

9 out of 13 accused

FROM PAGE 1
freedom fighter Mozaffar Ahmed Khan.

Mozaffar is complainant of the much talked about case filed on Monday against Jamaat leaders. According to him, 13 people including Jamaat Ameer Nizami, Secretary General Mojahid, Senior Assistant Secretary General Muhammad Kamaruzzaman and Assistant Secretary General Abdul Quader Molla were involved in wholesale killings of freedom fighters and locals of Keraniganj on November 25, 1971.

Of the accused, nine were on the spot of killings while the rest were behind the scenes. Of those who carried out the massacre, five are still alive. They are Haji Nazimuddin, ameer of Keraniganj Jamaat, Abul Hashem, ameer of Dhaka district Jamaat, KG Karim Babla, Mohammad Yasin and Fayezur Rahman Fayez.

Mozaffar said he has a number of eyewitnesses to testify against the nine and circumstantial evidence against the four who were the brains behind the mass killings.

"I saw Babla, a Razakar from Keraniganj, standing at the gate of Mohammadpur Physical Centre which was then the camp of Razakar, Al-Badr, and Al Shams Bahini. At that time, a jeep carrying Nizami and Mojahid entered the camp. I'm talking about November 5, 1971," Mozaffar said recollecting the days in the lead-up to November 25.

He said Karim, the then convenor of Dhaka city Muslim Chhatra League, had joined the Razakar Bahini in 1971.

"He was directly involved in the killings. He along with his family used to live in Hazaribagh then and now they live in Dhanmondi," Mozaffar said.

Legal experts say odds are stacked against the war crimes being proved in a conventional court under the criminal law and so there has been a growing demand for the war criminals to be tried in a special tribunal.

Asked why he lodged the case with a regular court, Mozaffar said, "I am quite hopeful that I will be able to prove the charges. I have enough witnesses and evidence against the accused, nine of who were on the spot of killings. I can also prove that the killings took place on instructions of Nizami, Mojahid, Quader Molla and Kamaruzzaman."

He said he believes that it would have been even better had the government taken the initiative to bring the war criminals to trial.

He still thinks he would get justice unless the government influences the proceedings in favour of the accused.

Now the commander Dhaka unit **Nazimuddin Sangsadda**, Mozaffar made the observations in an interview with The Daily Star yesterday afternoon.

He said Jamaat men killed his nephew Osman Gani, fellow freedom fighter Golam Mostafa alias Tukub Ali and Darbesh Ali on November 25.

Of the accused, four—Abdul Khaleq, Mannan Siddique, Dr Joyal and Pulina Al-Badr—have been exempted from the charges as they are not alive.

He said the local Razakars went on a killing spree across four villages at Keraniganj on November 25.

"Some of the villagers who survived the firing squad that day will testify for me," he added.

He however declined to elaborate on the witnesses he has to help him out in the trial. About the evidence he has gathered so far, he said, "All this is

Sharif

FROM PAGE 16
imposed a state of emergency on Nov. 3, though he used it to crack down on dissent and purge the judiciary in his favour.

Musharraf has promised that the elections will be free and transparent, and has said allegations of rigging were an attempt by the opposition to create an excuse in case they fare poorly at the ballot box.

Also Monday, a bomber killed nine Pakistani soldiers as they strolled back to barracks after a game of soccer, the army said, the latest in a string of suicide blasts spreading fear ahead of crucial elections.

The suicide bomber struck near an army base in Kohat, about 80 miles west of Islamabad. Maj Gen Waheed Arshad, an army spokesman, said nine troops were killed and four others wounded.

It was the sixth suicide bombing in the past two weeks. At least 32 people have died 20 soldiers and police, and 12 civilians. One of the attacks was carried out by a woman, a first in Pakistan.

No one has claimed responsibility, but officials blame militants linked to the Taliban and al-Qaeda who have expanded their influence in areas near the Afghan border.

Police, meanwhile, were still searching for a British suspect in an alleged plot to blow up trans-Atlantic jetliners who escaped from police custody over the weekend.

