Dutch trial seeks justice for MH17 families

The Netherlands will put four people on trial next week over the downing of flight MH17 over Ukraine in 2014, giving families hope of justice even if the suspects are not in the dock.

For more than five years relatives have called for the prosecution of those responsible for shooting down the Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777 with the loss of all 298 men, women and children on board.

The jet travelling from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur was torn apart by a Russian-made missile over part of eastern Ukraine held by pro-Moscow rebels, spreading bodies and debris over a wide area.

A Dutch-led international probe last year made its first charges in the case, accusing Russians Igor Girkin, Sergei Dubinsky, Oleg Pulatov and Ukrainian citizen Leonid Kharchenko of involvement.

None is expected to be at the high-security court near Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport on Monday, but family members will be out in force for the start of what is expected to be a year-long trial.

"For the next of kin this is a very important moment," said Piet Ploeg, head of a foundation for MH17 victims who lost his brother, sister-in-law and nephew on the doomed flight.

"We will hear what happened, why it happened, what was the role of the Russian state. I hope, I am convinced, we will get all the answers that we have not had for five-and-a-half years," he

Ploeg, who says he will attend every day of the trial, added: "It's a bloody shame that the four suspects are having a good time and parties in Russia, but we can't do anything about it, they won't be extradited. It's a fact that we will have to deal with."

Relatives will be allowed inside the courtroom to watch, while a media centre has been built outside the stark concrete building to house more than 400 journalists from around the globe.

The downing of MH17 on July 17, 2014 horrified the world, with its images of wreckage strewn across Ukranian sunflower fields and some victims including children still strapped into their seats, their faces masks of agony.

Of the dead, 196 were from the Netherlands, and Dutch authorities aided by Australia, Belgium, Malaysia and Ukraine have relentlessly pursued the case ever since.

Investigators say the BUK antiaircraft missile was fired from rebel territory and was supplied by Russia, while the Netherlands and Australia have said they hold Moscow responsible.

Russia has long denied any involvement.

"We have always questioned the objectivity of the work of the investigative team, as we were deprived the chance to participate in it," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Wednesday.

The first week of the trial is expected to deal with so-called "housekeeping" issues rather than hearing evidence, but it will include the crucial detail of whether the suspects will turn up.

SC stays HC order

directive over the seizure of gambling equipment and preventing people from playing such games at clubs as barrister M Amir-Ul Islam, who stood for the clubs, told the court that clubs are private places, not public places, and law enforcers can arbitrarily harass people due to the HC directive.

The top court also allowed the clubs to move an appeal before this court against the verdict.

Masood R Sobhan, a lawyer representing the clubs, told The Daily Star that following the appeals, which will be moved later, the SC may issue a guideline on which games can be played and which games cannot be played at clubs.

Meanwhile, writ petitioners' counsel Redwan Ahmed Runjib told this correspondent that the apex court yesterday upheld the HC verdict regarding ban of gambling except for one directive over the action of law enforcement agencies.

on February 10 observed that games Attorney General Mahbubey Alam played with money at stake and represented the state. dependent on luck rather than skills

are gambling. It said playing such games and organising them were punishable offences, but excluded authorised

lotteries. However, the games will be allowed when played without money or valuables at stake, the HC added.

It is expected that the government will seriously consider amending the law so that the prohibition applies equally to all people, irrespective of their financial and social status, the

full text of the verdict read. "The above-mentioned games, namely nipun khela 1-10, 1-8 charchari, dice, housie, three cards, flash, poker and any other games (exceptgovernmentauthorized lottery) played physically, electronically or by any other instruments, the outcome of which predominantly depend on luck and not on skill, are gambling.

"Accordingly, owning, occupying any place of such games and any instruments and allowing such games to take place, is an offence under the law of the land," it read.

It added: "Raffle draws/coupons given as a side-product of door tickets for attending picnics or to purchase any products from shopping malls, the dominant intention/purpose in those cases being to attend picnic or to purchase products, do not come within the mischief of gambling."

