

## GAZIPUR BOMB ATTACK 2005

## 10 JMB men get death penalty

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A court yesterday sentenced 10 JMB men to death for carrying out a suicide bomb attack inside the Gazipur Bar Association office in 2005 that killed nine people and injured 80.

The nine include the suicide bomber of the banned Islamist outfit Jama'at ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and four lawyers.

Interestingly, Judge Md Motahar Hossain of Speedy Trial Tribunal-4 in the verdict ordered each of the convicts to be hanged eight times. All the convicts are in jail.

On November 29, 2005, suicide bomber Md Nazir Hossain, also known as Shariat Ullah of Gaibandha, walked into the office after 9:30am and detonated the bomb he was strapped to. The bombing was apparently a part of JMB's attack on the judiciary.

Around 100 people, including 50 lawyers, their assistants and clients, were busy inside the office on the ground floor of Hall Building-2 at the Bhawal Rajbari court.

Three died on the spot while the others

died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital later. The deceased lawyers are: Amjad Hossain, Golam Farukh, Nurul Huda and Anwarul Azim.

The judge in his judgment yesterday said the charges of bombing and killing eight people were proved beyond reasonable doubt.

The convicts are Enayet Ullah alias Walid, Arifur Rahman, Moshidul Islam alias Masud, Saidur Munshi, Abdullah Al Sohaien, Nizam Uddin Reza, Taibur Rahman alias Hassan, Ashrafur Islam, Md Shafiullah alias Tarek and Adnan Sami alias Jahangir.

The convicts can appeal challenging the legality of the judgment within 30 days from the date of receipt of the judgment copy, the judge said.

On that November day, the JMB also carried out another suicide bomb attack on the Chittagong court premises.

The bomber attempted to get into the court but as law enforcers tried to stop him, he detonated the bomb at the gate of the court. At least two people were killed in the attack.



The Gazipur Bar Association office soon after the bomb blast on November 29, 2005.

PHOTO: FILE

## AL leader hacked

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Board office around 1:30am, Aminul told The Daily Star.

The criminals took to their hills right away, leaving Soheli to bleed profusely. His screams brought locals to the scene, who rushed him to the upazila health complex.

Around 5:30am, he was shifted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital, where he was declared dead, said Nayek Abul Bashar of CMCH police outpost.

The body was handed over to his family after an autopsy.

The inspector said the police were yet to find out the motive behind the assault.

Several hundred AL men marched on the highway.

They put up a barricade near north Bypass Road at 11:00am, creating long tailbacks on either side, said

Sohel Imtiaz, officer-in-charge of Baro Awlia



Mohiuddin Soheli

Highway police outpost.

Police moved in and removed the blockade two hours later. They fired 20 rounds in the air to disperse the protesters who pelted the police with a barrage of brick chips.

Vehicular movement resumed around 2:30pm.

Police detained Mohammad Shakil, 31, of south Mohadebpur in connection with the killing. Preparations for filing a case were underway last night.

## Grassroots blame

FROM PAGE 1

The ward level leaders and activists expressed discontent loudly and even created chaos when Qamrul, who is state minister for law, was delivering his speech at the meeting.

When Qamrul urged grassroots leaders to strengthen the party, thana and ward level leaders said they did not even get a chance to talk to the party high ups.

BM Sirajul Islam, president of the now defunct Awami League ward-29, urged the top leaders to give the grassroots a voice. "You will talk and we will just listen ... the party cannot run this way. You have to listen to our words," he said.

Maya, calming people down, said there would be a meeting on June 26 to discuss the holding of the council. "If necessary, we will sit for three consecutive days," he said,

adding that if thana and ward level leaders were ready, then committees would be declared after the meeting.

Party sources said the council of Dhaka city unit Awami League was held on December 27, 2012, after nine years.

Party General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam had asked the unit leaders to announce ward, union and thana level committees, which are under the unit, within two months of holding councils for them.

However, councils of 100 wards, 18 unions and 49 thana units are yet to be held.

