicted in a farcical trial. So, we do not have any alternative but to wage stormy protests against it," said Abu Taleb Mandal, secretary of Pabna district unit Jamaat.

Asked about their preparations, he said, "We are always ready and capable of paralysing the country in an hour's notice."

Amiruzzaman, chief of Chittagong city (North) unit Jamaat, said, "We will enforce hartal from the moment we come to know the date of delivering verdicts against our leaders."

Secretary of the unit Nurul Amin said they were just waiting for the verdicts.

Both Taleb and Amiruzzaman said they were yet to receive directives from the party high command regarding the protest.

Contacted, Inspector General of Police Hassan Mahmood Khandaker said his force is ready to tackle any situation that might

hamper law and order and public security.

"We have earlier tackled

the situation and will take

measures to ensure security

to people," he said.

Meanwhile, district Jamaat leaders said they wanted main opposition BNP's support to enforce the agitation programmes.

When Jamaat had

launched violent protests against the death penalty of Sayeedee, it did not initially get BNP's support. From the middle of March, BNP that maintained distance with Jamaat has started enforcing joint agitation programmes with it.

This stance of BNP boosted morale of Jamaat, a key component of BNP-led 18-party alliance.

## Ilias to return if govt acts

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government agencies of picking him up, a claim the government has dismissed all along.

On one occasion, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina even commented in parliament that BNP chief Khaleda Zia although one year has passed. We want him back in good condition," said Mosharraf, a standing committee member of the BNP.

Banani police recovered the abandoned car of the BNP leader near his Banani house around 1:30am on April 19. They found the driver's mobile phone on the passenger's seat.

Yesterday, a BNP delegation led by Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain visited Ilias's residence to console

his family members.

Talking to newsmen, Mosharraf maintained that the government was to blame for Ilias's disappearance.

"The government is yet to return our leader M Ilias Ali although one year has passed. We want him back in good condition," said Mosharraf, a standing committee member of the BNP.

The disappearance of Ilias Ali drew national and international concerns and condemnations.

Days after his disappearance, his wife and children met Sheikh Hasina, seeking her help in tracing him.

Referring to it, Tahsina Rushdir yesterday said:

"There is no progress to this end as neither the Prime Minister's Office nor the police authorities have contacted me so far."

THREE-DAY PROGRAMME

The BNP yesterday announced a three-day programme protesting the government failure to find out Ilias.

As part of the programme, the main opposition party will hold a protest rally today in front of the BNP's Nayapaltan office in the capital, another rally on April 20 at the Jatiya Press Club and protest rallies in all divisional headquarters on April 21.

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## City

## Ctg port still reels

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Shahjahan Khan held a meeting with the leaders of Bangladesh Cargo Vessel Owners Association (BCVOA) and Coastal Ship Owners Association of Bangladesh (COAB) at his secretariat office to end the strike. Later, the minister met some industry owners, but both the meetings ended inconclusively.

Workers enforced the strike on April 4 demanding security in inland waterways and an increase in their wages by 20 percent according to the decision of a tri-party meeting between vessel owners, workers and the shipping minister on January 11.

However, workers of some 150 lighter vessels owned by different industries joined work on April 10 midnight after a meeting between Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) and Bangladesh Shipping Agents Federation.

on that day. They are already receiving the increased wages.

Yesterday evening, 34 mother (cargo) vessels were anchored at the outer anchorage of the port and in deep sea at Kutubdia with over 13 lakh tonnes of goods, mostly commodity items, said port sources.

A total of 261 lighter vessels with around 2.80 lakh tonnes of goods remained stranded on the waterways and at different private ghats across the country due to the strike till yesterday, said sources at the Water Transport Cell (WTC), an organisation that coordinates lighter vessels owned by BCVOA and COAB.

Owners of each of the mother vessels are charged \$15000 as "fixed operating cost" daily for overstay, said Kamal Hayat, senior vice-president of Bangladesh Shipping Agents Federation.

Leaders of BCVOA and COAB claimed that they had incurred losses for months as the industrial group owners had been unloading goods by using their (industry owners') own vessels.

B C V O A President Mahbub Uddin Ahmad said they wanted all the vessel owners to be registered with the WTC, which would distribute the cargoes to the vessel owners. But the industrial group owners opposed the idea.

## First batch

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He said all the 10,000 workers would go to Malaysia gradually.

In February, the government completed the selection of 10,000 workers out of 36,670 candidates, who applied online.

More than 14 lakh people applied for jobs in Malaysia.

Relying on the reporters' queries about the Saudi Arabian government's general amnesty for illegal expatriates, Khandaker Mosharraf said the Bangladeshi who were staying illegally there should take the opportunity for their own sake.

Asked about the reopening of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) job market for Bangladeshi, he said the UAE government was now conducting its routine tracking of illegal residents.

This done, the Bangladeshi workers can go to the UAE without any restriction, he added.

## গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

কাস্টম্স, এক্সাইজ ও ভ্যাট (আপোল) কমিশনারেট, ঢাকা-১