

BANGABANDHU MURDER CASE

Verbatim Text of Cross Examination of Second Prosecution Witness

Following are the excerpts from cross-examination of Abdul Rahman alias Rama, the second principal witness in Bangabandhu murder case by the defence counsels during Wednesday's (July 16) trial proceedings:

Examination by advocate Abdul Razzaq Khan, counsel of Honorary Captain (ret'd) Abdul Wahab Joardar:

Q: Is Tungipara your permanent address?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you do something?

A: Yes.

Q: Agriculture?

A: Service to Gopalganj.

Q: What sort of service?

A: Government.

Q: Would you tell the name of your office?

A: District livestock office.

Q: Post?

A: MLSS.

Q: What is your academic qualification?

A: I had appeared in class two examination at Kerakopa Primary School but could not pass.

Q: When did you get the job?

A: In 1992.

Q: Did you get the job after application?

A: Yes, by application.

Q: Did you get the job following recommendation by local Awami League MP?

A: No, by appearing in interview.

Q: Was there any advertisement in the newspapers?

A: Yes.

Q: How many interviews were there?

A: I was the 35th. There was a lot after me.

Q: Did you see in newspapers that the Bangabandhu murder case had been lodged?

A: Yes, I saw.

Q: After how many days of filing the case you gave statement at the CID office?

A: 4/10/96.

Q: Did any body go to you from the CID office?

A: I was asked by local OC to go to CID office.

Q: When did your deposition to CID start and when concluded?

A: It took two to three hours.

Q: Who has written? What was his post?

A: He was in plainclothes. I can't say what his post was. He also did not tell me about it.

Q: On which floor of the CID office your deposition was recorded?

A: On the third floor.

Q: Did anybody else give statement at the office during recording of your deposition?

A: I don't know.

Q: Was Ajan from the nearest mosque heard from the house of Bangabandhu?

A: Yes.

Q: How long before the Ajan incident on the day had begun and after how long it ended?

A: I couldn't hear Ajan on that day.

Q: Was it dawn when you came to the bank of the lake?

A: Not dawn. It was about to be dawn.

Q: Did you go near the lake being asked by Begum Mujib?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you go upto the lake?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you not talk to the security guards?

A: No, I didn't talk to them.

Q: Did you not talk to them even after witnessing the firing?

A: No, I didn't talk to them.

Q: Didn't you see them?

A: Yes, I saw them.

Q: How long after the army had entered the house did you go out? Would it be 15 to 20 minutes?

A: May be.

Q: How much time the incident took to take place?

A: I can't say.

(Court: Tell the approximate time)

Q: Would it be more than an hour?

A: It would be one to one-and-a-half hours.

Q: After how long talking by phone at the reception Bangabandhu went upstairs?

A: I can't say. I saw him on the ground floor when I went

upstairs.

Q: After how long you saw him on the first floor?

A: I can't say the exact time.

Q: Can you say when Sheikh Kamal went to the ground floor and what he did?

A: No, but I heard him groaning later.

Q: Was Begum Mujib alone when she was moving?

A: I saw her alone on the first floor.

Q: In which room of the first floor Sheikh Kamal was?

A: At his own room on the south.

Q: How many rooms were there between Sheikh Kamal's room and Bangabandhu's bedroom?

A: A dining room and a small corridor.

Q: From which direction did you hear the sound of firing?

A: From the south direction.

Q: Were the army guards in the south direction?

A: They were in both south and north (backside) direction.

Q: Did any guard in the north fire shots?

A: There were huge firing. I could not guess in which direction the firing was going on.

(At this stage, taking permission from the court, prosecution lawyer suggested that witness Rama give answer after hearing the question and realising it properly.)

Q: Did you hear sound of bulge from the house?

A: No, I didn't.

Q: There was a barrack of the guards on road number 31?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you see the barrack?

A: Yes.

Q: How far was the barrack away from the house of Bangabandhu?

A: Long distance.

Q: How far?

A: I can't say.

(Court: Tell the approximate distance.)

A: 400 hands.

Q: Do you know where and how long did Bangabandhu phone on the day of occurrence?

A: No, I don't.

Q: Was there a collapsible gate at the main building?

A: Yes, there was a collapsible gate.

Q: Was there a balcony on the first floor?

A: Yes, in the south direction.

Q: Is the road seen from there?

A: Yes.

Q: You left the house at about 12 noon. Before you left, did the SP, DC, Chief of Army Staff or Chief of BDR had come to the house?

A: I saw many army officers. I didn't see them as I didn't know them.

Q: Do you know that Sheikh Jamal was an army officer?

A: Yes.

Q: Did he do office from house?

A: Yes.

Q: Did he use mercedes car to go to office?

A: No.

Q: Sheikh Kamal and Sheikh Jamal were freedom fighters. Did they have sophisticated firearms at home?

A: No.

Q: Did you know the then Vice President Syed Nazrul Islam, Prime Minister Capt (ret'd) Mansur Ali and other senior ministers who used to come to the house of Bangabandhu?

A: Yes, I knew many of them.

Q: Did they come to the house of Bangabandhu until you left the house on the day of occurrence?

