

Prosecution starts

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According to the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act-1973, the court will pronounce its verdict after the summation of the prosecution's and defence's arguments.

The three-member tribunal led by Justice Obaidul Hassan with members Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Judge M Shahinur Islam yesterday recorded the prosecution's arguments before it adjourned the case proceedings until today when the arguments will resume.

Mohammad Ali, the conducting prosecutor of the case, began his arguments giving a brief description of the political developments and movements from 1947 to 1971 in the erstwhile Pakistan.

In his two-hour argument, Mohammad Ali said two investigation officers of the case after a probe had submitted names of 40 witnesses and later included nine as additional witnesses.

On May 28, the tribunal indicted the Jamaat assistant secretary general for six specific charges of crimes against humanity allegedly committed during the Liberation War in 1971.

"But we [the prosecution] adduced only 10 witnesses, excluding the investigation officers of the case, as we had assessed that 10 witnesses were sufficient to prove the six charges [against Mollah] beyond doubt," said prosecutor Ali.

He said five "eyewitnesses" had given their testimony in favour of Mollah killing around 60 persons in Ghatarchar in Keraniganj [charge four], about 360-370 people in Alubdi village of Pallabi, Mirpur [charge five] and killing of six of a family in Mirpur [charge six].

Four other "hearsay" witnesses testified that Mollah had killed a student of Mirpur Bangla College [charge one]; pro-liberation poet Meherun Nessa, her mother and two brothers

[charge two]; and journalist Khondaker Abu Taleb [charge three], said the prosecutor, adding that another witness, who partly witnessed the Ghatarchar incident, narrated on the charge.

Syed Shahidul Haque Mama, Syed Abdul Kaim, poet Quazi Rosy and Khondaker Abul Ahsan, were the hearsay witnesses, said Ali, adding that these witnesses had heard of the incidents from direct witnesses.

Replying to a question of the tribunal, he said the witnesses did not have the chance to stay back and witness the incidents at that time. Had they done it, they would have also been killed.

Abdul Majid Palowan and Nur Jahan, the seventh and eighth prosecution witnesses, testified on charge No 4 against Mollah. They said he had killed at least 60 people in Keraniganj on November 25, 1971, continued Ali.

Mozaffar Ahmed Khan, a freedom fighter and the first prosecution witness, also narrated the same incident, he added.

Ali said Shafiuuddin Mollah and Amir Hossain Mollah, the sixth and ninth prosecution witnesses, gave their testimonies supporting charge No 5, the allegation of killing around 360-370 Bangalees in Alubdi on April 24, 1971.

The prosecutor said a rape victim had given her testimony in support of charge No 6 behind closed doors. She said under the leadership of Mollah, a group of Biharis and Pakistani army attacked their house on the evening of March 26, 1971.

According to her testimony, Mollah and his cohorts had killed her parents, two younger sisters and a brother. When her 11-year-old sister came out from hiding, 10-12 persons raped and killed her.

The witness was too a victim of gang-rape, added Ali.

At this, Judge Shahinur

Islam asked the prosecutor that why Quader Mollah would be held responsible for the rapes.

In response Ali said as per section 4(1) of the ICT Act, Mollah was also liable for the crime.

The section 4(1) of the act says, "When any crime as specified in section 3 [such as crimes against humanity and peace, genocide, war crimes etc] is committed by several persons, each of such person is liable for that crime in the same manner as if it were done by him alone."

"How can you be so sure that Mollah had control over the team?" asked Judge Shahinur.

Citing from the testimony of Amir Hossain Mollah, the prosecutor said after Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's historic speech on March 7, 1971, Mollah along with 70 to 80 members of Islami Chhatra Sangha (ICS), the then student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, gave training to the Bihari people "to protect Pakistan".

Ali said accused Quader Mollah, who is also the first defence witness, had said he was involved with ICS and was the president of its Dhaka University's Shahidullah Hall unit.

Citing from the book named "Sun Set at Midday" by former ICS leader Mohiuddin Choudhury, which is a prosecution document, Ali said, "The workers purely belonging to Islami Chhatra Sangha were Al-Badr."

According to the charge-frame order, Mollah as an ICS leader had organised the formation of Al-Badar with the members of the student body in 1971.

