



The golden ticket receivers from Birshreshtha Munshi Abdur Rouf Public School flash victory sign as they move on to the Divisional Round of The Daily Star Spelling Bee yesterday.

## Death for Bachchu Razakar

FROM PAGE 1

The long-cherished International Crimes Tribunal-1 was formed in March 2010, but it was the Tribunal-2, formed only in March 2012, that delivered the first verdict.

The tribunals formed to prosecute, try and punish the perpetrators of crimes are seen by many as a courageous endeavour to come out of the culture of impunity in Bangladesh.

The prosecution had stacked eight charges against the expelled Jamaat-e-Islami leader for crimes he committed four decades ago in Faridpur.

But Tribunal-2 Chairman Justice Obaidul Hassan, and members Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Judge M Shahinur Islam unanimously held Azad guilty in six charges related to crimes against humanity and one for genocide.

The only charge, which the prosecution failed to prove, was based on the abduction, torture and confining of freedom fighter Abu Yusuf Pakhi in Faridpur.

"In dealing with the charges we have found that the accused Abu Kalam Azad alias Bachchu himself had physically participated being accompanied by his armed accomplices to the commission of crimes and as such he held criminally responsible for the direct commission of crimes proved," the judge said in the verdict.

Azad was sentenced to death for four of the charges, although found "guilty beyond doubt" in seven.

The tribunal noted that he deserved imprisonment for the other three offences but the court decided not to award separate sentences as he had already received the death sentence.

For the four offences, he will be sentenced to death and be "hanged by the neck till he is dead" under the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act 1973, the tribunal said.

"Since the convicted accused has been absconding the 'sentence of death' as awarded above shall be executed after causing his arrest or when he surrenders before the Tribunal, whichever is earlier."

Azad went into hiding seven hours before Tribunal-2 issued an arrest warrant against him on April 3, 2012. His trial was held in his absence and a tribunal-appointed lawyer moved for his trial.

Since the tribunals enjoy the status of High Court, a convict has the right to file an appeal only with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court within 30 days of the judgment delivered by the tribunal.

Azad will not have the right to appeal unless he surrenders or is arrested within 30 days, as a convict cannot appeal in absentia, some legal experts said.

But other experts believe that if he is arrested or he surrenders after the 30 days and seeks the permission of the Appellate Division to file an appeal, the apex court has the discretionary power to consider it.

"The accused [Azad] cannot be considered merely as an absentee accused. He is an absconded accused," said the Tribunal-2. "Evading trial for the offences of which he has been charged with signifies his culpability too. The accused deliberately waived his right to be present at trial. This conduct adds further to his culpability."

"Therefore, the fact of absconding of the accused can also be taken as an adverse and material incriminating circumstance to reinforce the evidence and circumstances available in the case," the judges said in the judgment.

According to an official at Detective Branch of Police, Azad fled to India, crossing the border in Dinajpur illegally -- without a passport or a visa.

Some sources suggest that he is now in Karachi of Pakistan.

A red alert will be issued through the Interpol to have Azad detained and brought back home, Law Minister Shafiq Ahmed said yesterday.

Several hundred lawyers,

journalists and observers gathered at the tribunal to witness the maiden judgment delivery yesterday. Many could not get in and had to wait outside. In parts of the country, people from a wider

spectrum of society took out celebratory processions.

A three-tier security measure was in place in and around the old high court building where the tribunals are situated.

After the verdict, many were seen unable to control happy tears.

Considering the huge gathering and the tiny size of its courtroom, the Tribunal-2 judges sat in the larger court-room of Traibunal-1 to deliver the judgment.

Justice Obaidul Hassan, chief of Tribunal-2, started reading out a 24-page summary of the verdict around 10:45am. It took him an hour to finish.

The full judgment comes in 336 paragraphs on 112 pages.

"It has been proved from testimony of witnesses that the accused had directly participated to the commission of crimes as an armed member of the Razakar force," the tribunal said in its conclusion.

"Besides, we have found that for the reason of his atrocious acts in the locality, the accused was widely known as 'Bachchu'."

As per the law, the tribunal said, "An individual incurs criminal liability for the direct commission of a crime, whether as an individual or jointly."

On November 4, 2012, the tribunal indicted Azad, who used to regularly preach on a couple of private TV channels.

Azad was sentenced to death for four of the charges, although found "guilty beyond doubt" in seven.

The tribunal noted that he deserved imprisonment for the other three offences but the court decided not to award separate sentences as he had already received the death sentence.

The tribunal-appointed defence counsel failed to produce any witnesses due to "non-cooperation" of Azad's family members.

