

Plea for

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defence witnesses testified for Mollah.

Yesterday, Mohammad Ali spoke about contradictions between defence witnesses and Mollah's alibi.

As per the plea of alibi, Mollah was not in Dhaka, rather at his village home in Faridpur during the entire Liberation War. But Mollah, as the first defence witness, had testified that he came to Dhaka in the last part of July, 1971, to sit for an examination, said Mohammad Ali.

In his testimony, Mollah said he had left Dhaka for his village on March 11 or 12 and during his stay at the village, he used to go to the house of Moulavi Mohammad Ishak alias Dhala Mia Pir as he was a tutor to his two daughters.

The rest of 1971 and almost the entire 1972, I used to go to the market on Saturdays and Tuesdays and sit at Pir Saheb's shop and run the business," Ali quoted Mollah as saying.

Shushil Chandra Mondal, a resident of Quader Mollah's village and the second defence witness in the case, said, "He [Mollah] seldom came to the village and used to live at the house of Pir Saheb."

Ali said the testimony of Mollah and Shushil "contradicted" as Mollah claimed that he used to live in his village while Shushil claimed that Mollah used to live in Dhala Mia's home.

Ali said Mollah admitted that he was involved in Islami Chhatra Sangha, the then student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, when he was a student of Faridpur Rajendra College. He was elected president of Shahidullah Hall Chhatra Sangha unit of Dhaka University in 1970.

According to the charge-framing order, Mollah, as the president Shahidullah Hall unit of Chhatra Sangha, organised the formation of Al-Badr, an anti-liberation force, with members of the student body in 1971.

Mentioning some other contradictions in the testimonies of four defence witnesses, Ali claimed that they were not "believable" and that the alibi did not stand.

Ali urged the tribunal to add the charge of genocide with charge-4 and-5.

According to charge-4, a systematic attack and indiscriminate shooting by Quader Mollah and his cohorts killed hundreds of unarmed people in two villages, Khanbari and Ghatar Char, of Keraniganj on November 25, 1971.

As per charge-5, the Pakistani army and around 50 non-Bangalees led by Quader Mollah raided Alubdi village of Mirpur and launched an attack on unarmed villagers, killing 344 people on April 24, 1971.

During charge framing, the tribunal had recorded the two charges as "murder as crimes against humanity".

Earlier, Ali placed his arguments on six charges against Mollah citing testimonies of the 12 prosecution witnesses.

Meanwhile, the tribunal allowed two defence lawyers of Mollah to meet him in jail on December 31 for the preparation of the case.

The tribunal yesterday also recorded the cross-examination of Beauty Khanam, the eighth prosecution witness in the case against Abdul Alim, former minister of BNP founder Ziaur Rahman's cabinet, before adjourning the case proceedings until January 2.

It also recorded the cross-examination of Faijuddin Ahmed, the 11th prosecution witnesses against Jamaat leader Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, before adjourning that case's proceedings until January 3.

Meanwhile, at Tribunal-1, Mizanul Islam, defence counsel for war crimes accused Delawar Hossain Sayedee yesterday placed his argument on the petition for retrial of the case.

Sayedee is waiting for the verdict of his case. He is facing 20 charges of crimes against humanity.

Mizanul yesterday claimed that his client was prejudiced by the former chairman of Tribunal-1 Justice Md Nizamul Huq.

The proceeding of the case was adjourned until December 30. Mizanul would continue placing arguments on that day.

In the morning, chief defence counsel Abdur Razzaq completed placing his arguments on the retrial petition of war crimes accused Ghulam Azam.

Ghulam Azam is facing five charges for crimes against humanity, genocide and other grievous crimes committed during the Liberation War.

Tension with Turkey

FROM PAGE 1
Bangladesh Ambassador to Turkey Md Zulfikur Rahman, a day after Dhaka summoned Turkish Ambassador in Bangladesh Mehmet Vakur Erkul on Wednesday.

The foreign ministry sources told The Daily Star yesterday that content of the December 23 letter from the Turkish president is not acceptable and it is a clear interference in the internal affairs of Bangladesh.

Gul said the accused leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami are too old to stand trial and apprehended that it might cause a civil war in Bangladesh, the sources mentioned.

Dhaka was surprised to get such a letter and was going to send a reply to the Turkish president, but it was delayed because of the president's illness.

Subsequently, the visit of a 14-member delegation of Turkish NGO Cansuyu Aid and Solidarity Association from December 20 to 24 hiding their identity and misusing "on arrival visa" facilities and its inappropriate activities have made Dhaka too unhappy.

