

Bangabandhu killers

FROM PAGE 1
-Hafiz and Shahjahan--were ready to pull levers to slide apart the scaffolds.

It was 12:05am. Dhaka Jail Superintendent Touhidul Islam dropped a handkerchief from his hand to give signal to the hangmen. The two chief hangmen pulled the levers.

Sultan Shahriar and Farooq were kept hanging for half an hour to confirm their death, witnesses said.

At 12:35am, two other killers of Bangabandhu--AKM Mohiuddin and Bazul Huda--were brought to the gallows. They were also executed in a similar fashion.

Then it was the turn for Mohiuddin Ahmed. He was brought to a gallows at 1:05am and was hanged following all rituals.

The authorities had taken up a three-layer security measure for the execution.

Members of Rapid Action Battalion, police and armed police battalion were deployed around Dhaka Central Jail. Vehicular movement was restricted on the road in front of the jail gate.

Besides, law enforcement and intelligence agencies were kept alert across the country to avert any untoward incident.

As the news spread earlier that the five convicts would be executed, several hundred people started gathering at the jail gate in the evening, reported our staff correspondents Rashidul Hasan and Shaheen Mollah. A lot of people brought out processions in different parts of the capital including Bangabandhu's residence in Dhanmondi and Dhaka University campus.

Civil Surgeon Mushfiqur Rahman, Inspector General (Prisons) Ashraf Islam Khan, Deputy Commissioner Zillar Rahman, four magistrates led by the Dhaka district additional deputy commissioner, Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder and Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner AKM Shahidul Hoque arrived at the jail after 10:00pm yesterday.

Jail sources said they bathed the convicts around 11:00am. Around half an hour later the civil surgeon and two other doctors conducted medical check-ups of the convicts.

Earlier, the two gallows beside the condemned cells in the jail were prepared for the execution.

The compound was lit with floodlights around 11:00pm last night.

The bodies of the five were sent to their village homes by five ambulances by 3:30am under police and Rab escort after conducting post mortem, said Jail Superintendent Touhidul Islam.

People were seen throwing shoes at an ambulance carrying one of the dead bodies.

The five hangmen who performed the execution are Hafiz, Mohammad Shahjahan, Faruq, Raju and Sanwar.

REVIEW PETITION DISMISSED

Earlier yesterday, following the dismissal of his review petition, convict Syed Farooq Rahman in the afternoon appealed to the president for clemency, which President Zillur Rahman rejected.

Dhaka Jail Superintendent Touhidul Islam last night confirmed The Daily Star that they received the president's rejection order.

The Appellate Division rejected the review petitions as they contained no new arguments and any legal grounds for reviewing the Supreme Court judgment confirming the death sentences.

In all the petitions, the counsel of the convicts reiterated points that had already been argued during the hearing of their appeals against the High Court verdict. The HC had rejected those pleas.

The four-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Md Tafazzul Islam pronounced the order yesterday morning.

The other members of the Appellate Division bench were justices BK Das, Md Muzammel Hossain and SK Sinha. They heard arguments on the review petitions for three days from January 24.

Killers Syed Farooq Rahman, Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, Mohiuddin Ahmed, Bazul Huda and AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed, who were in condemned cells of Dhaka Central Jail, had filed the review petitions with the Supreme Court against its verdict.

Law Minister Shafiqur Ahmed told reporters that as per jail code, the jail authori-

ties should execute the convicts between the 21st and 28th days after the trial court issued death warrants against them.

The death warrants were issued on January 3 and the countdown started the same day, Shafiqur said, adding that this means the last date for execution is January 31.

Earlier in the day, the law minister held a meeting at his office with Home Minister Sahara Khatun, State Minister for Law Quamrul Islam, Chief State Counsel Anisul Huq, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam, Additional Law Secretary Anwarul Haque, Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder, Inspector General of Prisons Brig Gen Ashraf Islam Khan and Dhaka Jail Superintendent Touhidul Islam.

The meeting was held to decide the next course of action following the passage of the SC orders.

