

Mojaheed involved

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"I want justice," Sakti, 13th prosecution witness in the case against the Jamaat-e-Islami secretary general, appealed to the International Crimes Tribunal-2 with tears rolling down his face.

On January 15, Chitta Ranjan Saha, 12th prosecution witness in the case, testified that members of Peace Committee, Al-Badr and Biharis killed at least 10 people in Bakchar on the very day Mojaheed and other Peace Committee leaders held a meeting in Faridpur.

The three-member tribunal led by Justice Obaidul Hassan with members Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Judge M Shahinur Islam completed recording his testimony before adjourning the case proceeding until February 26.

The tribunal indicted Mojaheed, also a former minister of the BNP-led four-party government, with seven charges including murder, torture, genocide, and hatching conspiracy to kill intellectuals during the Liberation War.

During his 36-minute testimony, Sakti said the houses of Abdul Ali, father of Mojaheed, and former member Shamsul Mollah, were in neighbouring Khabaspur and "I knew them from my childhood and I was also acquainted to them".

The 57-year-old witness said Pakistani army entered Faridpur on April 21, 1971 and set up camps at Faridpur Circuit House, district stadium and other areas. Out of fear their family took shelter in his sister's house at Bakchar that day, he added.

After seven days, some

Biharis and Muslims looted the house of his sister before setting it on fire, said Sakti, adding that they took shelter in the neighbouring village and returned to his sister's house in the night.

Sakti said when he had gone to Khalilpur market around 10-11:00am on 29th Baishakh, he had seen Mojaheed, Alauddin Khan, Chairman Jalil Moulavi coming to the board office on an open jeep to form Peace Committee.

"I had seen the incident. I was present at the market," he said, adding that after returning to his sister's house he climbed up a tree to eat fruits to satiate his hunger.

"After the meeting, I saw the people I have mentioned earlier [Mojaheed, Alauddin Khan, Jalil Moulavi] left a jeep near the house of Binoy Sarker of Bakchar village around 2:00-2:30pm," said Sakti.

"At that time, there was a revolver in Mojaheed's hand and the Biharis were carrying rifles. They tied my father Upendra Narayan Saha and some others," said Sakti.

"When my mother and sister begged my father's life offering their gold ornaments to them, they said my father would be released. But instead of releasing him, they lined up 10-12 people at Shree Angan," he said adding, "Then Mojaheed made some signal and sounds of gunshots were heard."

"Bullets hit my father and others and they collapsed. After half an hour, I went there and found my father's body lying on the ground," said emotion-choked Sakti.

He added one Ohab Bihari, who was a Razakar, hit his mother with the butt of his

rifle that day, and after the killings, Sakti's family and many other Hindu families left the country and took shelter in different refugee camps in India.

Nripen Sikder, Biren Saha and others were killed along with his father and two women were shot dead after being raped by Biharis that day, Sakti said.

In the last part of his testimony, Sakti identified Mojaheed in the dock.

"I knew Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed since my childhood. My brother Khirud Lal Saha was classmate of Mojaheed's younger brother. I can't remember his name," said Sakti.

Before adjournment of the case proceeding, defence counsel Gazi MH Tamim asked Sakti four questions.

Meanwhile, the tribunal continued recording cross-examination of Abdur Razzaque Khan, 18th prosecution witness and investigation officer of the case against another Jamaat leader Muhammad Kamaruzzaman for the third day.

During the two-hour-and-50-minute cross-examination, defence counsel Kafil Uddin Chowdhury mostly asked questions about prosecution documents.

The tribunal adjourned the case proceeding until today when Razzaque would face further cross-examination.

The tribunal also fixed today for passing an order over a prosecution petition for limiting the number of defence witnesses in the case after hearing the petition yesterday.

Earlier, the defence submitted a list 1,354 witnesses to defend Kamaruzzaman.



Spelling Bee teams from European Standard School and Loreeto School pose with golden tickets yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Contest held

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opportunity for students to display their talents.

Anyone who did not qualify through their school can still participate through the online game on www.champs21.com.

The Spelling Bee finals are to be held in June.

Detailed information about the competition is available on www.champs21.com, the first e-learning portal of Bangladesh.

Sixth sense

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rats were able to detect it via electrodes in the part of the brain responsible for their sense of touch.