Qamrul yesterday said the elections were a warning to the Awami League but there was nothing to be worried about. The party had to prepare for the future by taking lessons from the recent elections.

## Is it a govt or an individual?

FROM PAGE 1

Independent Anti-corruption Commission in its report audaciously maintained that inclusion of Abul's name would have caused political tumult!

Abul remained untouched as a minister and Sheikh Hasina created a completely new ministry - ICT Ministry - for him. Not only that, she praised Abul as a 'patriot'.

But, as we know, because of this one man Padma has remained a distant dream and the World Bank has backed out from the project, leaving stigmata on the country. Hasina's overwhelming affection for Abul remains a mystery.

In the cases of Suranjit, Moshirur or Modasser, we also see similar attempts either to exonerate them or to divert investigations. If they were probed at all, they all got clean chits.

Modasser's link to Hall-Mark was so blatant that even a person with olfactory dysfunction could smell something fishy. Only the ACC could not.

In other cases, innocent people and people of eminence were pursued and harried until they were pushed to the wall.

Take the case of Dr Yunus or Grameen Bank. The government is hell-bent on demolishing them both, no matter what consequence that brings. There is no reason why a perfectly well-functioning Grameen should be split up and nationalized. What Yunus' 'crime' was to invite the wrath of the prime minister is also inexplicable, except that he wished to float a party.

However, public perceptions are not changed by such actions. People have their own perception of who is innocent or who is not. And the actions looked so arbitrary and autocratic.

So why did the government time and again choose to indulge in such acts? A very curious answer comes

out if one asks the AL top brass.

All they say is these are not 'government' decisions or actions because government means a collective body. These are the decisions and orders of one single person, who is none other than Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

"With Abul in communication (ministry), we knew this was going to happen today or tomorrow," an exasperated government adviser told us while narrating the whole episode. He had no answer why Hasina wanted to protect a person of such dubious repute.

A minister once told us in private he had no clue why Suranjit should still be a minister and wondered what damage it would have caused had Suranjit been dropped after the railwaygate scam.

Following the railwaygate scandal in April 2012, Suranjit resigned, but the premier kept him on as a minister without portfolio for more than a year.

None of the AL leaders can say why Modasser is so sacrosanct although he has caused more harm than good to the government in the Hall-Mark loan scam. He has now been nominated for the regional director's post under WHO, though he has no remotely relevant experience for such a job.

We have talked to many AL leaders who are aghast at the role of the Chhatra League and yet they feel helpless because the prime minister takes a lenient view of the League's misdeeds of crimes, violence and extortion.

And then they all say they feel helpless because it is the prime minister who makes all the decisions. Any dissension, if vented at all, is either harshly criticized or disregarded.

What we see now is the increasing intolerance, arrogance and despotism of Hasina. She is the high and mighty who decides every-

thing even at fatal costs to her party and the nation. In other words, we see the rise of an autocrat in Bangladesh's politics.

We have talked to many grassroots leaders who also expressed their sheer frustration at how their views were ignored about the ground reality. And the ground reality was once again proven through the city corporation elections.

A brief look back at Hasina's return to power in 2008 can illustrate how she has gradually concentrated power in her singularity.

At the 2008 elections, she had promised to foster courtesy and tolerance for a change in political culture.

But then she punished her most senior leaders because of their roles during the army-backed caretaker government. She left them out of the cabinet and picked some surprise candidates who could only serve as 'his master's voice'. So the cabinet was turned into a rubber stamp for Hasina's decisions.

She also dropped the senior leaders from party presidium, the highest policy making body. There was now no one to oppose her.

We may recall the arbitrary manner in which Hasina had proceeded towards canceling the caretaker government system. The parliamentary special committee on constitutional amendment in 2011 had recommended a continuation of the caretaker system in light of the Supreme Court verdict. But Hasina simply overturned the committee's suggestion, leading to the current political crisis.

It is the arbitrary nature of how Sheikh Hasina governs that has now left the party weak and the government shaken. She is dubbed by party insiders and people outside as 'arrogant'.