On November 19 last year, the Supreme Court awarded death penalty to 12 convicts. Apart from the five executed today, six are on the run and one died.

In an instant reaction to the dismissal of the review petitions, Chief State Counsel Anisul Huq and Attorney General Mahbubey Alam told reporters that they are happy with the apex court's order as they got justice in the case.

"Our fight was for establishing the rule of law and justice, not envy, and we got justice," Anisul Huq said.

Mahbubey Alam said the trial proceeding of one of the most heinous killings in history came to an end with the dismissal of the review petitions.

Barrister Abdullah-Al Mamun, lawyer for two convicts, told The Daily Star that they accepted the SC orders although they were disappointed with the dismissal of the review petitions.

Mamun urged the prime minister to show mercy to the convicts as a gesture of kindness.

FAROOQ'S MERCY PETITION

Convict Farooq Rahman sought presidential clemency through the jail authority.

The jail authorities forwarded the petition to the law ministry through the home ministry for legal opinion, a law ministry official told The Daily Star. But the law ministry subsequently opined against presidential mercy to Farooq.

The law ministry sent back the petition to the home ministry, saying although it is the president's prerogative to grant mercy, it would not be judicious to pardon the condemned convicts of Bangabandhu murder case.

Three other condemned former army officers--Mohiuddin Ahmed, AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed and Bazul Huda--earlier sought mercy from the president, which the president rejected on January 18.

Land prices

FROM PAGE 16
possible fee, possible price of land.

He mentioned that the rate of land registration over the last few months declined due to the increase in land prices, which led to increase in other costs, although the registration fee was reduced.

Answering to a question, he hinted that the rates of registration fee might increase, not decrease, in the readjustment.

Replying to another question, he said that it is taking some time to take a decision as they had to conduct a field survey.

Asked about the possible advantages when the decision will take effect, Muhith said that the rate of doing registration would increase as people will be encouraged to make registration of land at the exact price.

Besides, the use of black money will also decrease as the registration fee and the market price of land will be close and finally the harassment of common people by the Board of Revenue, Housing and Public Works Ministry and Land Ministry will be mitigated.

When his comment was sought as to whether the price of flats in the urban areas will increase or not, Muhith said, "I don't think so."

Land Minister Rezaul Karim Hira, State Minister for Housing and Public Works Abdul Mannan Khan and officials of the ministries concerned were present.

Top admin reshuffled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The civil administration yesterday witnessed a reshuffle with eight secretaries and additional secretaries transferred.

Of them, two were made officers on special duty (OSD) at the establishment ministry, according to a ministry gazette notification.

Energy and Mineral Resources Secretary Mohammad Mohsin was made a member of the privatisation commission.

Mohsin replaced Sheikh AK Motahar Hossain who had been made OSD. Acting Secretary of the Bridges Division Mohammad Jahid Hossain was also made OSD.

Additional Secretary of Economic Relations Division Mohammad Mesbah Uddin was made acting secretary of the Energy and Mineral Resources Division.

Food and Disaster Management Secretary Mohammad Mokhlesur Rahman was made secretary of the Disaster Management and Relief Division while Additional Secretary of the Health and Family Welfare Ministry Barun Dev Mitra was made acting secretary of the Food Division.

Under the food and disaster management ministry two divisions have recently been created. They are Disaster Management and Relief Division and Food Division.

Additional Secretary of Finance Division Mohammad Shafiqur Rahman was transferred to the ministry's Bank and Financial Division as acting secretary.

Additional Secretary of Economic Relations Division Mohammad Mosharrif Hossain Bhuiyan was made acting secretary of Bridges Division.

53 waterways

FROM PAGE 16
leased in many places and the lessees are putting up bamboo fences for fishing," he said.

"It is driving us towards a serious disaster. Therefore, the prime minister should take important steps to stop it," he added.

In reply, the PM said, "Stern actions will be taken against those who will create obstacle to the flow of rivers."