Similar devices have previously been used to make up for lost capabilities, for example giving paralysed patients the ability to move a cursor around the screen with their thoughts.

But the new study, by researchers from Duke University in North Carolina, is the first case in which such devices have been used to give an animal a completely new sense.

Dr Miguel Nicolelis said the advance, reported in the Nature Communications journal this week, was just a prelude to a major breakthrough on a "brain-to-brain interface".

Speaking at the annual meeting of the American Academy for the Advancement of Science in Boston on Sunday, he described the mystery work as something "no one has dreamed could be done".

The study demonstrates that a part of the brain which is designed to process one sense can interpret other types of sensory information, researchers said.

It means that in theory, someone who is blind because of damage to their visual cortex could regain their sight using an implant in another part of the brain.

Dr Nicolelis said: "What we did here was to demonstrate that we could create a new sense in rats by allowing them to 'touch' infrared light that mammals cannot detect.

"The nerves were responding to both touch and infrared light at the same time. This shows that the adult brain can acquire new capabilities that have never been experienced by the animal before.

"This suggests that, in the future, you could use prosthetic devices to restore sensory modalities that have been lost, such as vision, using a different part of the brain."

Armenian president reelected

AFP, Yerevan

Armenian President Serzh Sargsian yesterday celebrated a crushing victory in elections for a second five-year mandate but his rival alleged violations and observers complained the polls lacked competition.

Sargsian, a shrewd former military officer in power since 2008, won Monday's polls in the small ex-Soviet state nestled in the Caucasus mountains between Turkey and Iran with 58.64 per cent of the votes.

His nearest rival, former foreign minister Raffi Hovannissian trailed in a distant second place with 36.75 per cent of votes, the central election commission said after counting results from all the precincts.

9 GB directors trash

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The commission tried to assure that Grameen Bank's money would remain safe, according to the statement.

"If the government takes away the bank from our control and turns it into a government bank, will anyone believe them?"

The majority of the board members also expressed surprise at the commission's claim that the Grameenphone Ltd owes Tk 6,000 crore to Grameen Bank in profits.

"You cannot find anywhere in Grameen Bank's account statements since its inception that Tk 6 is owed from Grameenphone, let alone Tk 6,000 crore."

The directors said the country's top audit firms routinely looked into Grameen Bank's book but they never mentioned the amount that is apparently due from Grameenphone.

"The Grameen Bank governing body and the current chairman never mentioned it at the board meetings, not even at the latest one on February 14. Bangladesh Bank presented its review report at the board meeting but they have not talked about it."

The nine board directors also questioned the commission's suggestion about holding the election under the leadership of a person not related to the bank.

"No allegations of lack of transparency have been raised so far about the election process. No case has been filed until now. Even so, the press and electronic media have not published or broadcast anything in this regard."

"Has the system of fair election evoked envy in anybody with the result that it has to be ruled? We do not have any problem with the election process. Why is there so much interest in creating problems?"

The board members also contested the commission's claim that only 5.4 lakh members have bought shares.

"Where did it get such information? As a matter of fact, 54 lakh members have bought shares at Tk 100 each."

They also dismissed the commission's comment about the "negligible" presence of elected members at board meetings.

"This is totally wrong. No one can cite an instance where this [insignificant attendance] has been the case. It would not be an exaggeration if we say our presence at the board meeting is hundred per cent."

The statement also said the

commission has not felt the need to meet the elected board members as a group or individually for once to listen to what they have to say or write to them.

"But the commission happens to have met only males, many of whom do not have any idea about Grameen Bank."

The nine board members also chastised the absence of a woman member in the four-member commission formed to investigate the activities of the bank.

"Ninety-seven percent of the members of the bank are females. The lives of about one crore poor women have been changed for the better by this bank. Yet, not a woman was included in the commission. Unbelievable!"

Banning

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solved through a democratic process."

Warsi, however, favoured those ideas that are in the public domain, saying the public can decide what kind of idea they want for Bangladesh.

Responding to a question on the next polls, she said "To have a proper election, you need proper representation of all political parties in those elections for making that acceptable to all."

Warsi said she spoke to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia and Dipu Moni on that issue (next polls).

Bangladesh has an opportunity to display real democratic maturity by showing that it can hold a free, fair and inclusive election, she told reporters.