The foreign ministry summoned the Turkish envoy in Dhaka and asked him to explain the NGO team's visit without informing the government.

Acting Foreign Secretary Mustafa Kamal also handed over an aide memoir (diplomatic letter) to the ambassador in which Dhaka strongly protested Gul's letter and said it was an interference in the internal affairs of the country.

The aide memoir categorically mentioned that Bangladesh government is determined to conduct the war crimes trial as there is overwhelming support from the people.

It said the trial is taking place in the most transparent way by maintaining international standard, and categorically stated that the government will not compromise on this specific issue.

The two-page letter also mentioned the visit of the Turkish NGO delegation which it said misused the "on arrival visa" facility.

"Bangladesh believes that it is not the job of a friendly country to create any problem or confusion about an issue and hopes that this type of incident will not happen again," the letter stated.

In 2009, Dhaka unilaterally offered "on arrival visa" for tourist, investor, business, official, diplomatic and special passport holders, while Ankara approved on arrival visa only for official and diplomatic passport holders from the middle of this year.

Power tariff

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was already so high that a further increase would prompt people to refrain from paying bills.

It was the responsibility of the regulatory commission to protect consumers' interests and ensure their affordability but it had failed to do so, he said.

Shamsul, head of the electrical and electronics engineering department of Daffodil International University, blamed the energy ministry for adopting ways to have the power tariff increased.

"We have to rein in the power price hike," said Mohammad Hatem, senior vice-president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

The garment sector would otherwise see unrest, he said, "no matter we raise their wages or not as workers' cost of living has gone up due to the [previous] power hikes."

In a written statement circulated at the hearing, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association said the cost of power went up by 32 percent in the last one year.

"If the price hike continues it will be tough for the garment sector to sustain competitive edge."

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, some foreign ministry officials said the government could have sent back the NGO delegation but it refrained from doing so considering the excellent bilateral ties with Turkey and the recent exchange of visits at president and prime minister level.

They said the Turkish envoy has violated certain diplomatic norms and he can be expelled as he did not give prior information to the government about arrival of the delegation and subsequently he concealed information about its programmes and schedules.

The ambassador did not inform the foreign ministry about the delegation's meeting with leaders of BNP and Jamaat and others as well as its visit to the ICT.

A senior official said during the meeting with acting foreign secretary, the envoy claimed that the delegation's visit was not sponsored by the Turkish government, but he failed to give a satisfactory reply when asked why he accompanied the team during meetings with the opposition leaders.

Asked, a senior official that despite the tension, the existing bilateral relations with Turkey will not be affected and "our cooperation in all sectors will continue".

However another foreign ministry source told The Daily Star last night that the Turkish president wrote the letter both to the president and prime minister on December 23 and the Turkish embassy sent it to foreign ministry and the ministry subsequently sent it to Bangabhaban and PMO.

Sources said the Turkish president in his one-page letter, written in Turkish language and attached with English translation, requested Zillur not to give death sentence to Ghulam Azam and other Jamaat leaders.

President Gul said they came to know former Jamaat chief Ghulam Azam is being tried at the International Crimes Tribunal. It is learnt that this 90-year-old leader might be sentenced to death. Some other elderly leaders are also facing trial, which is a matter of great concern.

According to the Turkish president, if these leaders are punished, it might affect Bangladesh's socio-economic advancement and cause social instability and bloodshed.

Dhaka considered Gul's letter as the first ever interference since the ICT was formed in 2010, the sources said.

Sohrab Hossain

FROM PAGE 1
The veteran musician, who dedicated most of his life in preserving songs of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, had been suffering from old-age complications.

He was admitted to a capital's hospital on November 29 following complicated neck pain.

Born in Ayeshtola village near Ranaghat of Nadia, West Bengal, on April 9, 1922, Sohrab Hossain was one of those who made Nazrul songs popular among younger generations.

The government honoured this Sangeet guru with the Independence Day Award, one of the highest civilian awards in Bangladesh, in 1980.

War tribunal's

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tribunal received it on December 18, sources said.

The government established the International Crimes Tribunal on March 25, 2010, for holding trail of those who committed crimes against humanity during the 1971 Liberation War. A second tribunal was formed on March 22 this year to expedite the trial.

Presently, nine Jamaat-e-Islami and BNP leaders are facing charges of crimes against humanity at the two tribunals.

The government attached officials of the High Court and lower courts with the tribunals to run its regular activities. At present, the tribunal has a registrar and a deputy registrar to execute the administrative work.