"Keeping any place or office for drawing lottery, not being authorised by government, is an offence punishable under Section 294 A of the Penal Code, 1860."

Law enforcement agencies are directed to take immediate actions for seizure of clubs, gaming equipment and prevent people from playing such games at clubs, the HC said in the full

The HC also said the government should think seriously increasing punishment for gambling as the present punishments are lenient, considering the financial and other status of the people who are commonly engaged in those games.

Rokanuddin Mahmud and Fida M Following the writ petition, the HC Kamal appeared for the clubs while

BGB sues

Md Shamsuddin Bhuiyan, officer-incharge of Matiranga Police Station.

Quoting the case statement, the police officer said an armed mob attacked BGB members and committed the aforementioned

However, no case or complaint was filed on behalf of the villagers in this connection, the OC said.

At least five people, including 28-year-old BGB member Md Shaon, were killed and several others injured in a clash between members of the paramilitary force and villagers over illegal logging at Gazinagar village in Khagrachhari's Matiranga upazila on

On Wednesday, the National Human Rights Commission said in a statement that no matter who had fired the shots, BGB was the custodian of all the firearms used in the killings, and therefore, could not avoid responsibility

USSR will stand

and praises the Soviet people and their leaders for the hospitality extended to him and his entourage during their stay. "The love and affection shown to me and my party is in fact shown to the 75 million people of Bangladesh.'

Bangabandhu says that, besides discussing with Soviet leaders about the welfare of the two peoples, they also had talks on the preservation of world peace.

Bangabandhu also informs that the top Soviet leaders, including Soviet Communist Party Secretary Leonid Brezhnev, Prime Minister Alexei Kosygin and President Nikolai Podgorny have accepted an invitation to visit Bangladesh.

ENUMERATORS WILL VISIT EVERY **FAMILY**

The chairman of the Central Assessment Committee informs that enumerators will visit each and every family of Bangladesh to ascertain the loss of life and property caused by the atrocities of the Pakistan army during the period between March 25 and December 16,1971.

5,000 TRUCKS, 30 FERRIES NEEDED FOR RELIEF MOVEMENT

The government has suggested to international agencies for an overall improvement of the country's transport system to carry immediately a minimum of seven lakh tonnes of relief and rehabilitation materials per month throughout the country.

According to an official report on the transport situation available here, about 5,000 trucks and 30 ferry boats are needed immediately to avert a serious transport bottleneck in Bangladesh.

10 LAKH WEAVERS UNEMPLOYED

About three lakh handlooms employing about 10 lakh weavers and other workers are currently idle for want of industrial raw materials like cotton yarns and chemicals. All stocks of cotton yarn and chemicals and the connected industries were destroyed by the occupation forces.

However, Bangladesh Trade and Minister Mustafizur Commerce Rahman Siddiqi assures today that by next June the government will arrange supply of necessary cotton yarn for the

handloom industries in Bangladesh. SOURCES: March 7, 1972 issues of Dainik Bangla, The Daily Ittefaq, Azad, Morning News, The Bangladesh Observer and Purbodesh.



Pakistani volunteers rescue an injured girl from the rubble of a collapsed five-storey building in Karachi yesterday. At least 11 people were killed and several others injured after the residential building collapsed in the city's Golimar area, officials said.

Years of wait

FROM PAGE 20

297 out of 300. In chemistry, he got 294 out of 300, the highest score to be obtained in the subject by anyone in the country. He was a student of ABC International School.

Taqi's body was found floating in the Shitalakhya river on the morning

Rafiur filed a murder case with Narayanganj Kotwali Police Station the same day. He also submitted a complaint to the superintendent of police on March 18, accusing seven people by name, including Shamim Osman, and 8-10 unnamed others.

The home ministry on June 20, 2013 handed over the case to Rab upon a High Court order following an appeal by Rabbi.

