

Maj Zia wanted

FROM PAGE 20

The two witnesses said they later heard from different sources that Salahuddin had sustained serious injuries while his driver was killed in the attack.

Major Zia was a sector commander and chief of the Z-force during the Liberation War. He later became president of Bangladesh and founded the Bangladesh Nationalist Party in 1978.

Salahuddin joined the BNP in the 1990s and is now a standing committee member of the party.

Both prosecution witnesses yesterday gave a detailed description of their operation against Salahuddin.

They also described how student leader Mahbubul Alam was tortured to death at Salahuddin's Good's Hill home in Chittagong during the Liberation War.

"After completion of my training Major Zia made me the commander of our 16-member team and handed over a hit list. The first name on the list was that of Fazlul Quader Chowdhury while the second one was of his son Salahuddin," said SM Mahbub-ul-Alam.

Alam was the 11th prosecution witness in the case.

Alam, a businessman, said as the Pakistani army began mass killings and occupied half of Chittagong city on March 25, 1971, he went to Ramgar and met Major Zia.

"As per Major Zia's directive, I went to Tripura in India for training. After completion of my training, he, then sector commander, directed us to make a 16-member team of people who knew Chittagong town well," he added.

The freedom fighter said the name of the group was Bravo Company and "its number was eight".

"Major Zia handed over to us a hit list that included the names of Fazlul, Salahuddin, Didar Mia, a Muslim League leader, and Sharafat Ullah. He also mentioned some places for operations to be conducted and gave us weapons and some money," he added.

Alam said after returning to Chittagong town they heard that the Pakistani army and its collaborator forces, Al-Badr, Al-Shams and the Razakars, led by Salahuddin, were "massacring" people in Chittagong and in adjacent areas.

"A son of one Mozaffar told me that the Pakistan army led by Salahuddin had abducted Mozaffar and his brother whose locations were not known since then," he added. "We also heard that people were brought to Good's Hill to be tortured and made to disappear under the leadership of Salahuddin," he continued.

Quoting one of his comrades, he said one Mahbub Alam was also murdered after "he was skinned alive" at Good's Hill.

The freedom fighter said those who were critically injured after torture were sent to the home of doctor Chhami Uddin and those whose conditions were even worse were made to go missing.

He said the sector commander's headquarters was mounting pressure on them to do something about Salahuddin.

"We planned to conduct an operation at the doctor's home as we came to know that Salahuddin would join a family programme there. As per our plan, we took up positions with firearms in front of the house around 6:30pm on September 20," he added.

"When Salahuddin came out of the house, after staying there for around one hour, Aziz Uddin, son of Chhami, gave us the signal with a torch according to plan," he added.

"Getting the signal we, the four-member team, attacked the car. Fazlul Haque sprayed the car with bullets from his sten gun while Sourendra Nath Sen charged grenades and I opened fire with my revolver," he added.

He said, "We left the place after the operation and later heard that Salahuddin had been crucially injured and his driver killed in the operation."

Earlier in the day, Nurul Absar, the 10th witness, gave his statement before the tribunal.

Absar said Mahbub Alam, former Bangladesh Student Union president of Rangunia College unit, was his friend and they had planned together to protest the "massacres" being carried out by non-Bangalee people and their Pakistani supporters in Chittagong.

He said Mahbub was living at Khatunganj in Chittagong but he had been incommunicado since June-July 1971.

"Later, I heard that a group of people, including Salahuddin, Yousuf Khan, Hamidul Quader Chowdhury alias Khoka, Maksud and Ziauddin had kidnapped Mahbub from Khatunganj and tortured him at Good's Hill," he added.

"I heard that there was no skin left on Mahbub's body as they forced him to lie on a wooden plank bristling with nails and put another plank on him and pressed it down," he said.

Introducing himself as an organiser of the Liberation War, Absar, now an employee of a private firm, said they decided to kill Salahuddin as they heard that he regularly tortured freedom fighters at his Good's Hill home.

A group of freedom fighters also returned from India with the list at the time.

"We also came to know that Salahuddin sent critically injured people to Chhami Uddin's home secretly to know whether they would survive. Aziz Uddin, son of Chhami Uddin, was our friend. As he heard that freedom fighters planned to kill his father he sought security for his family from me," he added.

