

Nizami

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Bangladesh.

As a superior leader of the organisation and the force, which collaborated with the Pakistani occupation force, Nizami has also been charged for failing to prevent his subordinates from committing international crimes.

The most notable of the sixteen charges brought against Nizami is his role in eliminating the best brains of the nation through planned killing of intellectuals and professionals prior to Bangladesh's victory on December 16, 1971.

"Towards the period when international crimes were being committed in Bangladesh, you [Nizami] were president of ICS and head of the infamous Al Badr, an auxiliary force that committed said crimes all over Bangladesh," said the International Crimes Tribunal-1 reading out the charges against Nizami.

However, sensing defeat, the Pakistani occupation

and auxiliary forces, especially Al Badr formed with the members of ICS, carried out "selective elimination of respected professionals and intellectuals" in the country to give a "mortal blow" to free and of independent Bangladesh, the tribunal added.

The victims' houses were burnt; they were drugged out, often blindfolded, tortured, murdered, and their bodies were dumped in mass graves and other places, it added.

"Such attacks had largely spread out on around December 14, 1971, hours before victory of Bangladesh against Pakistani occupation and auxiliary forces," said the tribunal.

These were orchestrated and silently executed plans to eliminate a group of individuals, who were all members of a national ethnic and racial group," it added.

"Through your [Nizami's] above acts and commissions, you have committed the crime of genocide as

intended to eliminate the above victims [intellectuals and professionals] and others in whole and in part as members of a national ethnic and racial group as crime of genocide."

Tribunal-1 Chairman Justice Md Nizamul Huq yesterday read out the charges with an introduction to the formation of the tribunal, a brief history of the Liberation War, a profile of Nizami and submissions of the prosecution and the defence along with the court's views on the case.

Justice Md Anwarul Haque and AKM Zaheer Ahmed are the other members of the three-member tribunal.

According to the charges, Nizami had conspired with the Pakistani occupation forces, planned and incited crimes, and was complicit in murders, rapes, looting, destruction of property and was responsible for commissioning of international crimes in 1971.

"We are of the opinion

that there are sufficient grounds to presume that the accused Motiur Rahman Nizami had committed offences under section 3(2), 4(1) and 4(2) of the International Crimes Tribunal Act, as such we find that there is a prima facie case against the accused," said Justice Huq.

Nizami had assisted Ghulam Azam, who is facing similar charges at the tribunal, in forming different auxiliary forces including Shanti [peace] Committee, Razakar, Al Badr and Al Shams, said Justice Huq.

Two weeks ago when the Tribunal-1 framed charges against Ghulam Azam, it said he played a key role in forming these auxiliary forces. These forces helped the Pakistani forces commit atrocities across the country.

Three million people were killed and over two lakh women were raped during the nine-month-long war.

Nizami committed the alleged crimes by delivering speeches on different occasions in and outside of Dhaka during the War and issuing directives to his subordinates, among other means.

1971, where Pakistani army gathered the victims in front of a large ditch and shot them to death.

Some 30 to 40 women were also raped in the incident. Many of the rape victims were forced to leave the country, and as such effectively deported to India.

Nizami sat still in the dock as the tribunal chairman read out the charges. He was wearing a Jinnah cap [a dark brown cap named after Pakistani leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah] and cardigan over white punjabi and white pyjamas.

He was produced before the tribunal at 10:30am. He first took a seat in the dock at the back of the courtroom. Before starting the proceedings of framing charges, the tribunal asked Nizami to sit in the dock near the judges' bench.

Other charges brought against Nizami include his involvement in the killing of 450 civilians in Bausgari village in Pabna on May 14, 1971, where Pakistani army gathered the victims in front of a large ditch and shot them to death.

"You [Nizami] verbally abused detained Jalal, Bodhi, Rumi, Jewel and Azad. You told the Pakistani captain to kill all of them before the president declared general amnesty," said the tribunal.

"Excepting one, all of them were killed following your [Nizami's] suggestion."

Other charges against him include his involvement in the torture and murder of Kasimuddin and two others in Pabna town on June 4, 1971; in the killing of 21 unarmed civilians in Ishwardi's Arpara and Bhuter Bari villages on April 14, 1971, and another 52 people in Pabna's Dulaura village on November 11, 1971; and his frequent visits in Mohammadpur's Physical Training Institute, which was used as a detention camp and torture centre.