Meanwhile the tribunal yesterday completed recording the cross-examination of AKM Habibul Haque alias Munnu, the 10th prosecution witness in the case against Jamaat leader Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahed, before adjourning the case proceeding until December 26.

Khan said in the article.

Everybody was aware of the fact that West Pakistani baboos [gentlemen] considered East Pakistan a colony and treated its citizens in the same way as the British used to treat the West Pakistanis.

It was unfortunate that both the (Pakistani) political and military leaders are under the illusion (as happened in previous eras) that it was such a traumatic experience.

The country was broken up, hundreds of thousands of people were killed, women were raped and almost 92,000 army and other personnel were taken prisoner, he said, adding that nobody was held responsible for such a big and tragic disaster.

They could not manage to do that to a very docile nation in 1971, how then can they contemplate crushing a martial race? They will be fighting for a thousand years and bleed the country to destruction and disintegration, he said.

The rulers and the establishment are using poor, brave soldiers as cannon fodder for the sake of a paltry sum in dollars.

"We have forgotten how to protect our own borders and sovereignty," Khan added.

Pakistan may split

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Khan made the remarks in an article titled "Events of 1971" published in The News International yesterday.

Mentioning the Liberation War in 1971, and the birth of Bangladesh in the aftermath, he said "The country [Pakistan] is at present plagued with all kinds of social evils.

"If we don't rectify this soon, the day will not be far off when we disintegrate again."

In order to rectify the situation, the noted scientist opined that the first and foremost necessity is to "disengage ourselves from the foreign war and put our own house in order".

In the article, Khan also said all nations go through ups and downs -- they have glorious periods and tragic ones. People usually ignore and forget the tragic ones while celebrating the good events with great pomp.

"It is most unfortunate that we in Pakistan have also

not learnt any lessons from our past tragic mistakes. The breaking up of Pakistan on December 16, 1971, was one such recent event," he said.

Millions of Pakistanis are fully aware of the reasons behind that tragedy. But it seems that the (Pakistani) rulers and the establishment were oblivious to these, despite the fact that it was such a traumatic experience.

The country was broken up, hundreds of thousands of people were killed, women were raped and almost 92,000 army and other personnel were taken prisoner, he said, adding that nobody was held responsible for such a big and tragic disaster.

"We saw our own army killing our own people. It is a well-known fact that, when given absolute power, people become cruel. I was ashamed to see that such cruel acts could be perpetrated by Muslims against Muslims -- Pakistanis against fellow-Pakistanis,"

the capital along with detained Jamaat leader Tasneem Alam, he added.

Meanwhile, at least 25 people including seven policemen were injured when Jamaat-Shibir men fought pitched battles with law enforcers in Sylhet city yesterday afternoon during their processions in support of tomorrow's half-day (6:00am to 2:00pm) hartal in Sylhet division, adds our Sylhet correspondent.

Jamaat announced the shutdown demanding release of its acting secretary general Shafiqur Rahman.

He was arrested on Thursday at his Dhamondi residence in the capital in a case filed under the anti-terrorism act.

The following day, a Dhaka court placed him on four-day remand.

Regarding the detention of 21 female leaders of Jamaat and Chhatra Sangstha, police said

they were conducting drives in different areas in

Shamsunnahar Nizami, secretary of Islami Chhatra Sangstha, in another statement, blasted the government for detaining its female leaders and activists and demanded their immediate release.

Police were conducting drives in different areas in

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Sept 2011

The global lender suspends the loan.

Sept 21, 2011

A WB report labels corruption allegations against the then communications minister Abul Hossain and his company.

Sept 2011

The global lender says the loan will be revived if Abul goes.

Oct 21, 2011

The government rejects graft allegations and refuses to remove Abul.

Dec 5, 2011

Abul is shifted to the ICT

ministry, but the WB demands his removal from the cabinet altogether.

June 2012

Fresh talks begin; the WB sets four conditions, including removal of Abul and PM's adviser Mashur Rahman.

June 29, 2012

The WB cancels the loan deal as the talks fail.

July 2, 2012

The finance minister urges the lender to withdraw the cancellation.

July 23, 2012

Abul resigns; other donors pledge the govt help in negotiations with the WB.

Sept 3, 2012

ACC investigation committee quizzes Abul Hossain.

Sept 19, 2012

Govt sends Mashur's leave letter to the WB.