"I told him that if he informed us when Salahuddin would join their family programme, I would help him. At the end of September, he informed me that Salahuddin would be part of a family programme," he added.

"Getting the information I informed my commander, SM Mahbub-ul-Alam, and we designed our plan to conduct an operation with two others," he added.

"We took up position in front of Chhami Uddin's home after Maghrib prayers. As per our plan, I took up position on the road and informed three others about the arrival of Salahuddin with a Pakistani army officer. I heard the sound of the attack around 8:30pm and left the place immediately," he added.

He said Aziz told them that Salahuddin drove the car himself. That is why the firing was aimed at the driver's seat.

"We learnt from newspapers the next day that Salahuddin had received splinter grenade injuries in his leg while his driver was killed in the operation. We also heard that Salahuddin went abroad after the operation," he added.

Defence counsels will cross-examine Nurul Absar today and SM Mahbub-ul-Alam tomorrow.

Salahuddin was produced in court yesterday. He is facing 23 specific charges of crimes against humanity he allegedly committed during the Liberation War.

He is among four Jamaat-e-Islami and BNP leaders facing similar charges at Tribunal-1, the first of two courts formed to deal with such crimes.

Meanwhile, International Crimes Tribunal-2 yesterday recorded the cross examination of Abdul Momen, the first prosecution witness in the war crimes case against former BNP lawmaker Abdul Alim.

Defence counsels will resume the cross-examination today, as the court did not go into session after lunch yesterday.

The court did not go into session as the father of Justice Obaidul Hassan, a member of Tribunal-2, had died.

Witness Momen, a former student leader, testified before the tribunal on August 6. He had said that the former BNP lawmaker had ordered the killing of nine Hindus of Khetlal upazila of Joypurhat during the Liberation War.

On June 11, the tribunal framed 17 charges of war crimes against Alim, which include genocide, murder of Bangalee civilians, and burying people alive during the war.

'Rab source'

FROM PAGE 1

Limon was maimed in shooting by a Rab team in March last year. Later, his leg had to be amputated from the thigh.

The Rapid Action Battalion on April 23 last year filed two cases against Limon, then 16, and seven others under the Arms Act and another for obstructing official duty, attempting to murder and injuring Rab personnel.

Police submitted charge sheets in both cases against Limon and seven others on April 24, 2011 and on July 1, 2012.

The continuous harassment of the teenager has drawn fierce criticism at home and abroad.

The National Human Rights Commission has demanded a judicial probe into the incidents surrounding the student.

Yesterday, Brad Adams, Asia Director at Human Rights Watch, said "The ongoing abuse of Limon Hossain and his family by government elements protecting Rab adds gross insult to already grievous injury."

"This government while in opposition and in its early days in power, declaimed Rab excesses and promised a zero-tolerance approach toward such abuses," he said through a press release.

"These latest actions to punish a Rapid Action Battalion victim, instead of to protect him, only perpetuates Rab impunity."

Instead of taking any action against his attackers, police filed criminal charges against Limon and failed to protect him from attacks by alleged Rab supporters, said the New York-based rights watchdog in the press statement.

On August 23, Sub-inspector Badal Fakir of Rajapur Police Station got the court's permission to investigate the GD.

Henoara Begum in her GD said, "Ibrahim beat up Limon and as my elder son

Sumon and I tried to save Limon, Ibrahim and his associates also beat us."

Known to locals and some policemen as an extortionist, drug dealer and robber, Ibrahim is also a witness in one of the Rab cases filed against Limon.

Ibrahim had once been an informant of the elite crime buster, Colonel Faridul Alam, commanding officer of Rab-8, earlier told The Daily Star.

Ibrahim denies all the allegations. Talking to The Daily Star at his residence, he rejected outright the police findings and termed them motivated.

"Police did it by taking money as bribe as well as under pressure from a vested quarter," he said.

Assistant Sub-Inspector Nazmul Alam, general registry officer of Jhalakathi court, told The Daily Star that if Ibrahim did not appear before the court, the court would issue an arrest warrant against him.

Ibrahim also lodged a "murder case" with Jhalakathi Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court on August 23 against Limon's father Tofazzal Akand, mother Henoara, elder brother Sumon and maternal uncle Siddique Hossain and six locals.

The case is still in the process of being registered with Rajapur police station.

Ibrahim in the case alleged the accused had beaten his brother-in-law Forkan to death during a brawl with him.

