

BEST VERDICT

Shahriar Kabir

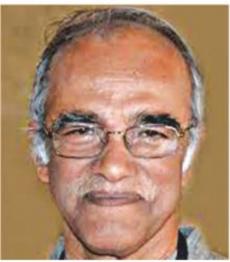
FROM PAGE 20
Shahriar Kabir said. The verdict reflects the fairness of the trial.

Shahriar said there had been talks about bringing up the issue of command responsibility in the war crimes trial and that finally came up in yesterday's verdict, "which is a good thing."

This verdict can lead to the trial of the Jamaat, he added.

Mafidul Haque

Mafidul Haque, trustee board member of the



Liberation War Museum, described the verdict as a remarkable victory for the nation.

He said the judgment has made history and demonstrated a new dimension of the trial process at home and abroad.

"The verdict proves that the standard of the tribunal is a good example for any other war crimes tribunal in the world," he said.

Prof Meghna

Guhathakurata

Prof Meghna Guhathakurata, daughter of martyred intellectual Jyotirmoy Guhathakurata,



hailed the verdict and said it was a judgment against a "proven war criminal".

She termed the verdict as a "foundation of justice" without which a nation cannot exist.

According to her, the 1971 war was not just a battle between two countries; it rather gave birth to a nation.

"So those who killed and tortured people during the war to destroy our dreams of freedom should be punished," she said.

Anwar Hossain

FROM PAGE 20

Hossain said, "The roles of the Jamaat, Al-Badr, Razakar and other anti-liberation forces have been specified in the verdict." Therefore, the charges that should be brought against the Jamaat are clear now.

Muntassir Mamon

FROM PAGE 20

The historian also thanked the youths who had waged a movement for capital punishment to war criminals. They too could sleep in peace now, he said.

Nasiruddin Yousuff

FROM PAGE 20

The verdict is fair and as expected, he said, adding, "We hope the sentence will be executed soon."

Village

FROM PAGE 20

verdict, the widows once again resorted to crying, but this time in solace.

Wiping away her tears, Hafiza Khatun said, "I have been waiting for this day for the last 40 years. I am grateful to the Almighty that He let me witness the trial of the person who killed my husband and children.

Another widow, Korfuli Begum, said, "I have lived in anguish all these days because of Kamaruzzaman. Today he got what he deserves."

Martyr's son Jalal Uddin said, "I was a witness at the tribunal. My father and many other villagers were killed under the leadership of Kamaruzzaman. As the son of a martyr, I felt relieved at hearing the verdict."

Shahabuddin, commander of Nalibari Muktiyoddha Sangsad, said the widows of Bidhoba Palli were happy with the verdict. Through this verdict they were able to see the killers of their loved ones brought to justice.

Jamaat at the core

FROM PAGE 1

International Crimes Tribunal-2, which handed down the death sentence to Kamaruzzaman yesterday for crimes committed against humanity in 1971, also said the party was behind the formation of Al-Badr, the force infamous for planning the killing of Bangalee intellectuals.

"In continuation of the earlier segment of this judgment which relates to the 'brief historical background' we deem it indispensable to get a scenario on the role and stand of the Jamaat-e-Islami in 1971, particularly when it has already been established that the Al-Badr was an 'action section', 'armed wing' of Jamaat and the Al-Badr was formed mainly of the workers of its student wing Islami Chhatra Sangha [ICS-now Islami Chhatra Shibir].

"Besides, the victims and sufferers of the diabolical atrocities do have the right to know the role the Jamaat-e-Islami played in 1971," said the tribunal, comprised of Justice Obaidul Hassan, Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Judge Md Shahinur Islam.

The three-member tribunal also cited excerpts from the book, "Sunset at Midday", written by Mohi Uddin Chowdhury, who was a leader of the Peace Committee, another organisation of collaborators, in Noakhali in 1971.

"To face the situation, the Razakar Force, consisting of pro-Pakistani elements, was formed. This was the first experiment in East Pakistan, which was a successful experiment. Following this strategy Razakar Force was being organized through out East Pakistan. This force was later on named Al-Badr and Al-Shams and Al-Mujahid."

"The workers belonging to purely Islami Chhatra Sangha were called Al-Badr, the general public belonging to the Jamaat-e-Islami, Muslim League, Nizam-e-Islami, etc., were called Al-Shams and the Urdu-speaking, generally known as Biharis, were called al-Mujahid."

Another book titled "Muktijudhdhe Dhaka 1971" notes that the Jamaat had obtained government recognition and approval for forming armed paramilitary groups like Razakar and Al-Badr to provide support and assistance to the Pakistan military.

Citing excerpts from Hussain Haqqani's book, "Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military", the tribunal

said, "The Jamaat-e-Islami and especially its student wing, the Islami Jamaat-e-Talaba [IJT], joined the military's effort in May 1971 to launch two paramilitary counterinsurgency units."