Replying to lawmakers' queries, the premier described her government's efforts to save the country from adverse effects of climate change and increase agricultural production through development of seeds able to adapt to drought, salinity and flood.

On Opposition Leader Khaleda Zia's opinion that the prime minister has disgraced the country by "begging" at the Copenhagen summit, Hasina said, "I am working for the welfare of the people of the country. I talked for our people and the country at the climate change summit.

"We are trying to save our people and others who will be affected by climate change. But she [Khaleda] sees our efforts as begging. The question comes if she is aware of the consequence of climate change in our country," said Hasina.

"We have every right to demand compensation since we are not responsible for the effects of climate change...It is not a matter of begging, it is a matter of our rights."

Kibria killed

FROM PAGE 16
SAMS Kibria, alleged Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in parliament yesterday.

"Truth has been revealed through investigation that the criminals of four-party alliance were involved in the killing of Kibria. Trial of the killers must be held," she said during the question-answer session.

On the death anniversary of Kibria yesterday, she expressed her deep gratitude towards late Kibria saying he was a successful finance minister and also a member of the Awami League advisory council.

Taking the floor on a point of order, Awami League lawmaker Abu Zahir, who was elected from late Kibria's constituency, said the BNP-Jamaat-led government blamed "internal conflict" of Awami League for the killing. They also misdirected the investigation, he said.

He demanded the interrogation of BNP Senior Vice-Chairman Tarique Rahman, Jamaat-e-Islami chief Matiur Rahman Nizami, BNP leader Harris Chowdhury and former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar to identify the mastermind and the perpetrators.

In response to the point of order, Deputy Speaker Col (ret'd) Shawkat Ali, who was presiding over the sitting at that time, said the government will take necessary steps to ensure justice.

Santu escapes

FROM PAGE 16
SUV carrying Santu was partially damaged in the attack with one of its windows shattered.

The car carrying Chakma Raja Barrister Debashis Roy, in the convoy, also came under the attacks.

Later in another incident a car carrying Nikhil Kumar, chairman of Rangamati Hill District Council, to the meeting, also came under a brick attack at Atharo Mile area of Naniyarchar upazila in Rangamati.

He escaped unhurt and took refuge in the nearby Armed Police Battalion camp.

After reaching the circuit house around 11:00am, Santu Larma told journalists that had the government provided him with proper security, the perpetrators would not be able to carry out the attacks. He accused the administration of showing negligence in ensuring his security.

"How can we discuss resolution of the CHT crisis if the administration shows negligence in providing security? I talked to the administration about providing me with security as UPDF wanted to liquidate me. But the administration did not show respect to me as the regional council chairman," he said. He also demanded banning of UPDF in the hill tracts.

Police escorting Santu's convoy, however, told reporters that they witnessed only one attack near Maischhari area.

K h a g r a c h h a r i

34 years for justice

FROM PAGE 1
of his daughter Sheikh Hasina. "Thoughts about the security of my life and other various adversities led me to delay filing of the case regarding the incident," a note from the case's complainant AFM Mohitul Islam in the FIR (first information report) filed with Dhanmondi police station on October 2, 1996 gives an idea of how adverse the situation was for filing a case in the aftermath of Bangabandhu's assassination.

In November 1996, Hasina's first government repealed the black indemnity ordinance of 1975, paving the way for the trial.

Following investigation, submission of charge sheet, and framing of charges, the trial court completed its proceedings on November 8, 1998, pronouncing death sentences for 15 accused and acquitting four others.

However, the trial was to face many political and legal hurdles that would contribute to further prolonging of the whole trial process since the verdict of trial court.

The uncertainty started clouding the fate of the case as first several High Court judges and then Supreme Court felt embarrassed and preferred to refrain from holding the trial at that time.

The reasons for the judges' embarrassment could not be known, but the matter was widely discussed among the people.

The then chief justice Latifur Rahman, who later became the chief of a caretaker government, writes briefly in his book 'Tattabodhaya Sorkarer Dinguli O Amar Katha' (The Days of Caretaker Government and My Version) about the judges' embarrassment.