A police official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to talk to media, said two officers have been arrested for negligence and were being probed for possible links with Rauf's two uncles, who also have been taken into custody for questioning.

Britain has been seeking Rauf's extradition, both to question him as a "key person" in the airport plot and as a suspect in the 2002 killing of his uncle. He has denied involvement in both cases.

Rauf, who is of Pakistani origin, was arrested here in August 2006 on a tip from British investigators. Pakistan described him as a key suspect in a purported plot to blow up airplanes flying from Britain to the United States, prompting a major security alert at airports worldwide and increased restrictions on carry-on items.

meant to be placed before the court only."

Mozaffar said in the morning of November 25, Razakars killed his 22-year-old nephew and his fellow freedom fighter Mostafa at their homes in Bhawal Khan Bari village. Osman and Mostafa went there the night before to visit their family.

"I had asked them not to go home as I feared they might be killed by the anti-liberation forces," he continued.

Asked what was the basis of his fear, he said he too had wanted to visit his family at the Boro Bhawal Village.

"I even started for my home on November 23. But on my way I saw KG Karim and learned from others that he was there trying to track down me and other freedom fighters to kill. At that instant I changed my decision and came back to my camp at Kolatali union at Keraniganj," he went on.

"The Razakars had asked Osman and Mostafa about my whereabouts and the location of our camp. But as the two did not disclose anything, they shot them dead."

At around the same time at Ghatat Char village, they killed Darbesh Ali.

Mozaffar and his men wanted to move to the villages to avenge the killings. "But as the collaborators had already asked for Pakistani forces, we changed our decision. Considering the strength of the occupying army, we found it unwise to fight them," he said.

Later in the day, Pakistani troops aided and abetted by the local Razakars committed mass killings across several villages of Keraniganj, he said adding that around five thousand people were killed that day.

He said at least 70 activists of Razakar, Al-Badr, and Al Shams Bahini took part in the killings, torching and looting in Keraniganj on November 25.

In the FIR, he mentioned that the accused had formed the paramilitary forces to exterminate the freedom fighters.

Nizami was the Al-Badr commander of Pakistan while Mojahid headed its East Pakistan wing, the complainant said adding that Quader and Kamaruzzaman too were in the top echelon of the Al-Badr Bahini.

He said names of some of the accused were in the gazette notification published in 1972 carrying the names of collaborators.

Mozaffar was a student of Ati Bhawal High School in Keraniganj before joining the Liberation War in May. He was 17-year-old and a candidate for matriculation examination.

As a scout, he would initially conduct physical trainings for freedom fighters at different camps in Agartala. Later, he went to Assam for arms training. On completion of the training, he came back to Melaghar in Agartala in July and got enrolled as a freedom fighter.

Mozaffar said he joined sector 2 under the command of Khaled Mosharrar, who was later replaced by Haider.

He returned to Keraniganj in August as the commander of a 15-member team.

He set up his camp at Kolatali Union. But as his was a small unit, he merged his group with that of former lawmaker and Gono Forum leader Mostafa Mohsin Montu.

Mozaffar said he led the war in Keraniganj while Montu in the southern part of Dhaka.

Home rush starts

FROM PAGE 1
Meanwhile, population in the bustling metropolis is expected to thin out in the next couple of days as thousands are expected to depart the capital to celebrate Eid-ul-Azha with their loved ones, braving the hassle and difficulties of finding a transportation home.

Launch, bus and railway terminals in Dhaka were seen crammed with Eid vacationers yesterday. Outbound launches, buses and trains were leaving the city being filled to capacity, with a number of passengers riding on the roofs.

As the Eid is to be celebrated on December 21, the mad rush for home is expected to escalate today and tomorrow.

Tickets of all modes of transport are reported to have been sold out, making many holidaymakers pay an exorbitant amount of money for their tickets.

Many people, especially garment workers, are still scouring for tickets with only a few days left until the Eid holidays kick off.