Under the new organogram, there will be six bench officers, six assistant bench officers, six personal assistants, six Jamader, six drivers and 12 support staff for the judges of the tribunals.

It will also include a registrar, two deputy registrars, one senior law research officer and other officers and employees for the tribunal's registrar office.

Nasiruddin, the current registrar, said they proposed recruiting two law research officers and one senior law research officer but the government approved just one senior law research officer.

"The matter of two law research officers is still pending," he added.

On several occasions, tribunal judges and officials said the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973 was a new law and to understand the law it was necessary for the judges to look into the process and orders of different tribunals.

The registrar said the researcher would follow the proceedings of war crimes trial all over the world and would assist the tribunals to improve their standard.

RESULTS COMPARISON

BOARDS	PASS RATE 2012	PASS RATE 2011	GPA-5 2012	GPA-5 2011
Dhaka	85.02	81.45	17595	12021
Rajshahi	85.09	79.88	6221	4212
Comilla	91.86	91.25	3763	2396
Jessore	85.28	79.87	3978	2754
Chittagong	78.35	72.65	3531	2176
Barisal	93.82	93.13	3172	1886
Sylhet	90.45	83.34	1364	748
Dinajpur	84.88	84.35	4534	3645
Total	86.11	82.67	44158	29838

Junior Certificate

FROM PAGE 1
29,838 last year.

The results published yesterday show a significant improvement in other indicators. The number of examinees, highest grade achievers and the number of schools with cent percent pass rose remarkably while the number of schools with zero pass rate came down.

A total of 12,98,188 students -- 6,17,412 boys and 6,80,776 girls -- under eight general education boards came out successful in the JSC examinations. The number of failed students came down to 2,09,487 from last year's 2,58,165.

And, 352 out of 362 JSC students who took the test from seven overseas centres came out successful. Of them, 47 obtained GPA-5.

The schools across the country wore a festival look as soon as the results came out. Apart from their own institutions, the examinees got their results online and through mobile phone SMS.

More than 15.54 lakh students from 18,461 institutions had registered for the test held on November 4-15. Of them, over 15.07 lakh showed up in the exam halls.

Students sat for nine subjects.

The number of schools with cent percent pass rate rose to 2,797, while the number of schools from where no student passed this year came down to 55.

The pass rate in Junior Dakhil Certificate (JDC) examinations under Madrasa Education Board is 90.87 percent, 2.16 up from last year.

Combined pass rate of JSC and JDC examinations also rose to 86.97 percent from last year's 83.71pc.

Students have been consistently doing well in the JSC examination since 2010, when the pass rate was 73 percent.

In terms of pass rate, boys did better than girls even though the number of girl examinees was higher. The boys' pass rate is 87.04pc which is 85.28pc for girls.

Rajuk Uttara Model School and College in the capital has topped the best 20 list of institutions while Vigarunnisa Noon School and Mymensingh Zilla School became third.

Briefing journalists on the results at noon at his

secretariat office, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said, "Compared to last year, we are better off this year in all indicators, which suggest an improvement in the education sector. We want to retain this."

The results were formally handed over to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the morning.

He mentioned various government steps, notably timely distribution of free textbooks, broadcasting classes of the best teachers of the capital countrywide through BTV and giving stipends that helped raise the pass rate.

The minister also gave credit to teachers, guardians and students.

Education board officials and teachers attributed "creative question method" and initiating more teachers' training on creative question, special care on English and mathematics, students' awareness of the examinations and stipends to this success.

"Creative method is one of the reasons that helped the examinees obtain more marks," Prof Fahima Khatun, chairman of Dhaka Education Board, told The Daily Star yesterday.

She said they trained around thousands of teachers of secondary level on creative question and that has enabled the teachers to simplify the lessons. Students understood the lessons better and did well in the test.

Prof Manju Ara Begum, principal of Vigarunnisa Noon School and College, echoed Fahima's view saying that because of the creative method, it is possible for students to get full marks if their answers were correct.

Eight educational institutions outside the capital secured positions among this year's top 20 institutions. However, all the top 20 institutions are either in the metropolitan area or inside the municipality.

As in previous years, the highest 93.82 percent examinees passed from Barisal Board. Chittagong Board is at the bottom with 78.35 percent pass rate while Dhaka Board goes down to sixth position with 85.02 percent pass rate.