"The IJT provided a large number of recruits....The two special brigades of Islamists cadres were named Al-Shams [the sun, in Arabic] and Al-Badr [the moon].... A separate Razakar Directorate was established.....Two separate wings called Al-Badr and Al-Shams were recognised.

"Well educated and properly motivated students from schools and madrasas were put in Al-Badr wing, where they were trained to undertake specialised operations... the remainder were grouped together under Al-Shams..."

"Bangladeshi scholars accused the Al-Badr and Al-Shams militias of being fanatical. They allegedly acted as the Pakistan army's death squads and exterminating leading left wing professors, journalists, litterateurs, and even doctors."

Hussain Haqqani served as adviser to Pakistani Prime Ministers Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto. He also served as Pakistan's ambassador to Sri Lanka from 1992 to 1993. Till recently he was Pakistan's ambassador to the United States.

A report of Fox Butterfield, published in The New York Times on January 3, 1972, establishes that the Al-Badr was being directed by a special group of Pakistani army officers.

There were a series of cryptic references to Al-Badr in papers found in the desk of Maj Gen Rao Farman Ali, the military adviser to the governor of East Pakistan, the report said.

JAMAAT AND PEACE COMMITTEE

The verdict also shed light on the link between the Jamaat and the Peace Committee.

A report published in daily Sangram on April 17, 1971 said a Peace Committee delegation, including Professor Ghulam Azam [the then ameer of Jamaat], in a meeting with East Pakistan governor Lt General Tikka Khan expressed solidarity and their adherence to the Pakistan army.

Also, Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, in his book, "The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jama'at-i-Islami of Pakistan", wrote: "In September 1971 the alliance between the Jama'at

and the army was made official when four members of the Jama'at-e-Islami of East Pakistan joined the military government of the province. Both sides saw gains to be made from their alliance."

The Jamaat, together with other religion-based political parties, had endorsed the plan of the Pakistan military in annihilating the Bangalee nation.

To support the Pakistan army further, the Jamaat backed the formation of the Peace Committee in 1971. It was also revealed in a dispatch from Sydney H Schanberg, New Delhi correspondent of The New York Times, who was expelled from East Pakistan on June 30, 1971.

"Throughout East Pakistan the army is training new para-military home guards or simply arming 'loyal' civilians, some of whom are formed into peace committees. Besides Biharis and other non-Bengali, Urdu-speaking Moslems, the recruits include the small minority of Bengali Moslems who have long supported the army -- adherents of the right-wing religious parties such as the Moslem League and Jamaat-e-Islami," the judgment said, citing the dispatch.

A report of The Economist in July 1, 2010 said, "Bangladesh, formerly East Pakistan, became independent in December 1971 after a nine-month war against West Pakistan. The West's army had the support of many of East Pakistan's Islamist parties. They included Jamaat-e-Islami, still Bangladesh's largest Islamist party, which has a student wing that manned a pro-army paramilitary body, called Al Badr."

Therefore, the tribunal said, it is now history based on old authoritative documents. It was chiefly the Jamaat-e-Islami which played a pivotal role in the formation of Al-Badr, Razakar, Al-Shams and Peace Committee and of course not with any intent of guarding civilians and their property.

Rather, it is undisputed history too that those paramilitary forces actively collaborated with the occupation armed forces to the accomplishment of their barbaric atrocities directed against the unarmed Bangalee civilians in the territory of Bangladesh in 1971.

Key man of Al-Badr

FROM PAGE 20

occupation Pakistani army, was formed after the army entered Jamalpur on April 22, 1971. The entire Mymensingh district Chhatra Sangha joined the Al-Badr force within a month under Kamaruzzaman.

Identity of Kamaruzzaman as the chief organiser of the Al-Badr has been very much evident from a report published in Jamaat's mouthpiece daily Sangram on August 16, 1971.

The report said M o m e n s h a h i [Mymensingh] Al-Badr organised a rally and symposium at local Muslim Institute on August 15 marking the 25th independence day of Pakistan and Kamaruzzaman, as the chief organiser of Al-Badr, chaired the programme.

After taking short training, Al-Badr men started committing atrocities targeting the Hindus and unarmed Bangalees of greater Mymensingh, say the prosecution documents, adding that Kamaruzzaman also served as the office secretary of East Pakistani Islami Chhatra Sangha during the war.

After the Liberation War, law enforcers arrested Kamaruzzaman in the capital on December 29, 1971 as one of the collaborators of the Pakistani army.

Bangla daily Purbadesh ran a report headlined "15 more collaborators including Deen Mohammad arrested" on December 31, 1971. The Dainik Bangla published another report headlined "15 more collaborators arrested" on the same issue on the same day.