One has to pay for one's arrogance. Sometimes, arrogance becomes too costly a posture.



Prof Yunus addresses a reception accorded to him in Chittagong yesterday on his winning the Congressional Gold Medal from the United States.

## People won't let it happen

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in the afternoon.

Yunus, founder of Grameen Bank, was referring to recent recommendations by a government commission for breaking up microfinance institution in the name of reform.

General borrowers possess 97 percent share of the organisation while the government has the remaining three percent, he said, pointing out that the government required at least 51 percent share to take over GB.

There is no scope of doing it justifiably, Yunus noted.

Dr Yunus also said the poor had no fault that they were suffering from poverty. Rather, it is the faults in the system that makes them poor. Society has given them less opportunity to thrive and the system has been depriving them, he said, making it clear that a change was necessary.

Poet and journalist Abul Momen, former vice-chancellor of Chittagong University Prof Alamgir

Muhammad Sirajuddin and Prof Mainul Islam also spoke at the session.

Earlier, Dr Yunus addressed young people, especially students of different institutions of Chittagong, at the same venue. The Daily Star Readers Club and Drishti Chittagong jointly organised the programme.

Yunus urged the youths to set their aims and use their creativity and imagination to signify their presence in the world.

He also elaborated on his new concept of social business. Social business, said he, was a business from which investors did not get any profit.

"Poverty cannot be a part of civic society.... Rather its place will be in the museum."

Vice-Chancellor of East Delta University Prof Sikandar Khan presided over the second session while MA Malek, editor of the daily Azadi, presided over the first session.

## 3 robbers killed

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of infamous "Saiji Bahini"; and Amzad Hossain, 42, leader of "Amzad Bahini".

The identity of the other one aged about 30 could not be known till filing of this report in the afternoon.

Major Sabbir Rahman Osmani, deputy commander of Rab-8, said a Rab team challenged the robbers in the area under Kalagachhia camp of the Sundarbans around 6:50am.

The robbers then opened fire on the Rab personnel, he said, adding that law enforc-

ers also fired in retaliation. After a 25-minute-long gunfight, the robbers fled the scene leaving three bodies lying on the ground, Sabbir Rahman said.

The law enforcers also recovered five guns, two .303 rifles, two .22 bore rifles, two airguns, one 9mm pistol, one local pistol, 23 bullets, a box of bullets of airgun, and one magazine from the spot.

The bodies and recovered arms were handed over to Shyamnagar Police Station.

In Cox's Bazar, an alleged

leader of a gang named Badal, 44, was killed in a gunfight with police in Mognama Ghat embankment area of Pekua upazila around 1:00am.

Acting on a tip-off, police sources said, they conducted a drive in the early hours yesterday to nab Badal, leader of a robbery gang.

Sensing the presence of the law enforcers, the robbers fired on them.

In retaliation, police also opened fire.

Later, police found the body of Badal lying on the

ground.

Two locally-made guns were also recovered from the scene.

Moin Uddin, officer-in-charge of Pekua Police Station, admitted the incident, and said Badal was killed by the shot fired by his fellow gang members.

OC Jahirul Islam Khan of Kutubdia Police Station said five robbery cases were lodged against Badal with the police station.

His body was sent to the district hospital morgue for an autopsy.

## SQC continues

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before International Crimes Tribunal-1.

Many of them made mention of how Salahuddin aided and abetted the Pakistan army and committed crimes against humanity during the Liberation War in 1971.

On the fourth day of his deposition yesterday, Salahuddin said, "From March 25 to December 16, 1971 the occupying marauding forces of the Pakistan army were defeated by popular will."

Salahuddin was defending himself as the first defence witness before the tribunal.

Quoting Irish political philosopher Edmund Burke, the war crimes accused said, "A nation may be subdued by force but it does not prevent necessity of being subdued again: a nation cannot be governed that has to be perpetually conquered -- this universal

truism is as valid then as it is now."