"[So that] at the end it produces a result which is acceptable to people of Bangladesh," she said, adding that Bangladesh has a stable democracy.

On how the polls would be held, Warsi said what process they would adopt is going to be a decision of Bangladesh, not of a foreign country.

Warsi highly praised the Shahbagh protesters for holding their demonstrations in a peaceful manner. "People have right to protest...those protests should be free of violence."

Asked about her discussion with Dipu Moni, the UK minister said "We talked about the Shahbagh protest, war crimes, war crimes trial, election preparation, and trade, human rights and Rohingya issues."

China military

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considered by China to be a state secret; however, we believe it engages in harmful computer network operations," Mandiant said.

"It is time to acknowledge the threat that is originating in China, and we wanted to do our part to arm and prepare security professionals to combat that threat effectively."

China has dismissed the allegations as "groundless", saying it strictly outlaws the practice, and says it has also been a victim of such crimes.

Questioned on the report, the foreign ministry spokesman Hong Lei said he doubted the evidence would withstand scrutiny. He said: "To make groundless accusations based on some rough material is neither responsible nor professional."

Unit 61398 is based in the Pudong district, China's financial and banking hub, and is staffed by perhaps thousands of people proficient in English as well as

computer programming and network operations, the report said.

It said the unit had "stolen hundreds of terabytes of data from at least 141 organisations across a diverse set of industries beginning as early as 2006". Most of the victims were located in the US, with smaller numbers in Canada and Britain. The information stolen included details on mergers and acquisitions and the emails of senior employees, the report said.

China has consistently denied being involved in such activities, but experts have dismissed the denials. "The PLA plays a key role in China's multifaceted security strategy, so it makes sense that its resources would be used to facilitate economic cyber-espionage that helps the Chinese economy," said Dmitri Alperovitch, chief technology officer and co-founder of CrowdStrike, a web security firm.

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KL may recruit

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system last month to select the workers from across the country.

On completion of registration and medical check-up, the 10,000 workers were selected for the jobs.

They are now undergoing training at 13 technical training centres across the country.

Although the workers' migration cost was fixed at Tk 40,000 each, they now may have to pay an additional Tk 10,000 if the employers in Malaysia do not bear the levy, the minister said.

Contacted, Dr Nurul Islam, director of the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training, told The Daily Star that the first flight might depart for Malaysia on March 27 with around 300 Bangladeshi workers.

The other flights will take place gradually, he said.

After a 4-year ban on the recruitment of Bangladeshi workers since 2009, the Malaysian government finally decided to recruit workers from Bangladesh under state arrangements in September last year.

Kuala Lumpur and Dhaka signed a Memorandum of Understanding in this regard on November 26.

It's propaganda

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The Shahbagh demonstrator has not made any derogatory comment about any religion and they will never do so, he said. "We only have made derogatory comments about war criminals and collaborators."

The wave of patriotism will wash away propaganda, said Imran.

Three newspapers yesterday published a half-page advertisement of Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh, Darul Ulum Hathazari, Chittagong. The advertisement containing highly offensive texts, which looks like online post, claimed that the Shahbagh movement was against Islam.

The demonstrators started the protest on February 5 hours after Jamaat leader Abdul Quader Mollah was given life term by a war crimes tribunal. They demanded death penalty for war criminals.

Talking to reporters yesterday morning, Imran said they were thinking to take the movement to the grassroots.

Asked how long the 24-hour demonstration will continue, he said discussion is going on about this matter among bloggers, representatives of student and social organisations.

"If we can make a decision after the discussion, we might announce it in the grand rally on Thursday."

Meanwhile, like previous days, people from all walks of life irrespective of age, sex and class, gathered at the Intersection.

Many students from different schools, colleges and universities imbued with the spirit of 1971 yesterday thronged the venue since morning.

Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday joining the demonstration said, "I am happy that even after four decades, the youths still keep alive the spirit of Liberation War spirit."

Noted academician Jamilur Reza Choudhury said, "This generation once again proved that only the youths can give us directives in a time of national crisis."

Health and Family Welfare Minister AFM Ruhul Haque said a new Bangladesh will be emerged from the Shahbagh demonstration.

Talking to reporters at Shahbagh, lawmaker and cultural personality Asaduzzaman Noor said the people of Bangladesh now demand maximum punishment for war criminals. The young generation has opened up their eyes.