Kamaruzzaman was 14th on the list of arrestees published in the reports. He was 287th on a list of arrested collaborators of Dhaka that was prepared by the Directorate of National Security Intelligence (NSI) Bangladesh on April 13, 1972.

News of his arrest was substantiated from the testimony of Kafil Uddin, elder brother of Kamaruzzaman as well as the fourth defence witness in the case.

During his cross-examination, Kafil said Kamaruzzaman was detained at Kamalapur Railway Station when he had gone to Dhaka at the end of 1971 but was released after 90-105 days.

Sources in the investigation agency say Kamaruzzaman sat for the HSC examinations from Dhaka Central Jail in 1972 and got released after around nine months as no case was filed against him in Dhaka. But a case was filed against him in Mymensingh under the Collaborator Act, 1972.

According to a report on the findings of the People's Inquiry Commission published in March, 1994, Hasanuzzaman, brother of victim Badiuzzaman, filed a case with Nalibari police after independence against Kamaruzzaman as the principal accused and 17 others in connection with his brother's killing.

Hasanuzzaman as a prosecution witness in the war crimes case against Kamaruzzaman also mentioned that case.

After the rebirth of Jamaat's student wing

Islami Chhatra Sangha as Islami Chhatra Shibir on February 6, 1977, Kamaruzzaman became its president in the second executive committee. War crimes suspect Mir Quasem Ali was the president of the first committee, according to prosecution documents.

Kamaruzzaman joined Jamaat in 1979. According to the defence documents, he obtained bachelor's degree in 1974 and master's in journalism from Dhaka University in 1976.

He joined monthly Dhaka Digest as an executive editor in 1980. Thereafter he took charge of weekly Sonar Bangla as its editor in 1981 and still remains in that position. He joined the daily Sangram as an executive editor in November 1983 and served in the post until 1993.

In October 1979, he joined Jamaat's Dhaka city unit and served as a joint secretary in 1981-82, say the defence documents, adding that he was the central publicity secretary from 1983 to 1991. He has been serving as an assistant secretary general of Jamaat since 1992.

Kamaruzzaman, father of five sons and one daughter, contested the parliamentary elections in 1986, 1991, 1996, 2001 and 2008 but could never win.

Detained on July 13, 2010 in a criminal case, Kamaruzzaman was shown arrested in the war crimes case on August 2 the same year.

Jailed once but escaped trial

FROM PAGE 20

connection with the killing of his brother Badiuzzaman, according to the findings published by the People's Inquiry Commission in March 1994.

Badiuzzaman's killing is one of the seven charges framed against Kamaruzzaman. Hasanuzzaman also gave his testimony as the sixth prosecution witness and mentioned the previous case he had filed after independence.

During cross-examination, he however said he could not follow up the case later.

According to reports of at least two newspapers published on December 31, 1971, Kamaruzzaman along with 14 others was arrested as the Pakistani army's collaborator in Dhaka on December 29 but got released after nine months

for unknown reasons.

After 40 years, Kamaruzzaman, one of Jamaat's assistant secretaries general, was arrested in connection with a criminal case on July 13, 2010 and shown arrested in the war crimes case on August 2 the same year.

The prosecution pressed formal charges against him incorporating nine charges of crimes against humanity on January 15, 2012 and the International Crimes Tribunal-1 took the charges into cognisance on January 31.

Kamaruzzaman's case was transferred to the Tribunal-2 on April 16, 2012 for expeditious trial.

On June 4, 2012, the tribunal indicted Kamaruzzaman on seven charges of crimes against humanity including murder and torture of unarmed civilians and complicity in other crimes during

the nine-month-long war.

After the resignation of Justice Nizamul Huq, former chairman of the Tribunal-1, amid controversy over his alleged Skype conversation with expatriate legal expert Ahmed Ziauddin, Kamaruzzaman on January 2, 2013, sought retrial.

The tribunal however rejected his petition the following day and continued with the proceedings.

As many as 18 prosecution witnesses including the investigation officer of the case testified against the accused, while five people including Kamaruzzaman's son and elder brother gave testimony in favour of him between July 15, 2012 and March 24, 2013.

The prosecution and the defence held closing arguments from March 24 until April 16 and the tribunal kept the case waiting for verdict since then.

Four killed in city road accident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three construction workers were killed and another six injured in a road crash in the capital's Tejgaon industrial area early today.

Around the same time, a biker was killed being hit by a truck in the city's Khilkhet area. He was identified as Robiul, 40, police said, while identities of the workers could not be known immediately.

A Mohakhali-bound van struck the nine around 1:00am while they were working at Shat Rasta intersection.

They were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared the three dead, said Inspector Moazzam Hoque, in-charge of DMCH Police Camp.

Ideal

FROM PAGE 20

Jhenidah Cadet College.

