



Recipients of 'Ekushey Padak' for 2012 pose with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the award giving ceremony at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city yesterday. Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad and State Minister for Cultural Affairs Advocate Promode Mankin were present. (Story on Page 20)

PILKHANA CARNAGE Havildar shot for preventing attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A prosecution witness yesterday told a court that a mutineer shot at him while he was trying to prevent some 10-15 armed jawans from entering the bungalow of the director general of erstwhile BDR (Bangladesh Rifles) on February 25, 2009.

"As I stopped the armed soldiers, sepoy Selim Reza aimed a gun at me. Instantly, I lay on the ground and he (Selim) shot me. The bullet hit me in the left hip", said havildar Babul Mia who still bears the mark of the bullet wound.

The armed mutineers marched towards the Bungalow firing, Babul said, adding that he heard gunshots from inside of the house.

Babul said an on-duty sepoy took him to the BDR hospital in Pilkhana for treatment, as his condition was worsening due to bleeding.

The Metropolitan Session Judge's Court recorded Babul's deposition.

Later the defence lawyers cross-examined him.

Yesterday, two other witnesses--nayek Rabintra Kumar Pal and subedar Anwarul Islam--also gave depositions and were cross-examined.

The court adjourned the proceedings till February 22.

'People themselves would have to realise rights'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Human Rights Commission Chairman Prof Mizanur Rahman yesterday said people themselves would have to realise their rights as politicians do nothing for them.

He made this remark at a discussion at the city's Jatiya Press Club. SHAREE, a non-government organisation, held the programme to mark the first anniversary of Bangladesh Dalit Shadow Panchayet.

Addressing the programme as the chief guest, the NHRC chairman said women of the Dalit community have to raise demands for an end to social discrimination.

He also urged all to eliminate gender disparity to facilitate women empowerment.

Empowerment of women should not be in theory only, Mizanur said.

"No discrimination between man and woman is accepted," he said adding that women were making good contribution to the nation's development.

Ramananda Das, president of Bangladesh Dalit Rishi Panchayet Forum, presided over the programme where Sadeka Halim, information commissioner, and Nirmal Chandra Das, secretary general of Bangladesh Harijon Oikya Parishad, also spoke.

KILLING OF PIROJPUR MAGISTRATE, 2 OTHERS

Sayedee was involved

Witness tells war crimes tribunal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 27th prosecution witness yesterday told the International Crimes Tribunal that Jamaat-e-Islami leader Delwar Hossain Sayedee was directly involved in killing his [witness'] brother and two others during the Liberation War.

Saif Hafizur Rahman, 65, a lawmaker elected in 1986 and 1988 and also the current Narail bar association president, told the tribunal that his brother Saif Mizanur Rahman, then Pirojpur district magistrate, was picked up by Pakistani occupation army on May 5, 1971.

According to a then Pakistan collaborator, Sayedee was in the car that took away Mizanur Rahman, said the witness.

Then sub-divisional police officer Faizur Rahman and acting sub-divisional officer Abdur Razzaque were the other two picked up by the occupation army that day, he added.

The three were murdered on the bank of the Baleshwar River, Hafizur said, adding that he heard of the incident from Khan Bahadur Syed Mohammad Afzal, the aforementioned collaborator of the Pakistan army.

The three-member tribunal led by its chairman Justice Md Nizamul Huq yesterday finished recording the deposition and cross-examination of Hafizur Rahman.

Sayedee was present at the court throughout the proceedings. He spent much of his time reading a book.

The Jamaat naye-e-ameer is among the six Jamaat and two BNP leaders facing the charge of crimes against humanity during the Liberation War in 1971.

The witness said after receiving the news of the murder, he along with his father and sister went to see Afzal and learned from him what happened to Mizanur Rahman.

"Afzal saheb said my brother was arrested for helping freedom fighters and giving them arms from the armoury," said Hafizur

Rahman, adding, "Before he was killed, he was asked to say 'Pakistan Zindabad' [long live Pakistan], but instead my brother said 'Joy Bangla'."

The three detainees were first stabbed with bayonets and then shot, Hafizur continued, "Their bodies were disposed of in the river."

According to the witness, he also learned from Afzal that Sayedee was directly involved in killing, raping, looting and acts of arson in Pirojpur in 1971.

After the deposition, defence counsel Mizanul Islam began cross-examining the witness.

Answering to different questions, the witness said he had twice been elected as a lawmaker during Ershad rule and is now serving as the vice president of Narail district unit Awami League.

He also told the tribunal that he did not file any case regarding his brother's murder.

At one point the defence counsel asked him whether he had made his bar association pass a resolution that barred its members to fight a case against him on behalf of local indigenous community.

The witness said it was not true.

When pointed out that such a report was published in a popular Bangla daily on July 26, 2009, he said he had sent a rejoinder denying the allegation but it was not printed.

The witness also said he did not initiate any legal proceedings against the newspaper although it had also brought an allegation against him of forging documents of a disputed property in the same report.

Another defence counsel Manjur Ahmed Ansari later took over the cross-examination and suggested that Hafizur Rahman had joined Awami League to get elected as a lawmaker again and that he gave false statement in a false case against the Jamaat leader as the central leaders of Awami League had asked him to do so.

The witness said it was not true.

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