Another cultural personality, Nasiruddin Yousuff, demanded punishment to those running smear campaigns against the protesters.

The protesters declared to hold a grand rally at 3:00pm tomorrow.

Beside, they called upon the people to write letters commemorating the martyrs of the Liberation War and tie those to balloons and release in the air at 4:13pm on February 20. The Pakistani forces surrendered at the same moment on December 16, 1971.

They also demanded to construct Shaheed Minar at all the educational institutions across the country by February 21.

Out with a new trick?

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As part of the smear campaign, Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh, a radical Islamist organisation based in Hathazari, Chittagong, got published a half-page advertisement in three newspapers yesterday with anti-Islamic contents, claiming those were posted on the internet by different bloggers. It claimed that the Shahbagh movement was against Islam.

Using such advertisements and reports in like-minded newspapers, the anti-liberation forces held protest rallies in Dhaka and Chittagong yesterday to counter the Shahbagh movement.

In a statement in the afternoon, Jamaat-e-Islami said, "The main objective of the Shahbagh protesters is to root out Islam from the country. They are involved in different anti-social activities there."

Meanwhile, Information Minister Hasanul Haque Inu said the government would not spare those who are hurting religious sentiments to create tension.

According to the law, it is a punishable offence to create tension by publishing provocative advertisements. And the organisations involved in such activities would be closed down as Youtube was shut in Bangladesh following the Ramu violence, said the minister.

"By spreading hate contents, they are dishonouring Prophet Muhammad [SM]," Inu said, adding that a meeting will be held today to decide on the issue.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, a top leader of Islamic Andolon Bangladesh said Jamaat-e-Islami that has drawn public outrage is

engaging Qaumi Madrasa-based radical Islamist groups to counter the Shahbagh movement by portraying it anti-Islamic.

They include Khelafat Majlish, Islami Oikya Jote and Olama Mashayekh Parishad.

The Shahbagh demonstrators yesterday strongly protested the advertisements and negative campaigns, and said the anti-liberation forces have chosen a path of hatred to demean Islam by using fake identities in the social media and shift the blame onto them.

Imran H Sarkar, a key organiser of the protest, said some media houses are branding the Shahbagh movement as anti-Islami and spreading lies about slain blogger Rajib Haider, one of the organisers of the movement.

He said the Shahbagh protesters have nothing against any religion, as the movement is against the mass murderers of 1971.

Immediately after Rajib's murder, the anti-liberation forces launched a negative campaign to brand Rajib as an atheist, claiming he had posted offensive and anti-Islami contents on the internet, said bloggers involved in the movement.

While fingers are pointed at Jamaat-Shibir for the killing, the anti-liberation elements are trying hard to brand Rajib as an atheist to justify the murder and portray all Shahbagh protesters as anti-Islam.

Rajib's family members strongly condemned the attempts to portray him as an atheist.

Ali Haider Dewan, a relative of Rajib, said a conspiracy is being hatched to divert Rajib's killing to a different direction.

Judge faces JS music

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against the judge," Shafique said.

He would also talk to the chief justice as to how action could be taken in line with the constitution, the minister said.

"His conduct is extra-constitutional and against country's sovereignty."

As some MPs kept on blasting Mizanur, saying he had violated the constitution, Speaker Abdul Hamid drew the law minister's attention to the issue.

"Where will people go [to seek justice] if judges engage themselves in such activities?" said the speaker. If the

issue is not resolved, he will come up with a ruling later, he said.

A number of newspapers ran reports on the justice's move on Tuesday.

Citing the newspapers' reports, Jatiya Party MP Mujibul Haque demanded action against the judge.

AL MPs Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Fazle Rabbi Mia, Abdul Mannan and Chief Whip Abdul Shahid echoed Mujibul's demand.

Sheikh Selim said the HC judge violated the constitution and sided with Razakars to foil the ongoing mass movement at Shahbagh demand-

ing death penalty for all war criminals.

Mizanur should be interrogated to find his link with the killing of blogger Rajib as Selim said, "the judge labeled Rajib as apostate".

The chief whip proposed holding a discussion at the House on the matter.

"The judge committed an offence which is not pardonable. He must be brought to book to uphold the dignity of the judiciary," AL MP Mannan said.

Many ruling alliance MPs were seen supporting their colleagues' sentiment and demands by thumping desks.