The tribunal took the charges into cognisance on January 9 this year. Nizami was one among the first four who were shown arrested in the war crimes charges in 2010.

After the proceedings, Abdur Razzaq, chief counsel for the Jamaat leaders, told the media the prosecution had placed 15 charges against Nizami, but the tribunal framed 16 charges, which was "not correct".

He said the tribunal has legal right to add the additional charge, but they are unhappy as they did not get an opportunity to argue against the additional charge.

Razzaq added they would file a petition seeking review of the indictment order.

Space drink

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A groundbreaking study has shown that the concoction, known as AS10, dramatically reduces wrinkles, blemishes and sun damage after four months.

Visia photographs, which reveal the condition of the skin below the surface by using different types of light exposure, were taken of 180 participants at the start of the trial, and again after four months of drinking two shots of AS10 a day.

By the end UV spots were reduced by 30 percent and wrinkles by 17 percent.

AS10 was developed as a nutritional supplement for astronauts to protect them from the damaging effects of high levels of radiation outside the Earth's atmosphere.

The drink contains a blend of fruits including cupuacu (a Brazilian fruit from the cacao plant family), acai, acerola, prickly pear and yumberry, which all provide vitamins and phytochemicals -- compounds known to block the harmful effects of radiation. Other ingredients are grape, green tea, pomegranate and vegetables.

Radiation particles alter

oxygen molecules in the body to create reactive oxygen species (ROS) -- so-called "free radicals" which damage cells in a process known as oxidative stress. This process has been linked to diseases such as cancer and Alzheimer's. The toxic molecules are also thought to play a role in the skin ageing process.

ROS are created naturally within the body as cells generate energy, but also through environmental factors such as chemicals and ultraviolet light from the sun, the strongest stress to skin. Mobile phone radiation, cigarette smoke and alcohol also generate ROS.

"Think of them as little Pac-men taking bites out of molecules that are essential for cells to function," says Dr Aaron Barson, the nutritional scientist from Utah who carried out the AS10 study after patients reported dramatic improvement from the drink.

AS10 is thought to improve skin condition because the drink's large quantities of antioxidants ward off oxidative stress, allowing the skin to heal naturally. Antioxidants

attach themselves to ROS and neutralise them before they cause damage.

Barson says, "The skin is the first body tissue to be exposed to UV rays and we know it is sensitive to oxidative stress. Our study shows it greatly benefits from a reduction in this stress. The effects of oxidative stress on the skin can be quickly modified and the skin can heal itself by drinking AS10."

Barson suggests that the results may have been even better had the trial been conducted during the winter, when exposure to ultraviolet light would have been less.

A second, larger study is planned this summer to investigate for how long the effects last and whether skin condition reaches a plateau or deteriorates once the drink is no longer consumed.

The main drawback is the high price of the drink. The women in the trial drank a sherry glass -- 60ml -- of AS10 a day. At £30 per 750ml bottle, the cost was just under £300 over the four months.

Polls under AL

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residence in the afternoon.

After the meeting, Deputy Press Secretary to the Prime Minister Bijan Lal Dev briefed reporters.

The prime minister said 5,197 elections including 12 by-polls, city corporation, upazila, municipality and Union Parishad were held in a free, fair and transparent manner with spontaneous participation of all in the last three years. "Not a single allegation was raised about the polls," she claimed.

Hasina also said the Election Commission was also working freely and independently and none was interfering in its activities.

She said the government was also working to strengthen the country's parliamentary system as

the parliamentary standing committees were formed on the very first session of the current Jatiya Sangsad.

The prime minister said her government contained terrorism and militancy with an iron hand.

She said Bangladesh's image had been tarnished in the world as the country was turned into a safe haven for militants and terrorists during the rule of the past BNP-Jamaat alliance government.

Hasina said her government was fully committed to promotion and protection of human rights. "The National Human Rights Commission has been functioning independently and the commission's dealing with the Right to Information is also functional."

She said the country's economy was doing well despite the global economic meltdown since the government maintained a good production of food and industrial production that helped the country to attain over six percent GDP growth rate over the last couple of years.

Terming the world as a global village, the prime minister said the government had to take some measures to nullify the impacts of the global recession.

About climate change, Hasina called upon the developed countries that are mainly responsible for climate change impact to come forward with more support towards the vulnerable countries.

The prime minister expressed satisfaction over

the existing friendly relations between Bangladesh and the United Kingdom, and hoped that the ties would be strengthened in the years to come.