A: I didn't see them, the names you mentioned.

Q: You are an arranged witness of the CID.

A: This is not correct.

Q: CID has made a deposition through you.

A: Not true.

Q: You were not present at the house during the occurrence.

A: I was there.

Q: You did not see anything.

A: I saw.

Examination by advocate Nazrul Islam, defence lawyer of Col (ret'd) Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan:

Q: Did you witness firing like that of August 15, 1975?

A: Yes.

Q: Where?

A: I was at the house of Bangabandhu on March 25, 1971.

Q: Was there any firing on that night or Bangabandhu was only arrested?

A: There was huge firing.

Q: The then Pakistani military asked Bangabandhu to surrender and Bangabandhu did it.

A: I didn't hear what the army men had said. I saw they were taking Bangabandhu after arresting him.

Q: Was it at about 10 in the night?

A: It was after 12 in the night.

Q: Did you leave the house after the incident of August 15 for lack of security of life?

A: Yes.

Q: For fear of life?

A: Yes.

Q: Tungipara became a thana during the rule of Sheikh Mujib.

A: Yes.

Q: Can you remember the year?

A: No.

Q: Did you tell anyone of the thana about the incident after fleeing to you home?

A: No, I didn't tell anyone.

Q: Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana, daughters of Bangabandhu, were they not at the house during the incident?

A: They were not.

Q: Were they abroad?

A: Yes.

Q: When did you first meet them after they had returned home?

A: I can't remember the date. I met at Tungipara.

Q: When did they return?

A: After a long time of the incident.

Q: How did you return home on the day?

A: By launch.

Q: How did you reach Sadarghat?

A: By a rickshaw.

Q: Did you see army, police on the road or was there a curfew?

A: I saw army cars patrolling the roads.

Q: The incident did not occur in a way you described?

A: You are not correct.

Q: The description of taking and bringing Russel was not true. The description was fabricated, you gave a colour of human interest.

A: This is not correct.

Q: You don't know who were killed where in the encounter between the two groups.

A: There was no encounter.

Q: You didn't enter the house fearing security of life after going outside the first time.

A: Your statement is not true.

Q: Did you think that you would be killed by brushfiring when you were kept on a line?

A: Yes.

Q: How many rooms were there on the ground floor of the house?

A: Seven.

Q: Who were on the ground floor accepting the receptionists?

A: One SB personnel, a telephone technician... I can't remember all their names.

Q: How many of them were there?

(At this stage the court once again requested the prosecution lawyers not to interrupt during the cross-examination as they did.)

A: I can't remember all of them.

Q: The present Prime Minister has given you the job?

A: This is not true.

Q: Was she then the Leader of the Opposition?

A: Yes.

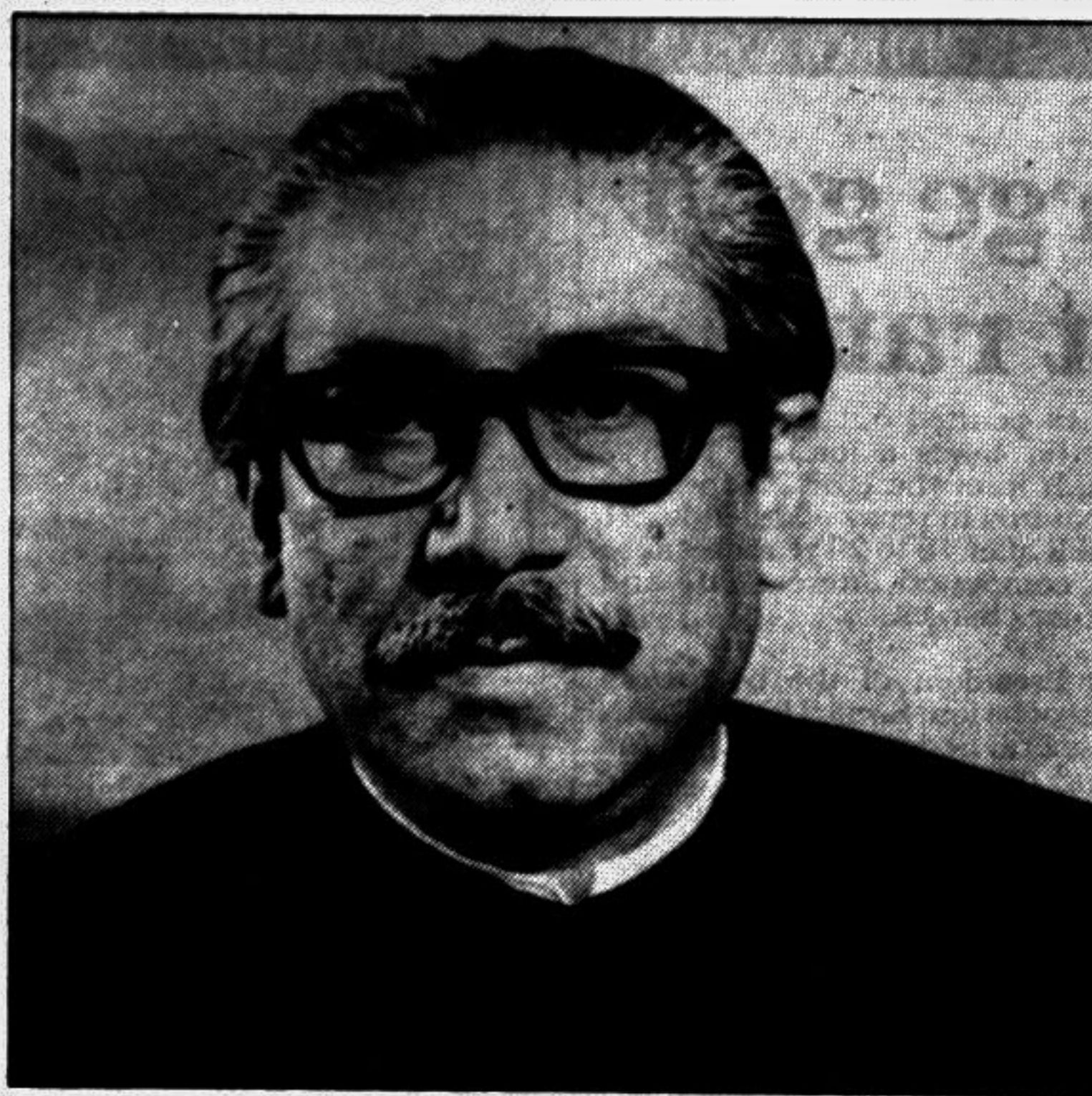
Q: You have been made an arranged witness as she is now the Prime Minister.