It is unclear how Forkan died as a postmortem report was yet to be submitted. Police have sent the body to Jhalakathi Sadar Hospital morgue, saying, "The body bore no injury marks."

About the new murder charge, Brad Adams said it only highlighted the depths to which the Bangladeshi government will go to discredit Limon.

Plane lost

FROM PAGE 20

Jessore airport for Dhaka with around 10 passengers and crew members at 8:30pm on August 13.

But things went wrong when the co-pilot side of the front windshield blew away and all the loose items in the plane were being sucked out of the cockpit. The aircraft was 25 nautical miles from its destination.

However, the pilot managed to manoeuvre the aircraft and safely landed at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport around 9:15pm. The airport was kept on red alert at the time with fire engines and ambulance ready for any disaster.

The injured co-pilot was rushed to a city hospital.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (Caab) on Monday formed a three-member committee to investigate the accident. The committee was asked to submit its report within the next two weeks, said a top Caab official seeking anonymity.

According to aviation experts, such damages usually lead to fatal accidents, but in this case no serious consequences occurred as the aircraft maintained the minimum altitude.

"If there was any leakage on the plane, disaster would have been inevitable," said a pilot who has several thousand hours of flying experience. He suspects the cabin pressure differentiation might have caused the damage.

But according to sources, the airlines authorities stuck to the decision of operating the flight despite detecting a crack on the windshield prior to take-off.

ATM Nazrul Islam, director business development and company secretary of the airline, however, denied any lack of maintenance.

behind the accident would soon come to light, he said, adding that the very plane is now in operation after a repair within 24 hours.

Talking about the blood chilling experience, a passenger of the flight said, "I suddenly heard a bang and there were frequent turbulences. Soon the plane was filled with fog and I could hear something breaking."

"I could feel that the aircraft was flying with its nose slightly down," said the passenger, who works for an aid organisation, on Sunday.

"After a little while, the fog slightly cleared out and I saw a crew, who with all his effort opened the cockpit door, on which there was another broken part of a door. He beckoned a flight attendant to him and had a little talk with the cabin crew. Then he disappeared in the cockpit, but only to return with the injured co-pilot," he added.

The injured man was bleeding profusely from a wound on the face, continued the passenger, seeing this, the two female air hostesses cried out loudly, but the first officer asked them to calm down and put some ice on the wound.

"As for me, I thought this was my end. Faces of my parents and siblings flashed before my eyes," he said, adding that it took him two days to shake off the horrible memory and get back to normal life.

Meanwhile, the passengers who went to Jessore on another flight of United Airways on August 11 alleged that the air cooling system on that flight was barely working.

About this, Nazrul Islam said the journey from Dhaka to Jessore takes only half an hour. It might happen thus that the air cooling system did not get enough time to cool the whole cabin.

14 plundered Tk 1,448cr

FROM PAGE 1

Twelve of these 14 people were in the DMCSL management committee for 2010-11 and the two others were top officials of the cooperative.

The committee members spent the money in the name of business promotion and giving loans to some two dozen non-profitable entities, the probe report says.

The cooperative firm, which registered with the DoC in 2005, has seen an astronomical rise in its capital, shareholders, profit and investment since 2009.

The firm's paid-up capital increased to nearly Tk 300 crore in 2009-10 from Tk 5.53 crore a year ago.

The figure jumped to nearly Tk 1,200 crore in 2010-11. Its paid-up capital in 2006-07 was Tk 1.62

crore.

Loans and investments grew to Tk 569 crore in 2010-11 from less than Tk 23 crore in 2008-09; they rose by over 213 percent between 2009-10 and 2010-11.

DMCSL came under the spotlight after a central bank investigation in March found that the firm was involved in illegal banking. The Anti-Corruption Commission and the National Board of Revenue are also investigating possible money laundering and tax dodging by the company.

Contacted, group Chairman Rafiqul Amin has rejected the DoC report.

"The cooperatives department has blamed us because we did not pay [bribe] them," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

The Destiny would take legal action against the DoC after getting a copy of the report, Amin warned.

DESTINY OFFICIAL

ARRESTED

In another development, the ACC yesterday arrested Abul Kamal Azad, one of the DMCSL management committee members, in connection with two money laundering cases.