"Usually, judges feel embarrassment with regard to cases which they litigated as lawyers, or if any of their relatives or special friends is involved in the case, or if the judges were somehow directly involved in the case. Otherwise no judge can decline to receive any case," Justice Latifur Rahman says in his book.

He observes that in the past judges used to write, "I am embarrassed to hear this case" in courts' order books, and the chief justice would send the cases to other courts right away. "However, it doesn't seem to me that judges used to feel embarrassed much back then," he says.

"When most of the senior judges felt embarrassed to hear Bangabandhu killing case, it seemed to the [Supreme Judicial] Council that the judges were reluctant to hear the case and avoiding responsibilities," says Justice Latifur Rahman who was the chief justice from January 1, 2000 to February 28, 2001.

The hearing of the death reference finally started in the High Court on June 28, 2000, about 20 months after the verdict of the trial court, and was completed on April 30, 2001 after the judgment of the third judge.

Judges' embarrassment in the Appellate Division of Supreme Court further delayed completion of the trial of the historic case.

The case was not heard for a single day during BNP's five-year tenure (2001-2006) because of a 'lack of judges' in the Appellate Division.

At one point, Justice

Superintendent of Police Amir Jafar told The Daily Star that Santu Larma was given proper protection all the way from Rangamati to Khagrachhari. "We've already started an investigation to find out who were responsible for the attack," he added.

Additional police were deployed at different points ahead of the Land Commission meeting, he said.

Khagrachhari Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Abdullah also claimed that proper protection was provided to Santu Larma. "It's not possible to deploy security personnel at every point."

When asked about PCJSS' claim that UPDF carried out the attacks, Khagrachhari district unit Press Secretary of UPDF Niron Chakma, and Rangamati district unit Coordinator Shantideb Chakma denied the allegation saying the attacks might have taken place due to internal disputes of PCJSS.

PCJSS and allied PCP brought out protest marches, and held a protest rally on the premises of Rangamati Deputy Commissioner's Office following the attacks.

Presided over by Gunendu Bikash Chakma, president of PCJSS district unit, the rally was also addressed, among others by its Secretary Bodi Satta Chakma, and high ranking PCJSS leader Ushatan Talukder.

They blamed UPDF for the attack and demanded immediate arrest of the perpetrators and exemplary punishment for them.

Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury, who was the chief justice from March 1, 2001 to June 17, 2002, suggested appointing a judge on an ad hoc basis for hearing the case. The BNP-led government, however, made no move.

A three-member bench was finally formed in the Supreme Court to hear the leave-to-appeal petitions after Fakhruddin Ahmed-led caretaker government took office. The bench allowed the condemned convicts to file regular appeals against the High Court verdict.

But hearing of their regular appeals was ensured only after the present Awami League-led alliance government appointed a few judges to the Supreme Court and set up a five-member special bench to hear the appeals.

The hearing started on October 5, 2009. After 29 days of hearing, the apex court delivered the much-awaited final verdict that rejected the appeals of the killers and upheld the high court verdict of death sentences for the 12 killers.

Following the SC verdict that has been termed by many as 'the best historic judgment for the nation', the killers filed review petitions for commutation of the sentences.

The SC yesterday morning rejected the plea of the killers, and President Zillur Rahman earlier this month had rejected the mercy petitions of four of the condemned convicts. Only Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan refrained from begging mercy.

All five condemned convicts were executed in the first hour of this morning.

It's quiet

FROM PAGE 1
too much to bear. Everybody was asking when the execution would take place.

Then the huge security vehicles started parking closer to the main gate and policemen lined up to create a path from the gate to the ambulances. A broken moon waiting to bloom into a full moon hung low just over the gate.

The first drift of news came--two had been hanged. A joyous crowd outside the police cordon were shouting cheers.

Inside, the hangmen wrapped up the executions at 1:05am.

Outside, the crowd lingered through the dark until the bodies of the killers had been sent off to their villages, escorted by Rab and police personnel.

