

WAR CRIMES TRIAL

Sayedee's plea to cross-examine 3 PWs again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The defence of war crimes accused Delwar Hossain Sayedee yesterday appealed to the International Crimes Tribunal-1 to cross-examine once again three of the 28 prosecution witnesses who had testified against the Jamaat naye-e-ameer.

The three-member tribunal will tomorrow decide on recalling the three witnesses -- Mahbulul Alam Hawlader, Ruhul Amin Nobin and Manik Posari.

Defence counsel Mizanul Islam told the tribunal Mahbulul Alam and Posari gave interviews to the media giving their accounts of the Liberation War.

But during cross-examination they said they could not remember whether they had given interviews, said Mizanul Islam, adding, investigation officer of the case Mohammad Helal Uddin made a presentation, in which the witnesses were seen giving interviews.

Another prosecution witness Ruhul Amin during the cross-examination claimed he had completed honours from Dhaka University in 1978.

"But I assume he didn't do it," said Mizanul Islam, adding he now has evidence in favour of his assumption.

Mentioning that the investigation officer produced burned corrugated tin sheets and doorsills of Mahbulul Alam and Posari's houses as evidence against Sayedee, Mizanul said he wants to quiz them about the seized items.

The tribunal headed by Justice Md Nizamul Huq asked the prosecution how Mizanul could make the witnesses remember when they had said they could not remember it.

"Do you want to make them remember by showing the video?" said Justice Nizamul.

Prosecutor Syed Haider Ali echoed the justice. Sayedee, who is facing 20 counts of war crimes charges, was present at the dock during the proceedings.

Later, the defence began cross-examining Helal Uddin for the 14th day and quizzed the investigation officer for two and a half hours about evidence which was exhibited by him.

The proceedings of the tribunal were adjourned until today.

Meanwhile, Ahsanul Haq Hena, defence counsel of BNP lawmaker Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, yesterday continued cross-examination of Sirajul Islam alias Shiru Bangalee.

Sirajul Islam, 64, gave deposition against Salauddin Quader, who is facing 23 specific charges of crimes against humanity committed during the Liberation War.

Sirajul Islam, the third prosecution witness in the case, said he wanted to kill Salauddin Quader and his close associate Syed Wahidul Alam during the War but failed.

During the court proceedings, Salauddin Quader was present at the dock.

Earlier, the defence drew the attention of the tribunal on different problems including shortage of chairs and tables at their room and poor condition of toilet.

In response to his prayer, Justice Nizamul Huq said journalists, visitors and staffs at the tribunal are also facing the same problems.

"These are facts... you [Ahsanul Haq] can manage to use the toilet at the next building, but what our mothers and sisters will do?" the justice said, adding he took initiative about one and a half years ago in this regard but failed.

Nizamul Huq however said he is trying to solve the problems.

The proceeding against Salauddin Quader was adjourned until today.

DISCHARGE PETITION OF MOJAHEED

Defence arguments continue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The defence counsels yesterday continued their arguments for the petition that seek discharge of Jamaat leader Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed from the charges of crimes against humanity at International Crimes Tribunal-2.

Abdur Razzaq, chief of defence counsels of the detained Jamaat leaders, started his submission by saying that the trial was being held for "political purposes", an argument the defence counsel had iterated in the cases of all war crimes accused.

Citing comments of some cabinet members on the war crimes trial published in newspapers, Razzaq claimed that the trial was being "interfered by executives."

"And the executive interference proved that the prosecution is for political purposes", the counsel said and sought his client's discharge.

Repeating his arguments from other war crimes cases, Razzaq claimed that 195 Pakistani army personnel were the "principal accused" of war crimes, and since they were released under a tripartite agreement, their abettors or aides could not be tried.

Mojaheed was a mere student leader during the war, Razzaq said, but the prosecution accused him as a leader of Al Badr Bahini [a collaboration force of Pakistan Army].

"That he [Mojaheed] was the commander of Al Badr must have to be established through evidence. But where is the evi-

dence?" he said. "There is no evidence that he was even a member of Al Badr Bahini."

The prosecution however on May 24 placed a photo of Daily Azad published on December 11, 1971, which shows Mojaheed addressing a meeting of Al Badr.

Earlier, the prosecution alleged that the accused, through his speeches and media statements, provoked his followers to "eliminate" freedom fighters and pro-liberation Bangladeshis in 1971.