Bangladesh Railway (BR) officials said 23 intercity expresses, five mail trains and six trains leased out to private operators have a capacity of carrying around 20,000 passengers every day. Due to the high demand of Eid vacationers, the BR will sell 20,000 extra tickets this time.

The BR has also made special arrangements to add extra compartments to each intercity express trains and it will operate extra trains on various routes on the eve of Eid.

Kamal Hossain, convenor of (Dhaka Zone) Launch Owners' Association, said the association has already doubled the number of launch trips.

On an average, 200 launches usually depart the city everyday on different routes, he said adding, "Now we will add around 25 more launches."

Bus Owners Association leaders said a good number of people will be able to go home this holiday as many city service buses are also being operated on various intercity or inter-district routes to transport the holidaymakers.

Jalil finally sued

FROM PAGE 1
According to the FIR, properties Jalil has illegally accumulated include a three-storey building on eight decimals of land in Naogon ward Tk 41 lakh and 61 decimals of land worth Tk 40,000 in Bhimpur of Mohadevpur.

The joint forces detained both Jalil and Altaf on May 28.

After arrest Jalil was taken on remand. He was admitted to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University on June 4 as he fell ill and was later shifted to Labaid Cardiac Hospital as his condition deteriorated.

In a letter sent to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed, Jalil pleaded with the government for his release on health grounds. In the letter dated July 2, Jalil said he would quit politics if necessary.

The AL raised questions over the authenticity of the letter and wanted to hear about it from a "free" Jalil. The AL general secretary has been detained under the Special Powers Act and no charges were brought against him until yesterday.

CASE AGAINST ALTAFA
ACC Deputy Director Moniruzzaman Khan filed the case with Ramna Police Station for concealing information or giving false information about movable wealth of Tk 2.59 lakh and amassing wealth of Tk 256 crore beyond known sources of income.

In the FIR, it was mentioned that Altaf kept the wealth in his own name and the names of his wife Suraiya Akter and daughter Jubaida Akter. Altaf in his wealth statement mentioned low price of assets he purchased in his and his wife's name.

The FIR said Altaf gave false information about loans and did not mention anything about the five firearms worth Tk 2 lakh which he purchased between 1974 and 2002.

He also concealed information about three savings accounts with Standard Chartered Bank.

Altaf in his wealth statement said he had lent Tk 14 lakh to his wife Suraiya while she said her husband lent her Tk 17 lakh. He also said he purchased a jeep at Tk 8 lakh while the real price of the vehicle was Tk 20.17 lakh. Besides, he showed low price of the car he purchased in his wife's name.

He also said he took loans of Tk 68.27 lakh adding that a loan of Tk 5.16 lakh was taken from Standard Chartered Bank in his own and his wife's name.

Altaf Hossain submitted his wealth statement to the ACC on July 25 saying that he has wealth worth Tk 3.25 crore.

CASE AGAINST PABAN
ACC Deputy Director Mahbubur Rahman filed the case with Ramna Police Station against Paban.

The FIR said Paban in his wealth statement submitted to the ACC concealed information about his property worth Tk 1,02,595.

It was also mentioned in the FIR that the ACC suspects Paban amassed his wealth of Tk 7,491,829 beyond his known sources of income.

CASE AGAINST DFO
ACC Deputy Director in Chittagong Abdul Kalam Azad filed the case with Double Mooring Police Station as Tapan did not respond to the ACC notice issued on October 28 for submitting his wealth statement.

reports our CU correspondent.

The joint forces raided his office at Sholoshahar and seized about Tk 13 lakh on June 25. He has been absconding since then.

Rangs death toll

FROM PAGE 16
of Abdur Rahim from the third floor of the building on Bijoy Sarani yesterday. Earlier, five bodies were recovered on Monday, four bodies on Thursday and another on Saturday.

Survivors and relatives of the trapped labourers said 10 of the 11 killed workers were from Faridpur and the other from Gaibandha.

Deputy Director of Dhaka Division Fire Service and Civil Defence Selim Newaj Bhuiyan said one of their rescue teams would stay on the spot.

They take a decision today whether they will conclude the operation, he added.