Sahidur Rahman, conducting prosecutor of the case, expressed his satisfaction over the verdict.

Defence counsel Abdus Shukur Khan said the accused did not get justice.

"The accused will be benefited if he goes to the apex court against the verdict," he said, adding that the tribunal-appointed counsel does not have authority to file an appeal against the verdict.

Azad was charged with the killing of Chitta Ranjan Das in Faridpur in 1971. In an instant reaction to The Daily Star, his son Gopal Das said: "My father's soul will now rest in peace."

He thanked the government for holding the trial.

"Like me, thousands of sons, daughters and family members of martyrs are waiting to see other war criminals walking the gallows," Gopal said.

Some journalists rushed to Azad's home in Dhaka after the verdict but his wife refused to open the door or talk to them. She, however, did say that according to her knowledge, her husband was not involved in any crime and that she does not know Azad's whereabouts.

PROVED CHARGES IN BRIEF

During the first week of June 1971, Azad and his accomplices apprehended Ranjit Kumar Nath alias Babu Nath from Khabashpur in Faridpur town and took him to the Pakistani army camp at Faridpur Circuit House.

After discussion with Pakistani Major Akram Koraishi and Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, Ranjit was taken to a house at Bihari Colony, kept confined to a room there and tortured with the intent to kill, but he somehow escaped.

Mojahed, now secretary general of Jamaat-e-Islami facing war crimes charges, was a top leader of Islami Chhatra Sangha, the then student wing of the Islamist party.

On May 14, 1971, Azad accompanied by 10-12 armed Razakars attacked the village of Kolaran of Boalmari in Faridpur. There, he shot landlord Sudhangshu Mohan Roy and injured his son Monimoy Roy.

On May 16, 1971, Azad accompanied by 10-12 armed Razakars captured Madhab Chandra Biswas of Purura Namapara village of Nagarkanda in Faridpur, about 300 yards from his house. He shot Madhab to death.

On June 8, 1971, Azad along with 10-12 armed Razakars attacked Natibodia village in Boalmari of Faridpur and took away two females from the house. He along with

four to five of his accomplices raped them.

On June 3, 1971, Azad along with 10-12 armed Razakars launched a planned attack on the Hindu-dominated village Fulbaria of Nagarkanda in Faridpur and looted houses.

Accompanied by seven-eight accomplices, Azad dragged out Chitta Ranjan Das from his house and shot him dead.

On May 17, 1971, Azad accompanied by 30-35 armed Razakars launched a planned attack on the Hindu-dominated Hasamda village of Boalmari in Faridpur.

They looted and burnt houses of Hindu civilians and shot nine Hindus to death.

On May 18, 1971, Azad along with seven-eight armed Razakars attacked the house of Guru Das of Ujjirpur Bazarpara of Saltha in Faridpur and abducted his daughter and tortured her keeping her locked up for seven to eight days.

The girl was released, but she committed suicide when the accomplices of Azad tried to take her again.

### Fares charged

FROM PAGE 20

Sohag Hossain, a private university student, on Friday bought a ticket of VIP Deluxe Paribahan for Jhenidah for Tk 400, which was earlier sold at Tk 350.

The other bus operators on Dhaka-Magura, Meherpur and Chuadanga routes have been charging the same fare, he added.

The distance from Dhaka to Jhenidah is around 230km. As per the government decision, the fare on this route should be hiked by Tk 23.

Buses of SR Paribahan ply the Dhaka-Rangpur route. A staff at its Kalyanpur counter in the city said they are now charging each passenger Tk 550, which was Tk 500 a week ago.

Rangpur is around 310

kilometres off Dhaka and the fare should be increased by Tk 31.

Talking to The Daily Star last night, Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samity secretary general Khandaker Enayetullah said, "I have heard the allegations that some transport owners have hiked bus fares immediately after the announcement of fuel price hike. This might have occurred due to a long gap [18 days] between the fuel price hike and bus fare hike."

On January 3, the government raised prices of diesel and kerosene by Tk 7 a litre, and octane and petrol by Tk 5 a litre in efforts to cut subsidy cost.

Diesel and kerosene now sell at Tk 68 a litre, and octane and petrol at Tk 99 and Tk 96 a litre respectively.

Some journalists rushed to

Azad's home in Dhaka after the verdict but his wife refused to open the door or talk to them. She, however, did say that according to her knowledge, her husband was not involved in any crime and that she does not know Azad's whereabouts.

