

FROM PAGE 1

end to campus violence.

Zubair, an honours final-year student of JU English department, was tortured and stabbed by some rival group activists on January 8, 2012. He died at a Dhaka hospital the following day, triggering huge uproars in and outside the campus.

Son of Tofael Ahmed of Patuakhali's Khepupara, Zubair belonged to the BCL group opposing the faction allegedly blessed by the then VC Prof Sharif Enamul Kabir.

On January 9, the university filed the murder case. In the syndicate's January 30, 2012 decision, the authorities expelled seven students and suspended six others for two years following its own probe.

The central leaders of Bangladesh Chhatra League claimed none of 13 was involved with the organisation and the JU BCL committee had been dissolved when the murder took place.

The investigation officer of the case on April 8, 2012, pressed charges against the 13 and the court indicted them on September 8, 2013. Twenty-seven people gave testimony as prosecution witnesses.

Following over a year's trial, the court awarded capital punishment to Khandaker Ashiqul Islam alias Ashiq of philosophy department; Rashidul Islam Raju, Khan Mohammad Rais alias Sohan and Zahid Hasan of zoology and Mahabub Akram of government and politics department.

Nazmul Hossain Plaban of public administration and Mahmudul Hasan Masud of History were acquitted.

The six given life term are Ishtiaq Mehbub alias Arup of philosophy, Najmus Sakib Topu of biochemistry and molecular biology, Kamruzzaman Sohag of philosophy, Abhinandan Kunidu of statistics, Majharul Islam of history and Shafiqul Alam Setu of statistics.

All the 13 were bailed as the trial proceeding started. Early last year the persecution sought cancellation of bail of Ashiq, Shaon, Akram and Ishtiaq, Raju and Zahid for violating conditions.

But Ashiq, Shaon, Akram and Ishtiaq fled the court dock on February 13, when the court cancelled their bail. Raju and Zahid did not appear before the court that day.

The six still remained on the run while the rest were produced before the court yesterday under tight security amid the ongoing blockade.

On February 4, the court rescheduled the verdict date citing security reasons.

A few days back Ashiq was seen at

5 BCL men to die for killing Zubair

6 get life term; court says the murder was outcome of unethical practices by student organisations

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Five BCL men of Jahangirnagar University were handed down death penalty and six others life term yesterday for the killing of a rival faction activist, Zubair Ahmed.

Two other accused in the murder case were acquitted of the charges while six, including the five sentenced to death, were now on the run.

Zubair's family expressed satisfaction over the verdict. "We are happy," his elder brother Abdullah Al Mamun told The Daily Star. "However, we will be happier if the fugitives are tracked down and the verdict is executed quickly."

Mamun, a private university teacher,

alleged some of the convicted BCL men were living in different dormitories of Dhaka University and some even took part in a recent public programme at JU.

Delivering the verdict, Judge ABM Nizamul Haque of Speedy Trial Tribunal-4 of Dhaka said the Zubair killing was the ultimate result of unethical activities by student organisations at public universities.

Some so-called students indulged in crimes, including killings, but none was brought to justice in the near past, he said and recommended formulating "codes of conduct" for student politics.

Hailing the verdict, JU Vice-Chancellor Farzana Islam hoped it would help bring an

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

PHOTO: BANGLA CHOKHA



Zubair Ahmed



Ashiq



Raju



Sohan



Zahid



Akram

Madhur Canteen with a group of BCL activists. He occasionally visited the DU campus and stayed at its different dormitories, according to BCL insiders.

Investigation Officer Mir Shahin Shah Parvez told The Daily Star that they were trying to arrest the fugitives. "We have already deployed sources to trace them as we have information that the fugitives are still in the country."

He claimed this is the first capital punishment pronounced in a trial over a murder at public university.

Though the family members and university authorities expressed satisfaction, they have to wait for the completion of the next legal phases.

Under the existing law, the con-

victed persons have the right to appeal against the verdict with the High Court within 30 days of receiving the certified copy of the verdict. And they can appeal against the HC verdict.

Earlier on December 18, 2013, eight BCL leaders and activists of Jagannath University were awarded death penalty and 13 others life term for killing tailor Bishwajit Das in Old Dhaka.

During his 15-minute judgment, Nizamul Haque mentioned some findings of the investigation officer.

Victim Zubair and his killers Ashique and Rashedul were involved with pro-BNP student body Chhatra Dal. But the trio along with some

other Chhatra Dal activists joined politics of Chhatra League when Awami League came to the power 2009.

Those students, being divided in different factions in the ruling party, got involved in criminal activities like extortion, ragging, sexual harassment of female students and even killing, he said.

But the syndicate, the highest policy-making body of the university, failed to prevent the crimes, added the judge.

The court also praised the positive role of the media, but asked news media to be more cautious while reporting on sub-judice matters.

[Our JU correspondent SM Najmus Saif contributed to the report]