Refuting the allegations, Razzaq said as the secretary general of East Pakistan Islami Chhatra Sangha, Mojaheed visited different districts and delivered speeches during the war, but the prosecution had failed to establish a causal link between the speeches and the alleged crimes.

The three-member tribunal headed by its Chairman Justice ATM Fazle Kabir with member Justice Obaidul Hassan and Judge Md Shahinur Islam adjourned the proceedings till today.

Razzaq completed his arguments on seven charges and will resume his arguments today.

Mojaheed, who is facing 32 charges of crimes against humanity allegedly committed during the Liberation War of 1971, was produced at the dock yesterday.

Earlier on the day, the prosecution placed two separate petitions before the tribunal for its consideration.

The tribunal will hold hearing on the petitions tomorrow.



Journalists stage demonstration before Jatiya Press Club yesterday, protesting a police assault on three photojournalists of the daily Prothom Alo and a criminal attack on the office of online news portal bdnews24.com in the capital this week.

PHOTO: STAR

An apology to lawmaker Reza Ali

Yesterday we published a report headlined "Appointment in Nazrul University: Job aspirant blames law-maker for taking bribe" on page-5 which was totally based on an allegation raised by a job seeker. All the parties involved have denied the allegation. The Daily Star did not independently verify the allegation, which is a deviation from our policy of ethical and fair journalism. We apologise to lawmaker Reza Ali for this gross error and the damage that it may have caused to his reputation.

Allowance for all freedom fighters mullied

Says Tajul Islam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has planned to provide special monthly allowance to all freedom fighters (FFs) by this year, State Minister for Liberation War Affairs AB Tajul Islam told in parliament yesterday.

Apart from monthly allowance to the family members of the martyrs, the government now provides allowances to insolvent and war-wounded FFs, Tajul Islam said.

"But now, we have planned to provide allowance to all freedom fighters, irrespective of their economic condition," he said.

ASSAULTS ON JOURNALISTS

6-day ultimatum given to arrest attackers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Journalists of different media houses yesterday issued a six-day ultimatum to the government for arresting the miscreants and policemen involved in the attacks on journalists of online news portal bdnews24.com and daily Prothom Alo this week.

During a two-hour agitation programme before the Jatiya Press Club in the capital, the journalists also warned the government of tougher movement if their demand is not met by June 4.

They decided to submit a memorandum to the speaker of National Parliament on June 5 for enacting a law to ensure the security of the journalists.

They strongly protested the Monday's criminal attack on bdnews24.com journalists and staff and Saturday's police assault on Prothom Alo photojournalists.

The journalists also demanded removal of Officer-in-Charge of Dhanmondi Police

Station Moniruzzaman for attacking the people protesting against the death of Bibhash Chandra Saha, senior reporter of daily The Independent, earlier this month.

Later, they met with Home Minister Shahara Khatun at her ministry around 2:00pm and placed their demands.

Members of Jatiya Press Club, Dhaka Reporters Unity, Crime Reporters Association of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists, Dhaka Union of Journalists and other media houses took part in the rally that started around 11:30am.

Meanwhile, journalists across the country also condemned the incidents and organised protest programmes yesterday.

Ain O Salish Kendra, Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, Progressive Art and Mass Media Workers Forum, Bangladesh Students' Union and Jatiya Mukti Council, in separate statements yesterday, condemned the attack on the journalists of bdnews24.com.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nurunnahar Begum, mother of Mafuha Sultana, additional director general of the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training, died of old age complications at Samarita Hospital in the capital yesterday morning. She was 93.

She left behind her one son, six daughters, many grandchildren, a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn her death.

She will be buried in her family graveyard following namaz-e-janaza on Hashimia Alia Madrasa premises in Cox's Bazar at 11:00am today.

Rafiqul Islam Golap

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Rafiqul Islam Golap, a freedom fighter, died at Dhaka Metropolitan Hospital yesterday at the age of 65.

He left behind his wife, one son, one daughter, a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

Different organisations and political parties, including Bangladesh Mukti Jidha Sangsad, condoled the death.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the second death anniversary of Shamsun Nahar, mother of

Abu Kaosar, special correspondent of the daily Samakal.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani and a doa mahfil will be held at her Palishara village home in Hajiganj of Chandpur, said a press release.



President Zillur Rahman, with the family members of martyrs and wounded peacekeepers of UN peacekeeping missions, at the Bangabandhu International Conference Center yesterday on the occasion of the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers. (Story on Page 2).

PHOTO: PID

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