A: This is not correct.

Q: Is your home adjacent to the village home of the Prime Minister?

A: Not adjacent, nearby.

(Lunch break)



Examination by Khan Sair Farooque Rahman, counsel for Col (ret'd) Farooque Rahman:

Q: The incidents of August 15, 1975 and March 25, 1971 were of similar nature as in both cases the military tried to take away Bangabandhu.

A: Yes. But on August 15, 1975, he (Bangabandhu) was tried to be taken away against his will.

Q: The residence of Bangabandhu never remained unguarded even on August 15, 1975 night.

A: Yes.

Q: When the sentry shed on the southern side of Bangabandhu's house was built?

A: I can't remember.

Q: Can you recollect whether guards used to stay in those sheds or not?

A: Yes, guards used to stay in that shed.

Q: Was there any sentry window in that shed?

A: There was no window.

Q: After leaving Bangabandhu's residence for Tungipara, did you enquire about those who were alive in that house?

A: No.

Q: How many types of uniform the military who used to guard that house used to wear?

A: Khaki.

Q: The police?

A: Also khaki.

Q: The Rakhhi Bahini?

A: There was no Rakhhi Bahini.

Q: When you first heard the sound of firing, did you think that the house would be safe?

A: I feared trouble.

Q: There was a servant's quarter on the northern side of that house.

A: Yes.

Q: Where those who used to guard that house there on the previous day?

A: I don't remember.

Q: Will you be able to recognise those people now who were guarding that house on that night?

A: I don't think so. Twenty-two years is quite a long time.

Q: What was your age in 1992?

A: About 30 to 31.

Q: Did you know that certificate of class VIII is a pre-requisite for a job as MLSS?

A: No, I don't know.

Q: Did you know that a helicopter carried the body of Bangabandhu to Tungipara for burial?

A: I heard it.

Q: Did you sign while entering this court?

A: No.

Q: When did you come to Dhaka first from Tungipara after August 15, 1975?

A: Probably in 1982.

Q: Didn't you have your articles in the servant room?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you take those along with you?

A: No.

Q: The sooner you leave that place in fear of life is the better — was that the reason?

A: Yes.

Q: Normally, when did you wake up from sleep?

A: I say my fazar prayer in the morning.

Q: When you used to wake up normally during your stay in Bangabandhu's house?

A: At that time, I wouldn't say my prayer. If I used to go to bed late, I used to get up late and when I used to go to bed early, I used to get up early.

Q: How long you used to sleep?

A: Two to three days.

Q: When did the OC send a man to your village home?

A: I don't know because I was in the office. But heard about it when I reached home from office in the evening.

Q: You submitted your leave application the following day.

A: Yes.

Q: How did you come to Dhaka and when did you arrive?

A: By bus and arrived at about 2 to 3.30 in the afternoon.

Q: You said that you had taken job at Bangabandhu's house in 1969 and taken government job in 1992. Do you know that you didn't have age for government job when you joined in 1992?

A: It is not true.

(At this stage, Judge Kazi Gollam Rasul asked the witness: Do you confess that you didn't have age when you got the job in 1992? The witness, Abdul Rahman Sheikh alias Rama, answered in the negative.)

Q: Did you appear for an interview for the job? If so when?

A: Yes, probably at the end of 1991.

Q: Did you apply for the job seeing any advertisement?

A: Yes.

Q: Which newspaper?

A: I don't remember. One person supplied me the paper clipping.

Q: For which post?

A: Darwan.

Q: When did you join as peon?

A: About