The anti-graft body filed the cases last month against 22 top Destiny Group officials, including Azad, Rafiqul Amin and Destiny Group director Lt Gen (retd) M Harun-Ar-Rashid.

According to the cases, the accused persons laundered Tk 3,285.26 crore.

Police produced Azad in Metropolitan Magistrate Hasibul Haque's court, which sent him to jail.

Arctic sea ice

FROM PAGE 20

The sea ice fell to 4.10 million square kilometers, some 70,000 square kilometers less than the earlier record charted on September 18, 2007, the centers said.

Scientists said the record was all the more striking as 2007 had near perfect climate patterns for melting ice, but that the weather this year was unremarkable other than a storm in early August.

Michael E Mann, a lead author of a major UN report in 2001 on climate change, said the latest data reflected that scientists who were criticized as alarmists may have shown "perhaps too great a degree of reticence."

Arctic ice is considered vital for the planet as it reflects heat from the sun back into space, helping keep down the planet's temperatures.

The Arctic region is now losing about 155,000 square kilometers of ice annually, the equivalent of a US state every two years, said Walt Meier, a scientist at the National Snow and Ice Data Center.

The planet has charted a slew of record temperatures in recent years, with 13 of the warmest years ever taking place in the past decade and a half, along with extreme weather ranging from severe wildfires in North America to

major flooding in Asia.

Researchers have also reported a dramatic melt this summer on the ice sheet in Greenland, which could have major consequences for the planet by raising sea levels.

Scientists believe that climate change is caused by human emissions of carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions.

But efforts to regulate emissions have faced strong political resistance in several nations including the United States, where industry groups have said that regulations would be too costly for the economy.

Kumi Naidoo, the executive director of Greenpeace who on Monday intercepted a Russian ship in the Arctic, said the ice melt showed that the planet was "warming up at a rate that puts billions of people's future in jeopardy."

Shaye Wolf of the Center for Biological Diversity pressure group called the record ice melt "a profound - and profoundly depressing -- moment in the history of our planet."

The melt has rapidly changed the politics and economics of the Arctic region, with shipping companies increasingly eager to save time by sailing through the once-forbidding waters.

Data released Monday by the Washington-based Center for Global

Development found that nations including China, India and the United States were reducing the intensity of their carbon emissions but that the effort was overwhelmed by the surge in power consumption in developing nations.

Runi's family

FROM PAGE 20

the allegation at a meeting with the parliamentary standing committee on the home ministry at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Sagar Sarwar, a news editor at the private TV channel Maasranga, and his wife Meherun Runi, a senior reporter at ATN Bangla, were killed on February 11 in their West Rajabazar flat.

Rejecting the Rab's claim, Runi's brother, Nowsher Alam Roman, said they were never reluctant to cooperate.

At yesterday's meeting, the Rab officials assured the JS body that they were hopeful of identifying the killers once they got a DNA report from the USA in September.

The High Court in April ordered to transfer the case from the Detective Branch of police to the Rab, as there has been no appreciable progress in the inquiry into the double murder.

3 shot dead in Kushtia

FROM PAGE 20

Pabna's Dogachi Ghat with around 60 people onboard around 2:00pm.

"A group of 8-10 men on another motorboat intercepted us. Then they hopped onto my boat and, telling other passengers to duck down, opened fire on the chairman and his three assistants," said the boatman.

The gunmen then cut off

the chairman's head and threw his body along with others' into the river while keeping the head to themselves, he added.

"We have sent for divers to recover the two bodies that are still missing," said Kumarkhali police sources. The elite force further arrested him in 2008 with an AK-47 rifle from Pabna and he got bail in 2009, added the sources.

Kumarkhali, Kushtia, Pangsha, Rajbari and Pabna police.

Rapid action Battalion arrested Nurul on 2004 with arms in a case and he got bail in the case in 2004, said Kumarkhali police sources. The elite force further arrested him in 2008 with an AK-47 rifle from Pabna and he got bail in 2009, added the sources.

DU student's death

FROM PAGE 1

The other student, Faisal Mahmud of history department, escaped with minor injuries.

Towhid was first rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital and later shifted to Green Life Hospital at Panthapath where he died around 6:30pm.

His body was sent to his village home for burial without autopsy, said DU Proctor MA Ali.

Police arrested Anwar Hossain, driver of the bus, at the spot.