PROVED CHARGES IN BRIEF

On January 3, the government raised prices of diesel and kerosene by Tk 7 a litre, and octane and petrol by Tk 5 a litre in efforts to cut subsidy cost.

Diesel and kerosene now sell at Tk 68 a litre, and octane and petrol at Tk 99 and Tk 96 a litre respectively.

He thanked the government for holding the trial.

"Like me, thousands of sons, daughters and family members of martyrs are waiting to see other war criminals walking the gallows," Gopal said.

Some journalists rushed to

Azad's home in Dhaka after the verdict but his wife refused to open the door or talk to them. She, however, did say that according to her knowledge, her husband was not involved in any crime and that she does not know Azad's whereabouts.

PROVED CHARGES IN BRIEF

On January 3, the government raised prices of diesel and kerosene by Tk 7 a litre, and octane and petrol by Tk 5 a litre in efforts to cut subsidy cost.

Diesel and kerosene now sell at Tk 68 a litre, and octane and petrol at Tk 99 and Tk 96 a litre respectively.

He thanked the government for holding the trial.

"Like me, thousands of sons, daughters and family members of martyrs are waiting to see other war criminals walking the gallows," Gopal said.

Some journalists rushed to

Azad's home in Dhaka after the verdict but his wife refused to open the door or talk to them. She, however, did say that according to her knowledge, her husband was not involved in any crime and that she does not know Azad's whereabouts.

PROVED CHARGES IN BRIEF

On January 3, the government raised prices of diesel and kerosene by Tk 7 a litre, and octane and petrol by Tk 5 a litre in efforts to cut subsidy cost.

He thanked the government for holding the trial.

"Like me, thousands of sons, daughters and family members of martyrs are waiting to see other war criminals walking the gallows," Gopal said.

Some journalists rushed to

Azad's home in Dhaka after the verdict but his wife refused to open the door or talk to them. She, however, did say that according to her knowledge, her husband was not involved in any crime and that she does not know Azad's whereabouts.

PROVED CHARGES IN BRIEF

On January 3, the government raised prices of diesel and kerosene by Tk 7 a litre, and octane and petrol by Tk 5 a litre in efforts to cut subsidy cost.

He thanked the government for holding the trial.

"Like me, thousands of sons, daughters and family members of martyrs are waiting to see other war criminals walking the gallows," Gopal said.

Some journalists rushed to

Azad's home in Dhaka after the verdict but his wife refused to open the door or talk to them. She, however, did say that according to her knowledge, her husband was not involved in any crime and that she does not know Azad's whereabouts.

PROVED CHARGES IN BRIEF

On January 3, the government raised prices of diesel and kerosene by Tk 7 a litre, and octane and petrol by Tk 5 a litre in efforts to cut subsidy cost.

He thanked the government for holding the trial.

"Like me, thousands of sons, daughters and family members of martyrs are waiting to see other war criminals walking the gallows," Gopal said.

Some journalists rushed to

Azad's home in Dhaka after the verdict but his wife refused to open the door or talk to them. She, however, did say that according to her knowledge, her husband was not involved in any crime and that she does not know Azad's whereabouts.

PROVED CHARGES IN BRIEF

On January 3, the government raised prices of diesel and kerosene by Tk 7 a litre, and octane and petrol by Tk 5 a litre in efforts to cut subsidy cost.

He thanked the government for holding the trial.

"Like me, thousands of sons, daughters and family members of martyrs are waiting to see other war criminals walking the gallows," Gopal said.

Some journalists rushed to

Azad's home in Dhaka after the verdict but his wife refused to open the door or talk to them. She, however, did say that according to her knowledge, her husband was not involved in any crime and that she does not know Azad's whereabouts.

PROVED CHARGES IN BRIEF

On January 3, the government raised prices of diesel and kerosene by Tk 7 a litre, and octane and petrol by Tk 5 a litre in efforts to cut subsidy cost.

He thanked the government for holding the trial.

"Like me, thousands of sons, daughters and family members of martyrs are waiting to see other war criminals walking the gallows," Gopal said.

Some journalists rushed to

Azad's home in Dhaka after the verdict but his wife refused to open the door or talk to them. She, however, did say that according to her knowledge, her husband was not involved in any crime and that she does not know Azad's whereabouts.

PROVED CHARGES IN BRIEF

On January 3, the government raised prices of diesel and kerosene by Tk 7 a litre, and octane and petrol by Tk 5 a litre in efforts to cut subsidy cost.

He thanked the government for holding the trial.

"Like me, thousands of sons, daughters and family members of martyrs are waiting to see other war criminals walking the gallows," Gopal said.