On August 7 in 2013, the Rab raided Ajmeri's "Winner Fashion" office on Allama Iqbal Road in the town and seized a pair of blood-stained jeans, a pistol butt and equipment for yaba consumption. Officials also found numerous bullet marks on the walls, almirah and sofa.

This "Winner Fashion" was one of the six "torture cells" detected by Taqi Mancha in 2014. Rafiur alleged that Taqi was tortured to death inside the office.

A draft of the investigation report was leaked before the first death anniversary of Taqi on March 6, 2014. Different newspapers ran stories based on the draft with quotes from top-ranking Rab officials about the involvement of around a dozen people in the murder.

The then Rab Additional Director General Col Ziaul Ahsan in March 2014 told media that they found involvement of Ajmeri Osman and his 10 associates in Taqi murder.

Ajmeri is the son of late Jatiya Party Nasim Osman and nephew

were clearly linked to its armed

their investigation would include alleged war crimes by US Central

Intelligence Agency operatives at

detention facilities, referred to as

"black sites" in ICC member countries

At least 24 suspects were subjected to

like Lithuania, Poland and Romania.

torture at these secret prisons between

In 2006, the ICC's prosecutors opened a preliminary probe into possible war

crimes and crimes against humanity

in the central Asian nation since 2003.

allow a full-blown inquiry, not only

into Taliban and Afghan government

personnel but also international

But pre-trial judges then said it

"would not serve the interests of

justice" and that the court should focus

on cases with a better chance of success.

hailed the decision to uphold the

rosecutions' appeal.

Human rights groups yesterday

"The decision also sends a much-

forces, US troops and CIA members.

In 2017 Bensouda asked judges to

2003-2004, the prosecutors said.

ICC prosecutors previously said

conflict.

VICTORY

Others involved as mentioned in the draft charge-sheet are Rajib, Kalam Shikder, Mamun, Apu, Kajol, Shipon, Jamshed Hossain, Yusuf Hossain Liton, Sultan Shawkat alias Bhromor and Tayebuddin alias Jacky.

He had also said that the charge sheet would be submitted any day. That day never came.

Law enforcers so far arrested five people -- Yusuf Hossain Liton, Rifat, Sultan Shawkat, Tayebuddin and Simanta -- in connection with the murder. Two of them -- Yousuf and Sultan -- gave confessional statements before the magistrate.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Taqi's father Rafiur Rabbi, who took part in countless demonstrations and public events to talk about his grievances, said it is not a failure of the investigators, but the political influence which is stalling the probe.

"The law enforcement agencies have already unearthed who were the killers ... they prepared the charge sheet within a year...As we saw the accused were family members of an influential political leader in Narayanganj, the investigation came to a halt," Rabbi added.

".The Rab told media why, where, when and how the killing took place and presented a draft charge-sheet in March 2014 which was supposed to be submitted in court," Rabbi said, adding that six years have passed by, but the Rab is yet to submit it.

The Prime Minister, in parliament, said she stands by Osman's family... Since then the investigation went into a stalemate," Rabbi said. "It's now in the Prime Minister's

doesn't give any instruction to do ruling Awami League MP Shamim so. Taqi would get justice if the PM of countless protests.'

needed signal to current and would-

be perpetrators of atrocities that

justice may one day catch up to them,'

Human Rights Watch's Param-Preet

the US administrations who don't

want to be bound by the rule of

law," added Katherine Gallagher, a

US-based lawyer who represents two

believe detainees should be treated

humanely and that civilians should

be protected," she told AFP after the

Bensouda's move had unleashed a

backlash from the US government,

which in April last year revoked the

Gambian-born chief prosecutor's visa as

part of broader restrictions on ICC staff

John Bolton warned in 2018 that the

US would arrest ICC judges if the

and does not recognise its authority

court pursued an Afghan probe.

Former national security advisor

The US has never joined the ICC

probing American or allied personnel.

Washington did not immediately

"It was a victory for those who

victims of alleged torture.

respond to the judgment.

