

Staff reporter A Dhaka court on Sunday fixed December 7 for framing charge against sacked minister Abdul Latif Siddique in a case filed for his disparaging remarks on Hajj and Tablig Jamaat. Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Asaduzzaman Noor passed the order. Latif Siddique was sent to jail by Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Atiqur Rahman when police produced him before the court following his surrender at Dhanmondi Police Station on November 25. Later, Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Bikash Kumar Sarker transferred the case to the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Asaduzzaman. Latif Siddique was shown arrested by the police on November 25 in one of the seven cases filed against him in Dhaka for his disparaging remarks on Hajj and Tablig Jamaat. The case was filed with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court by Advocate ANM Abed Raja, former president of Dhaka Metropolitan Bar Association. Today (Sunday), the petitioner filed an application with the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Asaduzzaman Noor for not holding any hearing in the case in his absence. On October 28, the same court issued a warrant for the arrest of Latif Siddique, the former Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology Minister, as he did not appear in compliance with its order. Latif Siddique turned up at the Dhanmondi Police Station around 1:30 pm on November 25, two days after he returned home amid several court warrants pending for his arrest. He returned home from Kolkata on the night of November 23, nearly two months after he made the disparaging remarks on Islam in the USA. A number of courts across the country, including in Dhaka, Chittagong and Narail, issued warrants for the arrest of Abdul Latif in separate cases filed for hurting the religious sentiments of Muslims with his derogatory comments. He faces dozens of cases filed against him for his disparaging remarks. At a views-exchange meeting with expatriates from Tangail in New York on September 28, Latif Siddique made disparaging remarks about hajj, one of the main pillars of Islam, and Tablig Jamaat. He had said: "During hajj, too much of manpower is wasted. Over 20 lakh people have gone to Saudi Arabia to perform hajj. They've no work, no production and they only cause deduction." "Some 20 lakh Tablig Jamaat people get together annually who don't do any work except halting traffic movement across the country," he added. His remarks triggered widespread criticisms both at home and abroad. Latif Siddique was dropped from the cabinet and expelled from Awami League for his derogatory comments.