The British minister highly praised Bangladesh's tremendous success in different fields including agriculture, education, food security, women's empowerment and social safety net.

Burt also lauded the capabilities of Bangladesh's garment industry, saying that the sector was playing an important role in the global economy.

He expressed satisfaction over the existing trade and investment relations between the two countries and said Britain would work together with Bangladesh for further development of the ties.

Ambassador-At-Large M Ziauddin, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Sheikh Md Wahid Uz Zaman, PM's Special Assistant Abdus Sobahan Golap and British High Commissioner in Dhaka Robert Gibson were also present.

Later, Malaysian Government's Special Envoy to India and South Asia on Infrastructure Dato Seri S Samy Vellu met the prime minister.

During the meeting, the envoy apprised Hasina of the Malaysian government's project proposal on the proposed Padma Bridge.

Issues relating to investment and trade also came up for discussion.

Communications Minister Obaidul Quader was present, among others.

Malaysia

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In reply to queries, the minister said they would go back to the World Bank (WB) only if it "assures funding within the government's tenure", adding that Bangladesh so far signed only an MoU with Malaysia.

"But we cannot wait for years for the World Bank funding, as we have political pledge to meet," he said. "They [World Bank] may have allegations against one or two high officials but they cannot punish the people of Bangladesh."

Quader also said the government's agreement with the WB expired automatically in January, but the Bank voluntarily extended it for six months.

The WB suspended its funding process for the much-cherished project last September alleging corruption against the then communications minister, Syed Abul Hossain.

Quader told journalists that the government would examine Malaysia's brief outlines in the proposal for a month and hold negotiations to sort out mutual benefits.

Then a ground-breaking ceremony will follow possibly in presence of the prime ministers of both the countries to launch the project work formally, said the minister.

In January, Malaysia formally proposed a \$2.19-billion loan for the bridge project.

The visiting Malaysian delegation includes Dubai-based financial company Capital Trust Group and a team of technical experts. Malaysian High Commissioner to Dhaka Jamaluddin bin Sabeh accompanied them.

Bridges Division Secretary Khaniker Anwarul Islam and Shafiqul Islam, project director of the Padma Multi-purpose Bridge Project, were present at the press briefing.

An expert team of the delegation is scheduled to visit the project site at Mawa and Zajira today.

Fair polls impossible

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when the main opposition BNP and its allies have declared an ultimatum for the government to restore the caretaker government system by June 10. On the other hand, the prime minister is sticking to her party's stance that the polls will be held under the political power.

"MPs cannot use people's mandate against people," he observed.

Sujan Secretary Dr Badiul Alam Majumder said a political compromise between the ruling party and the main opposition on the 15th Amendment to the Constitution is a must for the sake of democracy.

The 15th Amendment says the election will be held three months before tenure of parliament ends. It also abolishes the caretaker system, which is totally rejected by BNP and its allies that have been taking to the streets for its restoration.

"Many think failure of the two political parties to compromise will hinder peaceful power transfer through polls and create a scope for illegal grabbing of power," Badiul Alam added.

Legal expert Shahid Malik said if Awami League sticks to its stance and holds the polls, BNP will boycott it, leading eventually to grave consequences for the ruling party.

Prof Emazuddin Ahmed suggested a coalition government, if not the caretaker one, for the polls. "The solution must be political, nothing else," he added.

Awami League leader Mahmudur Rahman Manna said the present crisis would deepen unless the two main political parties sit together. "Nothing but such crises in the past paved the way for the 1/11," he said.

Leftist leader Rashed

Khan Menon, MP, ally to the ruling party, asked the speakers to come forward with proposals on the model of the interim government which they demand.

Referring to international media reports, BNP advisory council member Inam Ahmed Chowdhury said involvement of any external forces amid political crisis is unwanted.

ASM Shahjahan, adviser to a former caretaker government, rights activist Dr Hameeda Hossain, independent lawmaker Fazlul Azim, Prof Tareque Shamsur Rahman, leftist leader Ruhin Hossain Prince and Jahangirnagar University Prof Dr Pias Karim also spoke at the discussion moderated by M Hafizuddin Khan, former adviser to a caretaker government.

Associate Project Analyst

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For more details about the position, visit www.adb.org/Employment/NSAS/default.asp

Reporting Arrangement

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- Able to liaise and work effectively with government officials within own work location and with colleagues throughout ADB
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