In reality, Burke in his "Speech on Conciliation with America" said: "The use of force alone is but temporary. It may subdue for a moment; but it does not remove the necessity of subduing again: and a nation is not governed, which is perpetually to be conquered."

Yesterday, Salahuddin also told the tribunal that he had become a victim of political persecution.

"I stand before this Tribunal as a victim of political persecution," he claimed.

The prosecution raised objections to this claim.

Tribunal-1, led by Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim, recorded Salahuddin's statement and the prosecution's objection.

The war crimes accused also shared his experience before the tribunal of com-

ing by misbehaviour during his arrest by the past caretaker government.

The tribunal reminded the accused to make his deposition concise.

The proceedings of the case were adjourned until June 23.

ALIM'S CASE

Meanwhile, defence counsel Ahsanul Huq Hena yesterday completed cross-examining the 26th prosecution witness, Jogen Chandra Paul, in the war crimes case against Abdul Alim at Tribunal-2.

Jogen said many relatives of Krishna, Shibben, Tarmuja had died and many had left for India. He does not know whether some of them are still alive.

He said it was not true that Alim had never been president of Jaypurhar Peace Committee.

The proceedings of the case were adjourned until June 26.

## POLITICAL ASYLUM

## Chetia seeks to withdraw appeal

STAR REPORT

Detained since 1997, Anup Chetia, general secretary of the separatist group United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), has sought withdrawal of his appeal for political asylum in Bangladesh.

"Earlier, I wanted to stay in this country. I have changed my mind and I have decided to live the rest of my life with my children in my country [India]," Anup was quoted as saying in a petition submitted on May 13 to Rajshahi Central Jail where he has been in detention.

The jail authorities forwarded the petition to the home ministry, jailor Ismail Hossain yesterday said.

The ministry received the petition but is yet to make any move regarding the matter, an official of the ministry said preferring anonymity.

"It is a political issue and so the government will decide the fate of Anup," he added.

India has long been demanding Anup's deportation but Bangladesh has been saying that the issue needs to be settled by the court as Anup sought political asylum.

The ULFA leader was arrested in December 1997 at Mohammadpur in the capital. A Dhaka court sentenced him to seven-year imprisonment on charges of intrusion into Bangladesh territory with a fake passport and illegal possession of currencies of 16 countries.

## Bad-mouthing

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The House rules of procedure prohibit anyone speaking against individuals not present in parliament.

In protest against Apu's remarks, the opposition MPs walked out of parliament at 9:00pm and did not return to the House.

On Wednesday, BNP lawmaker Shammi Akther made a blistering attack on the ruling party lawmakers using some offensive words, less than an hour after the Awami League and BNP lawmakers agreed not to use swear words in parliament.

Within three minutes of her speech on the budget, Apu yesterday told the House it was important for her to reply to the opposition lawmakers' "propaganda" against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's son Sajeeb Wazed Joy and his wife.

"Sajeeb means fresh, Wazed is his noted father's name and Joy is the symbol of our victory in 1971. His wife is a renowned jurist who comes from a respected family," said Apu, who used to be a professor of Teigaon College in the capital.

Deputy Speaker Co (ret'd) Shawkat Ali, who was presiding over the sitting at the time, requested Apu twice to speak on the budget.

But ignoring the request, Apu continued her attack and said Khaleda Zia's family came to Dinaipur in 1956 from India and took shelter with a farmer's family there.

## Govt puts

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After the payment of Tk 13.2 crore, the government will hold a stake of about 20.5 percent, said Shahjahan.

The government has paid only Tk 1.8 crore against its share of the paid-up capital since the bank's inception three decades ago.

The recent move came after the Grameen Bank Inquiry Commission wrote to the finance ministry, suggesting that the government make the payment against the paid-up capital of the bank.

In a recent meeting with the commission, Finance Minister AMA Muhith directed officials to make the payment.

The government formed the commission last year to review the activities of Grameen Bank and 48 other legally independent organisations that bear Grameen's name, and make recommendations on how to run these organisations.