War criminals

FROM PAGE 16
the Pakistani occupational forces in 1971 and put them up for everyone to see in public places all over the country.

Ekattur Ghatok Dalal Nirmla Committee (Committee to Eliminate Killers and Collaborators of 1971) has meanwhile congratulated the people on their protest against the burial of a Razakar in Magura.

A press release signed by the president of the committee Professor Kabir Chowdhury, acting president of its central executive committee Shahriar Kabir and general secretary Kazi Mukul said the incident proves that the people's hatred of Razakars has now reached the grassroot level.

The body of a teacher of the Department of Islamic History of Chittagong University Rezaul Karim, known locally as Reju Razakar, was not allowed to be buried in his home village in Magura amidst strong protests from people.

Prior to this, another Razakar ASM Solaiman could not be buried in Mirpur amidst resistance of Committee to Eliminate Killers and Collaborators of 1971.

The committee urged the people to boycott the anti-liberation forces politically, economically and socially. The anti-liberation forces will not be spared the hatred of the people till their trial and punishment, the press released.

The committee also called on the government to take necessary steps to bring the war criminals to trial through a special tribunal.

Global food crisis

FROM PAGE 1
to conflicts and disasters. In addition, food security is being adversely affected by unprecedented price hikes of basic food, driven by historically low food stocks, droughts and floods linked to climate change, high oil prices and growing demand for bio-fuels. High international cereal prices have already sparked food riots in several countries.

It estimates that the total cost of imported food for the LIFDCs in 2007 will be around 25 percent higher than that in the previous year, surpassing \$107 billion.

"Without support for poor farmers and their families in the hardest-hit countries, they will not be able to cope. Assisting poor vulnerable households in rural areas in the short term and enabling them to produce more food would be an efficient tool to protect them against hunger and undernourishment," said FAO Director General Jacques Diouf.

The FAO listing shows that not only Bangladesh but also four other Saarc countries -- Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Afghanistan -- are facing severe food crisis.

Of them, Afghanistan's food crisis stems from conflicts and floods. Nepal is suffering from market access problems and effects of conflicts and floods. Pakistan is facing after-effects of the Kashmir earthquake, floods and cyclone. Sri Lanka that of the Tsunami, deepening conflicts and floods, and Bangladesh is facing the aftermath of floods and cyclone.

In Bangladesh, the livelihood of over 8.5 million people is adversely affected by the damage caused by the cyclone, FAO says.

According to the government's estimates, the cyclone and two consecutive floods have caused a shortfall of 14 lakh metric tons (MT) of rice.

Estimates by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and Brac show this figure could go up to 20 lakh MT.

Bangladesh usually imports around 20 lakh to 24 lakh MT of food grains a year. Because of the short fall this year, the import will hover around 35 lakh MT.

And due to the global scarcity of food and lack of interest of exporting countries, Bangladesh is also facing problems with import. The government has decided to import food at higher prices.

This means that food prices will continue to rise in the coming months.

TCB data show that price of higher grade rice like Nazirshail, now selling at Tk 33 to Tk 39 per kg, increased by 50 percent over the last one year. In the last one month, it increased by nine percent.

Medium quality rice like Pajam now sells at Tk 27 to Tk 29 per kg -- up by 42.5 percent in the last one year. Its price shot up by 5.5 percent in the last one month.

The lowest grade rice like Chinese Irri is selling at Tk 25 - 27 a kg, showing a 40 percent price rise in

a year. In the last one month, its price rose by 8.33 percent.

Price of atta also marked a similar rise -- 46 percent -- over the last one year, now selling at Tk 35 to Tk 38 per kg. Its price remained static in the last one month.

Edible soybean oil now sells at Tk 86 to Tk 88 per litre, up by 40 percent in a year. Palm oil is selling at Tk 74 to Tk 76 per litre, up by 53 percent.

Lentil (Mushur) now sells at Tk 60 to Tk 80 per kg, six percent higher than the price a year ago and potato is selling at Tk 24-27, up by 21 percent.