Sept 20, 2012

WB revives the loan.

Oct 5, 2012

WB announces formation of a three-member panel to review the investigation into the graft allegation.

Oct 14, 2012

WB external panel arrives in Dhaka on a three-day visit.

Nov 28, 2012

A three-day meeting of

co-financiers of Padma bridge project starts at Asian Development Bank headquarters in Manila.

Dec 1, 2012

External team arrives in Dhaka for the second time.

Dec 4, 2012

The ACC team submits its draft report that included names of Abul Hossain, former state minister for foreign affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury and businessman Nixon Chowdhury, brother of Awami League whip Noor-e-Alam Chowdhury.

Dec 9, 2012

ACC inquiry team submits its final report

AL leader shot dead in Bogra

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Masked gunmen shot dead Svechchhasebak League leader Khairul Anam Rekkat in his shop in Rahman Nagar here yesterday.

The 35-year-old victim was the joint convener of the town unit Awami Svechchhasebak League, an associated body of the ruling Awami League.

Witnesses said about two to three gunmen on a bike drove to Khairul's cement shop near Abdullah intersection around 11:45am and opened fire on him. The assailants escaped after carrying out the attack.

Shop manager Russell told newsmen that he heard several shots when he was in a bathroom near the outlet.

Coming out of the loo, he found Khairul lie groaning on the floor of the shop. The victim received bullets in his head, chest and hands.

Critically injured Khairul was rushed to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital, where he expired around 2:00pm.

The deceased was sued in two cases by Jamaat-Shibir last month for vandalising their local offices and a few coaching centres.

Contacted, Bogra Superintendent of Police Moazzammel Haque said they identified two suspects and were trying to nab the duo.

He hinted that the incident could be the result of personal enmity.

Talking to The Daily Star, victim's father Oafat Rahman said his son was very gentle and helped many in the area. He demanded exemplary punishment of the killers.

Locals, however, said the incident occurred due to an internal feud in the Svechchhasebak League unit over establishing supremacy.

On October 1, Khairul's associates led by town Svechchhasebak League executive member Nasim attacked fellow party men Sajal, 22, and Roni, 21, in Rahman Nagar.

Hearing the news, police arrested Nasim from the spot and on his confession recovered some lethal weapons including machetes from a nearby house. The arrest escalated the factional rivalry.

But president of town Svechchhasebak League Shahidul Islam Bappi claimed that there was no intra-party rivalry.

No case was filed in this connection till filing of this report at 11:00pm yesterday.

ACC facing

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the ACC work independently?

Hasina made the allegations during a Victory Day discussion at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital.

The prime minister said evil attempts were being carried out by local and international collaborators at a time when the government was going on with the war crimes trial.

In this regard, she mentioned of the communal attacks on Ramu Buddhists, garment factory fire in Ashulia and the killing of Biswajit Das, and said these are not isolated incidents at all.

Reiterating her firm resolve to hold the trial of war criminals, she called upon all to be vocal and to remain alert against the "conspiracies" of the collaborators of the defeated forces.

Hasina, also the Awami League (AL) president, said there was a class of people who does not have the capacity to win elections but still wants to go to power. They conduct propaganda using money, property and the media.

Syed Sajed Chowdhury, AL presidium member and deputy leader of parliament, presided over the meeting.

Abul spared, for now

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about bribe money for Abul Hossain, the ACC deputy director said the global lender had given some information but the commission was yet to get any document in support of the allegation.

Ramesh Shah, an SNC Lavalin official now facing trial in Canada over the graft charges, had mentioned in his diary Abul Hossain as the recipient of 4 percent out of 10 percent (Tk 38 crore) bribe from the supervision work money, sources said.

It was not immediately clear if the World Bank would start releasing its fund after the filing of the case.

The six other accused in the case filed with Banani Police Station are Superintendent Engineer of Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA) Kazi Mohammad Ferdous, Executive Engineer of Roads and Highway Department Reaz Ahmed Zaber, Deputy Managing Director of Engineering and Planning Consultant, a local agent Canadian firm SNC Lavalin, Mohamad Mostofa and SNC Lavalin officials Mohammad Ismail, Ramesh Shah and Kevin Wales.

According to the case statement, former secretary Mosharraf dissolved the