Гoday was not only a blow against

ICC backs war crimes probe

Singh said.

judgement.

BACKLASH

wants," Rabbi said.

Contacted, Rab-11 Commanding Officer Lt Col Imran Ullah Sarkar could not specifically say when the probe report would be submitted before the court.

'I joined Rab-11 recently and by this time, I saw a number of investigation officers were changed, causing a delay in the investigation,' the Rab commander said, adding that they had resumed the enquiry.

He said they were hoping to complete the probe "very soon".

Asked about Rab's draft charge-sheet of 2014, the Rab official said he could not say anything about this as he was not stationed at Rab-11 at that time.

The Rab official claimed that the investigation was going on right track and there was "no pressure" on them.

Prosecution lawyer Pradip Ghosh Babu said they wrote to the court on January 20 so that it orders the investigation officer to submit report as soon as possible, but the court didn't give any such deadline, he said, adding that the next hearing is scheduled for March 9, he said.

"If they [Rab] had submitted the probe report before, the trial would have been completed by now. Basically, Rab has been doing nothing since 2014," he added.

Narayanganj City Corporation Mayor Selina Hayat Ivy said there are some recent examples of solving sensational cases.

"Justice for Taqi is much needed,"

Halim Azad, member secretary of Taqi Mancha and former president of Narayangani Press Club, said, "The whole country knows who are the hand. The probe report would not killers. Yet there is no justice. It is very come to light if the Prime Minister unfortunate that the victim's family

over American citizens, saying it poses

own procedures in place to deal with

US troops who engage in misconduct.

inquiry, saying the country itself had

responsibility to bring justice for our

The ICC's ruling comes days after

Taliban militants killed at least 20

Afghan soldiers and policemen in a

string of overnight attacks, throwing

the country's nascent peace process

Taliban agreement, foreign forces will

quit Afghanistan within 14 months,

subject to Taliban security guarantees

and a pledge by the insurgents to hold talks with Kabul.

A US-led force invaded Afghanistan

2001 following the 9/11 terror

Fighting has continued ever since

last year more than 3,400 civilians

were killed and almost 7,000 injured,

according to data provided by UN

attacks in the US, targeting Al-Qaeda

in the sanctuaries provided by the

Under the terms of a recent US-

Washington argues that it has its

Afghanistan also opposes the

a threat to national sovereignty.

nation and for our people".

into grave doubt.

Taliban government.

Turkish journos jailed for intel officer's funeral report

AFP, Istanbul

Two Turkish journalists face up to nine years in prison over a report on the funeral of a Turkish intelligence officer apparently killed in Libya, local media reported yesterday.

News director Baris Terkoglu and reporter Hulya Kilinc were detained earlier this week after a video was published on the OdaTV website claiming to show the officer's quiet burial, the Hurriyet newspaper reported.

The journalists were taken to an Istanbul court on Wednesday which formally arrested them on suspicion of disclosing the identity of an intelligence agency official, state news agency Anadolu sáid.

OdaTV published the officer's first name and the initial of his last name, reporting that he was buried in the western province of Manisa, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) said.

The news site responded that an opposition lawmaker had already revealed the officer's identity.

Turkish Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu criticised the report in an interview with CNN Turk.

"There is such a thing as state secrets, national security secrets," he

Terkoglu served 19 months in jail in 2011-12 on accusations of taking part in an alleged plot to topple the government. He was later released along with many others at the time and the case later fell apart.

Turkey says it has sent dozens of military personnel for training purposes to support the Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli as it heads off an assault by Libyan strongman Khalifa Haftar, but denies they are engaged in active fighting.

RSF ranks Turkey 157th out of 180 countries for press freedom, and the CPJ said 47 journalists were behind bars in December.

London city

FROM PAGE 20

The move followed her appearance, as Myanmar's civilian leader, at The International Court of Justice in The Hague to personally defend her country against allegations of rape, arson and mass killings against Rohingya victims.