Price of onion marked a 116 percent hike in the last one year, and now sells at Tk 25 to Tk 40 per kg.

Economists and government decision makers believe that to cover the food shortage, there is no option but to increase boro production. But still there is a fertiliser crisis and a lack of decision on subsidising diesel for irrigation, which might affect the plan to increase boro production.

Prices of essentials

FROM PAGE 1
The supply of local variety onion, too, is scarce in the wholesale and retail markets with per kg being sold at Tk 55 to 60 at present. Meanwhile, the fresh green onions have started reaching the kitchen markets although its demand is comparatively low.

The onion traders of Karwan Bazar wholesale market said that during the Eid-ul-Azha the demand for onion increases at least ten times and consequently the prices rise.

Per kilogram quality fine rice, Kalijira and Chinigura, are being sold at Tk 78 to 85 while it was selling at Tk 72 to 75 last week. The price was Tk 38 to 42 per kg last year, the businessmen at Karwan Bazar said.

Price of coarse rice also skyrocketed ahead of Eid. In the retail market, per kilogram rice is selling at Tk 26, which was being sold at Tk 24 last week.

Prices of rice like Miniket and Najir Shail rose by Tk 2 to 4 per kilogram yesterday while those varieties were selling at Tk 33 and Tk 38 respectively last week.

The Karwan Bazar traders said that as different organisations and individuals have been buying coarse rice from the capital and sending those to the Sidr hill areas, the prices of rice shot up in Dhaka.

Price of per kilogram milk powder rose by Tk 15 to 16 during the last two days.

Although price of pasteurized liquid milk did not skyrocket, supply to the retailers is too scarce. Capitalising on the apparent shortage, some traders are selling milk at higher prices.

Prices of different kinds of spices and soybean oil have remained high since the Eid-ul-Fitr.

Poor power

FROM PAGE 16
Chairman of the committee ANM Rizwan disclosed the findings during a press briefing at the Power Ministry yesterday after he handed over the probe report to Power Secretary M Fozul Kabir Khan.

The power secretary said this committee will also investigate the latest blackout incident on December 15 and it was asked to submit report within three weeks.

The probe body chairman said it was found in the investigation that at the distribution end, some of the substations were not following the instructions of the CLDC. And the mismatch led to a sudden rise in the demand, making the whole system collapse under the pressure on November 15 in the wake of devastation by the cyclone.

Rizwan, the former chairman of PDB and former managing director of Power Grid Company of Bangladesh (PGCB), however, said, "The officials frantically helped the system survive though they didn't have such an experience to tackle the situation when a devastating cyclone hit the power infrastructure."

He said as the cyclone hit the country, the electricity feeder lines collapsed and power stations faced forced shutdown, consecutively and the electricity demand fell down drastically to 350 MW, a tenth of the

total generation.

"But immediate after the cyclone, the demand started rising sharply, which the CLDC officials failed to control, because the substations' officials did not abide by their instructions. And it finally triggered a collapse of the whole power system," said Rizwan.

He said the committee recommended installation of "state of the art" ICT-based equipment and mechanisms at the central load-dispatch centre (CLDC) to make the whole controlling system computerised.

"We put forward 50 recommendations, which are short- and long-term ones... steps need to be taken to implement those immediately to avert any such further incident," he said.

About the December 15 nationwide grid failure, the expert dispelled the myth that it's a dove that wrecked the national power grid and plunged the country into darkness.

"It's a remote possibility that a bird could cause such incident," he said.

Power Secretary Fozul Kabir Khan said he is yet to go through the whole report. "But after studying the report, we'll take follow-up actions."

He said the report will be placed before the chief adviser.

Over 2m hajj pilgrims

FROM PAGE 1
travelled to Saudi Arabia for the hajj. Interior Minister Prince Nayef bin Abdul Aziz said, joined by hundreds of thousands of Saudis and other residents of the kingdom.

Ahmadinejad was to join other pilgrims in carrying out a series of other sacred rituals, such as walking counter-clockwise seven times around the Kaaba, the cube-shaped structure at the Grand Mosque in Mecca.