FAMILIES VISIT THE CONDEMNED
At least 64 family members and relatives of the five convicts visited them in jail in the afternoon as the authorities invited them over telephone.

Bazul Huda's wife Nafiza Mariam and 23 others went to jail to meet him, while AKM Mohiuddin was visited by 20 people including his wife.

The relatives of Huda and Mohiuddin entered the jail in four groups.

Besides, 12 members of Sultan Shahriar's family, five members of Mohiuddin's family and four members of Farooq Rahman's family visited them.

The relatives include wives, mothers, sisters, brothers, nieces, nephews, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law and other close relatives.

Forgery

FROM PAGE 16
the gangs cannot adopt the new currency printing technology so fast.

"Old currencies should be replaced in every five years so that the gangs involved in making phoney money fall behind and their forged notes become useless," said an investigator concerned with anonymity.

HOW THE GANGS OPERATE
The investigators said each of the gangs has around 50 to 60 men divided into several groups across the country. Each group of four to five members along with its leader operates in busy market places, bus and launch terminals, railway stations and border areas.

The team leaders collect a certain amount of fake notes from manufacturers and distribute those to the field workers.

A field worker gets a commission of Tk 100 to Tk 120 for blending a forged Tk 500 note successfully in the market.

A manufacturer gets Tk 70 to Tk 80 from a fake Tk 500 note while the making cost is only Tk 12 to Tk 15 each. The rest of the profit money goes to the middlemen like the team leaders, said Maj Mohammad Mahbul Haque of Rab-3, who led in Wednesday's drive.

Usually unemployed smart youths are recruited for this clandestine job, he added.

The field workers use code names like 091 to be identified in their group. That is why a detained field worker can hardly give names of other operatives or group members.

Sohel Taj

FROM PAGE 16
there to welcome the lawmaker.

Sohel Taj, son of the country's first prime minister Tajuddin Ahmed and the youngest member of Sheikh Hasina-led council of ministers, first refused to accept the protocol but agreed to it later.

On Tuesday, the Cabinet Division in a letter to the home ministry said Sohel Taj is state minister without portfolio, and asked it to provide him state protocol.

Sohel Taj stepped down as state minister on June 1 last year citing personal reasons. His resignation followed reported criticisms from some high-ups in the government. There were also reports of "misunderstanding" with home minister on different issues.

He had submitted his resignation letter to the prime minister.

Prior to that Sohel Taj was reported to have said he would leave the country if he could not work independently.

The home minister however said at that time he (Sohel) had applied for leave. And she knew nothing about his resignation.

Sohel Taj left for the US on June 9 and stayed there with his family.

Sources in the ruling Awami League said Sohel Taj has returned home to avert losing membership of parliament for absence from the House sittings for 90 days in a row.

They also said the prime minister's son Sajeed Wazed Joy, who also lives in the US, had talks with him (Sohel) in this regard.

Seeking anonymity, an AL insider said, "Sohel Taj might also be made a joint general secretary of the party."

In this connection, he mentioned that a post of joint general secretary in the party's 73-member central executive committee is still vacant.

His remarks about Sohel Taj however could not be confirmed from party high-ups.

Sri Lankan

FROM PAGE 16
The election commission declared Rajapaksa the winner with 57.8 percent of the vote to Sarath Fonseka's 40 percent. The president now must rebuild the country after last year's successful offensive to destroy the Tamil Tiger separatists after 25 years of conflict.

Fonseka refused to accept the results, accusing Rajapaksa of using the state media to attack him, misappropriating public funds for his campaign and preventing displaced minority Tamils whose support the opposition candidate was counting on from voting.

In a letter to the electoral commission, he said he would initiate legal proceedings to have the results annulled.

As the returns came in, troops surrounded the Cinnamon Lake Hotel after about 400 people, including alleged army deserters, gathered inside with Fonseka, military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara said.

The troops remained there throughout the day.

"We don't know what's their motive, and as a protective measure we have deployed troops around the hotel, and people who go in and come out are being checked," Nanayakkara told The Associated Press. He said there were no plans to arrest Fonseka.