"Today's unprecedented decision reflects the City Corporation's condemnation of the humanitarian abuses carried out in Myanmar," said David Wootton, chair of the committee that deals with Honorary Freedoms.

"The argument for the removal of the award had been much strengthened by Aung San Suu Kyi's close association with Myanmar's government at the (Hague) hearing as well as her lack of response" to the committee's letters. Suu Kyi was originally awarded

the honour, which dates back to 1237, in May 2017 in recognition of her "non-violent struggle over many years for democracy and her steadfast dedication to create a society where people can live in peace, security and freedom".

She attended the award ceremony herself, during a tour of Europe, but faced protests even then at the plight of the Rohingya.

Previous recipients of the honour include Britain's wartime leader Winston Churchill, anti-apartheid leader Nelson Mandela and scientist Stephen Hawking.

Nasa shares pic FROM PAGE 20

"Holes such as this are of particular interest because their interior caves are relatively protected from the harsh surface of Mars, making them relatively good candidates to contain Martian life," Nasa wrote on its Astronomy Picture of the Day page, where it shared the image this week. "These pits are therefore prime

targets for possible future spacecraft, robots, and even human interplanetary explorers. In the time since the image was

taken, Nasa has continued to scour the surface of Mars for more possible cave openings on the surface.

The hunt is by extension a mission to look for potential underground habitats, since researchers speculate that while there is no evidence of alien life on the surface, it could be hidden underneath the red planet.

Caverns could also be useful places for future human explorers to shelter from the harsh environment on the Martian surface.

Those explorers could also examine the materials found in those caverns. Since they could include material left there from previous epochs, they may prove a useful way of looking back into Mars' past.

Nasa is only recently starting to dig unto the large unexplored world beneath the Martian surface. Last week, it showed off the first findings from the InSight spacecraft, which revealed that Mars was seismically active and more, in findings that could help reveal how the red planet was

20 injured as CU BCL factions clash most of the members and leaders of

Campus sources said the two groups had previous rivalry.

They added that a fight had begun between Bijoy member Md Abdullah and Concord member Arman at the Alaol Hall over sharing room no.238.

Later that night, senior leaders of Bijoy harassed Arman, who informed his group about the matter at Shah Jalal dormitory. Following the incident, a tense

situation had been prevailing on the campus since Wednesday morning, while members of both the groups were seen carrying sharp weapons and chasing each other on the campus in several phases that evening. Activists of another BČL fraction,

Uddin, joined the Concord men in the chase. Around 1:30am on Thursday, Concord and Sixty-Nine men attacked Bijoy men in AF Rahman hall, where

Sixty-Nine", also loyal to AJM Nasir

Bijoy used to stay. A witness said the two groups came

with sharp weapons and attacked the Bijoy men inside the hall and at one point, started breaking the lights there.

"They broke all the lights of the dormitory from the ground floor to third floor, leaving the dormitory dark. Then they started breaking windows and hitting doors [of the rooms] with sharp weapons. The general students were all in panic," he added, preferring anonymity.

On information, Hathazari and CU outpost police rushed to the spot and dispersed the BCL men by charging batons on them. Speaking to The Daily Star, CU

Proctor SM Monirul Islam said, "They broke almost all the windows of the dormitory after breaking all the lights. They also damaged five motorbikes parked at the hall."

"A few students also alleged that

valuables were looted from their rooms during the incident," he said, adding, "Additional police members were deployed on the campus to avoid further clashes, and we will sit with the two BCL groups to solve the problem.

"Legal action will be taken as per the vice-chancellor's order," the proctor said. Dormitory sources said around 87

rooms of the hall were vandalised. After the clash the Bijoy men fled the Masud Alam, officer-in-charge of

Hathazari Police Station, said, "Police

detained eight BCL men from the

According to police, campus sources and local media, at least 400 leaders and activists were injured in 75 CU unit BCL's factional clashes of BCL in the last 10 years, since the AL led government assumed office in