RESULTS COMPARISON

DIVISIONS	PASS RATE 2012	PASS RATE 2011	GPA-5 2012	GPA-5 2011
Dhaka	97.10	98.08	90152	41731
Rajshahi	97.06	97.63	30813	14352
Khulna	98.54	98.13	28966	12241
Chittagong	97.00	97.24	34034	17015
Barisal	99.19	99.05	9290	4592
Sylhet	95.34	90.59	7456	3291
Rangpur	98.14	96.85	29509	12451
Total	97.35	97.26	230220	105673

Primary Terminal

FROM PAGE 1

The results published yesterday show 24,15,341 students -- 10,98,073 boys and 13,17,268 girls -- passed the examination while 65,778 failed.

Pass rate of Ebtedai (primary level of madrasa education) examination is 92.54 percent.

Better care by the teachers and guardians, free textbook distribution, training programmes for teachers and above all competitiveness of students and their awareness of issues related to exams are behind the success, teachers and officials said.

In addition, doing better in every subject made a positive impact on the overall result, they said, adding increased monitoring and evaluation also contributed to this feat.

"Teachers are now more accountable and are giving their best to get a good output because stipends are allocated on the basis of the results," Shyamal Kanti Ghosh, director general, Directorate of Primary Education, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Majority of the failed students flunked mathematics and English but students' performance in these subjects is better this year," he said, adding that over 99 percent examinees passed in English and 97 percent in maths this year.

Primary and Mass Education Minister Afsarul Ameen briefed the media at 11:00am at his secretariat office about the results, which was formally handed over to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the morning.

"The overall quality of primary education has bettered. The students have done better in all subjects while the number of GPA-5 achievers has also increased. This indicates that the teachers have been able to motivate the students to study," he said.

This year, 26,41,903 students from 92,328 schools registered for the exam, of whom 24,81,119 took the test.

The number of schools with cent percent pass rate rose to 72,227. No student from 710 schools passed this year.

The examination began on November 21 and ended on November 29. Students of class-V must qualify at

the terminal exams to enrol in class-VI.

Across the country yesterday, jubilant students and parents, who had been suffering from nerves for the last couple of days, burst out in cheers as soon the results were out. Many were seen distributing sweetmeats.

Boys are slightly ahead of girls in terms of success although the number of girls who took the exams was higher than the boys. The pass percentage of boys and girls is 97.53 and 97.19.

Girls, however, outshone the boys in achieving the highest score with some 56,539 girls securing GPA-5 compared to 49,134 boys.

Fourteen of the top 20 schools -- in terms of the number of registered students, GPA-5 holders, pass rate and absent rate -- are from Dhaka. The six others are from Comilla, Chittagong and Khulna.

Monipur High School in capital's Mirpur has retained its position as the best in the country while National Ideal School and Vigarunnisa Noon School and College secured second and third spots.

"The students adapted themselves to the system and are more confident and serious now as the examinations are being held for four years," Farhad Hossain, principal of Monipur High School, told this correspondent.

Like previous years, schools affiliated with Primary Training Institute (PTI) and those run by Brac, a non-government organisation, topped the success chart in terms of pass rate with over 99 percent students passing the test. In contrast, Ananda schools, which are under a government project, ranked the lowest.

Asked why government schools fail to do better, the primary education minister said PTI schools were located in district headquarters and the quality of teachers there were good as they are teachers' trainers. But public schools are in remote areas and lack teachers.

Barisal, as in last year, came out on top among all seven divisions with 99.19 percent success rate. With 95.59 percent pass rate, Sylhet is at the bottom. Dhaka secured fourth position with over 97 percent success rate.

Lalmonirhat saw cent percent pass rate, leaving the 63 other districts behind. At the upazila level, 39 out of 505 upazilas saw cent percent pass rate.

Pass rate among the physically and mentally challenged children is over 96 percent.

Hall-Mark's

FROM PAGE 1

Savar upazila authorities.

"The Hall-Mark Group had grabbed some 10 acres of government land for years. We conducted the drive to recover the government land by evicting the illegal occupiers," Kabir Hossain Sarder, upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of Savar, told The Daily Star.

In November, a Dhaka court ordered the recovery the government land which was grabbed by Hall-Mark Group.

The group's chairman Tanvir Mahmud and many of its officials are now in jail in connection with the Sonali Bank loan scandal.

Sources said Hall-Mark Group in 2006, had primarily purchased only 2 acres of land in Hemayetpur for a dairy farm. However, within a short period of time, Tanvir Mahmud with the help of his hired goons and a section of unscrupulous government officials and law enforcers grabbed around 200 acres of land of the locals.

At least 65 general diaries and four cases were filed with Savar Police Station in this regard.