Tigers suffer

FROM PAGE 16
hardly needed a bat on ball as the second delivery of the innings went for two byes to bring India a deserved victory.

Having started the day on 228 for three with a resolve to overtake the Indian total and stretch the lead to as much as possible, Bangladesh innings screeched to a halt thanks to a superb 7-87 from left-arm pacesman Zaheer Khan.

All the expectations and dreams that crept building up following the previous day's dreamlike partnership between Tamim Iqbal and Zunaed Siddiqui ended in utter nightmare for the Tigers with their frail nature of batting once again had its head out. This innings was reminiscent of the Duneid Test exactly two years ago where after an outstanding opening partnership of 161 runs between Tamim Iqbal and Zunaed Siddiqui, Bangladesh got bowled out for 244 and in the way handed the hosts an easy nine-wicket victory.

Go back five years to Peshawar where Bangladesh surrendered to the reverse swing of Shoaib Akhtar, going down from a strong position of 310 for two to be 361 all out. Instances such as those are plentiful and that's why the supporters still fear to dream about the miracle.

It was however a far cry from the first hour's play when the two overnight batsmen Mohammad Ashraf and nightwatchman Shahadat Hossain seemed least troubled by the Indian bowling. The two put on 62 runs in the first hour. Ashraf was usually cautious in his approach, and it seemed like he was looking to stay there for a long time.

His life, struggle

FROM PAGE 1
his parents, he began his school education at Gimadanga Primary School. He then moved on to Gopalganj Public School before being transferred to a missionary school. However, in 1934, he had a break of studies, which lasted four years, owing to an operation on one of his eyes.

Having completed his studies from Islamia College in Calcutta in 1947, Bangabandhu took admission in law at Dhaka University. However, his active involvement in politics led to his expulsion from the university in 1948. It was also the year in which he went to jail, twice. That was but the beginning of a political career that would lead to innumerable spells in incarceration for the future founder of Bangladesh.

By 1954, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had transformed himself into an activist politician thanks to his involvement in the formation of the Awami Muslim League in June 1949. At the provincial elections of March 1954, the Awami League played a pioneering role in the creation of the Jukto Front, which convincingly defeated the ruling Muslim League by winning 223 seats out of a total of 237. The AL alone won 143 seats. Mujib won his seat from Gopalganj and joined Sher-e-Bangla's cabinet as minister for agriculture and forests. The new ministry was, however, dismissed under Section 92-A by the Pakistan central government at the end of May. Mujib was arrested at Dhaka airport on his return from Karachi. He was to remain in prison till December of the year.

In 1955, Bangabandhu was elected member of the Pakistan constituent assembly. On 25 August, as moves got underway to establish One Unit in West Pakistan and change the name of East Bengal to East Pakistan, he demanded a referendum or plebiscite on the issue. It was also the year when his party shed the term 'Muslim' from its name and became the Awami League. By 1956, Mujib was a minister in the provincial government of Ataur Rahman Khan. In May of the following year, however, he resigned in order to focus on the organizational activities of the Awami League.

Following the imposition of martial law throughout Pakistan on 7 October 1958, Bangabandhu was arrested on 11 October and implicated in one case after another. Released after fourteen months, he was re-arrested at the jail gate. He was freed in 1961 after he had filed a writ petition before the East Pakistan High Court. On 6 February 1962, he was arrested again but released on 2 June. He travelled to Lahore in September and assisted his leader Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy in the formation of the National Democratic Front, an alliance of political

parties opposed to the Ayub Khan regime. Following Suhrawardy's death in Beirut on 5 December 1963, Sheikh Mujib revived the Awami League in January 1964. It was a move which clearly demonstrated his desire to mould the party along the lines he thought would turn it into a voice of the Bengali masses. He campaigned all over East Pakistan to drum up support for Miss Fatima Jinnah at the upcoming presidential election. He was arrested by the regime fourteen days before the election but later freed by order of the High Court.