His pilgrimage has an added significance because of the sometimes rocky relations between Shiite Iran and Sunni-dominated Saudi Arabia.

An Iranian demonstration during the hajj in July 1987 led to Tehran and Riyadh breaking diplomatic relations. Security forces tried to break up the protest and 402 people, including 275 Iranians, were killed.

Iranian pilgrims stayed away from the hajj until 1991.

They have since held peaceful anti-US demonstrations inside their hajj compound, during which a message from Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is read out.

Khamenei this year urged Muslims to stand united against

world "arrogance," Tehran's reference to the United States.

"All the Islamic nations and especially their scholars and intellectuals should create a united front against the world arrogance and solidify it day by day," Khamenei said.

At the Grand Mosque, the massive Kaaba monument was being draped in a new "kiswa", its silk cover adorned with Koranic verses embroidered in gold and silver-plated thread, costing more than five million dollars.

Muslims face the Kaaba when they pray five times a day.

At sunset on Tuesday, the faithful were to move toward Muzdalifah valley, several kilometres (miles) from Mount Arafat, to spend the night and collect pebbles to cast at columns in Mina symbolising the Devil.

On Wednesday morning, pilgrims flock Mina for the last part of the hajj -- the ritual stoning of Satan.

Later the same day, the pilgrims will sacrifice a beast, generally a sheep, in remembrance of the sacrifice Allah asked Abraham to perform by giving up his son to prove his devotion.

SSC exams

FROM PAGE 1
The important public examinations were scheduled to start from February 27 next year under the caretaker government's plan of advancing the date and publication of results of the examinations in phases.

"However, the SSC and its equivalent examinations of 2009 will begin from February 15 while that of 2010 from February 1 according to the previous decision of the government," said the announcement.

The November 15 cyclone caused colossal damage to life and property in the country's coastal areas. The violent storm damaged educational institutions, books and other study materials of the students in the affected areas.

Youth held

FROM PAGE 16
three youths traded over 100 round of bullets in Maddhya Badda in the capital. Soon after the gunfight, the crime busters arrested Al Beruni alias Sabui alias Rony, who claimed to be an organiser of an unknown Islamist group, Islamic Dal.

Meanwhile, Rab officials said the three youths have no link with any Islamist militant outfit.

"After interrogating Rony intensively we learned that they were criminals," Rab Legal and Media Wing Director Commander SMAK Azad told The Daily Star.

He said Rony also admitted that they used to rent the firearms, recovered from their possession, to criminals in the capital.

Siddiqui Rahman, owner of the house where the gunfight took place, quoted Rony as telling Rab that they were members of banned Islamist militant outfit Harkatul Jihad Al Islami (Huji) working to form Islamic Dal.

In the hour-long encounter one of the youths named Kamal was killed, while Rab men Lt Farhad Sarkar and Shaunik Kabul Hossain received bullets.

Attack on UK envoy

FROM PAGE 16
Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Shafique Anwar (former metropolitan magistrate of Dhaka), Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Baniachang Nurey Alam Siddique (former magistrate of Sylhet), Sub-inspectors Abdul Awal Chowdhury, Sabur Rahman and Shah Alam, Dr Matir Rahman and Dr Mahbub Haider Chowdhury, former criminal investigation department assistant superintendent of police (ASP) Munshi Atiqur Rahman (now on LPR) and Abul Kalam Azad, Dhaka.

The summonses were issued due to their repeated failure to show up before the court in recent months. Earlier the court was compelled to issue arrest warrants against the nine for this reason.

The judge, however, recorded the deposition of two prosecution witnesses yesterday. They are Assistant Registrar of the Osmani Medical College Hospital Dr Quamrul Alam and the then Officer-in-charge of Sylhet Kotwali Police Station SA Newaji (now OC Munshiganj Police Station). With these two, depositions of 46 prosecution witnesses out of the 57 have been recorded.

The judge fixed December 26 and 27 for recording of depositions of the remaining prosecution witnesses