As the death news spread, several hundred DU students of different dormitories took to the streets and went on the rampage on various city roads for about three hours since 8:00pm.

They set fire to a bus and vandalised dozens of vehicles at Shahbagh, Hotel Ruposhi Bangla intersection, Banglamotor, Kataban, Elephant Road, Bata Signal, Nilkhet, New Market, Palashi and Chankharup areas, causing immense sufferings to commuters.

The agitating students

also set fire to a police box at Shahbagh intersection.

Panicked, commuters ran to and fro for shelter.

Traffic on both sides of the roads stood still till 11:00pm. The jam spilled over also to Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Farmgate, Mohakhali, Asad Gate and Mirpur Road.

No police personnel were seen till 11:30pm to calm the demonstrating students. The law enforcers appeared on the scene only after the students had left the streets.

A correspondent of The Daily Star found the main entrance to the Shahbagh Police Station locked from the inside and its lights turned off around 10:00pm. The picture was the same at the Shahbagh Police Control Room.

During the rampage, a Dhaka University student, Sayed Bari, was shot in the leg at Elephant Road around 9:30pm. He was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

As of filing this report at 2:30am today, it was unclear who shot him.

Another DU student, Shamima Sultana, was slightly injured as a private car hit her at Shahbagh around 9:30pm.

S African mine strike continues

AFP, Marikana, South Africa

A heavy police contingent guarded platinum giant Lonmin's Marikana mine in South Africa yesterday to protect workers who quit a violent wildcat strike in which 44 people have died.

The London-listed firm said only eight percent of its 28,000 staff had clocked in yesterday, a further slide from 13 percent the previous day, amid fresh reports of threats against returning workers.

"There are unsubstantiated reports of intimidation in two mining areas," the company said. "No incidents of violence have been reported. Management is appealing to all stakeholders to remain calm."

Cop tortured on Babar's directive

Ctg arms haul witness tells court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A prosecution witness of the sensational 2004 arms haul cases told a Chittagong court yesterday that following the incident the Rapid Action Battalion had tortured him on the orders of the then state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar.

Helal Uddin Bhuiyan, a former sergeant of a police outpost in Chittagong, also said a false arms case had been filed against him on Babar's orders for his involvement in the seizure. He was replying to the queries of a defence lawyer yesterday when the court resumed his cross-examination.

Helal is one of the policemen who rushed to the Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Limited jetty when the smuggled arms and ammunition were being off-loaded there on April 2, 2004.

Two police officials, including Helal, had been arrested by Rab in 2005 on charges of stealing two AK-47 rifles, Arshad Hossain Asad, Chittagong metropolitan assistant public prosecutor, told The Daily Star, adding the case had been filed with Sudharam Police Station in Noakhali at the time.

During cross examination before the judge of the Chittagong Metropolitan Special Tribunal-1, SM Mojibur Rahman, Helal said he in 2008 in a deposition under Section 164 had spoken of the torture before a magistrate.

The defence then asked him if what he said was true, why the record had not mentioned anything about the torture.

In response, Helal said, "What could I do?" if the magistrate had not recorded those statements properly.

Babar's counsel Abdus Sobhan Tarafdar said Helal had not mentioned Babar's name in the deposition and now he was giving a false statement in the changed situation.

It is not true, the witness replied.

Assistant Public Prosecutor Asad said Helal had meant Babar when he had said home minister in the deposition.

Mohammad Ahsan, lawyer of Maj (retd) Liakat, also cross examined the witness. The cross examination of Helal was completed yesterday.

The court adjourned at about 2:30pm until today.

Koko innocent

FROM PAGE 20

also did not disclose its contents. The committee members did not make any comment after the chairperson's statements, the sources added.

"You [standing committee members] don't speak up against corruption by the prime minister's family members. But they [ruling party leaders] are running propaganda against us. From now on you should be vocal against corruption of the prime minister's family members," Khaleda went on.

Earlier on June 23 last year, a Dhaka court sentenced Koko with six-year rigorous imprisonment and fined him Tk 38.83 crore for laundering Tk 20 crore to Singapore.

Koko, Khaleda's younger son, who is now fugitive, is also facing a tax evasion case involving Tk 52 lakh.

Koko was arrested during the military-backed caretaker government rule in 2007. Later he was given parole and he left for Bangkok for better medical treatment on July 19, 2008.