Chittagong: Collegiate School, Dr Khastagi Govt Girls High School and Fauzdarhat Cadet College.

Barisal: Barisal Cadet College, Barisal Govt Girls High School and Barisal Zilla School.

Sylhet: Sylhet Cadet College, Jalalabad Cantonment Public School and College and Sylhet Govt Pilot High School.

Comilla: Comilla Zilla School, Nawab Faizunnesa Govt Girls High School and Comilla Cadet College.

Dinajpur: Amena-baki Residential Model School, Syedpur Govt and Technical High School and College and Rangpur Cadet College.

Bangladesh Madrasa Education Board: Tamirul Millat Kamil Madrasa from Gazipur, Dhaka; Tanjimul Ummah Cadet Madrasa from Uttara, Dhaka; and Darunnazat Siddikia Kamil Madrasa from Demra Dhaka.

Bangladesh Technical Education Board: UCEP Dhaka Technical School from Mirpur, Dhaka; AK Khan UCEP Technical School from Chittagong; and UCEP-Rajshahi Technical School from Rajshahi.

To judge the top 20 schools in each board, the education ministry applied four academic standards -- the percentage of regular students, the passing percentage, the percentage of students obtaining GPA-5, and the average GPA of all examinees.

Jamaat calls

FROM PAGE 20

on the instructions of its chief Shah Ahmed Shafi.

About the reason for the withdrawal, the Hefajat leader said the hartal would disadvantage many of their men who had suffered injuries in clashes with police and were undergoing treatment at different hospitals.

He noted that they would also be trying to find out "the activists who were made to disappear" during the clashes.

Asked the number of their casualties during a police drive at Motijheel on May 5 and 6, he said their district-level chiefs would prepare a list of the "martyred" and the wounded activists.

Meanwhile, the two-day countrywide hartal called by the 18-party alliance ended last evening without occasioning much violence.

However, at a press conference at its Nayapaltn head office, the BNP last night claimed that three of its activists were killed during the hartal, one each in Chapainawabganj, Feni and Comilla.

Our correspondents in the districts did not have any such information as of the filing of this report at 8:00pm.

Talking to The Daily Star, many people -- especially day labourers and roadside vendors -- aired their grievances about the BNP-called general strike.

"In the last two-day hartal, I could not earn even one-fourth of what I normally do," said a vendor who sells burgers near the BNP central office.

BNP leaflets seized

FROM PAGE 20

casualty figures of the drive.

"The leaflets are full of misleading information. That's why we confiscated them," Najmul Alam, deputy commissioner of DMP (Motijheel division), told The Daily Star.

Some 70,000 to 80,000 leaflets were seized from a printing press in the capital's Fakirapal, he added.

The police officer also rejected the opposition party's claim that the law enforcers had arrested BNP activists.

In the leaflets, BNP claimed that it along with the people of the country was appalled watching different photographs and video footage of indiscriminate firing in the police drive, a huge number of bodies, vehicles being run

over the bodies and spiriting away of bodies in trucks.

"The heinous killing spree began after midnight when the Hefajat leaders and activists were fast asleep or were at prayer," the leaflets claim.

According to the leaflets, the police action was only comparable with Operation Searchlight, carried out by the Pakistani occupation forces on the Bangalees on the Black Night of March 25, 1971.

But asked if the BNP had any of the photographs or video footage to support those claims, party leader Shamsuzzaman Dudu answered in the negative.

"We watched them in national newspapers, including The Daily Star, Prothom Ali, Inqilab and Jugantor," he claimed.

But none of these dailies

PM bins 2,500 death

FROM PAGE 20

The prime minister also questioned, "Where have all the bodies gone? Where are the families of those killed? Would they [opposition] even be able to give an account of how many people were injured?"

She asked the opposition to go find out the bodies and the injured people.

Hasina, who is president of the ruling Awami League, was speaking at a views exchange meeting with leaders of the Feni district AL at the Gono Bhaban.

She alleged the opposition leader was responsible for Hefajat-e Islam's violence in the capital on Sunday, and said she would be implicated in cases as an "instigator of the mayhem".

"On her [Khaleda] orders, people were killed and copies of the holy Quran were burnt. She will be accused of giving such orders," Hasina continued.

Referring to Hefajat's rampage, she said everyone involved would be traced by scanning video footage and brought to book.

The premier alleged that Khaleda wanted to overthrow the government by banking on Hefajat, and for this, she gave the 48-hour ultimatum and asked the radical Islamist group to stay in Dhaka.

"You have given so many ultimatums ... where are those now? These won't work," she said, and urged Khaleda to give up "destructive" activities.

"You'll kill people, burn the holy Quran, and still there will be no trial. This cannot continue," Hasina added.

She said Muslims always keep the holy Quran in the safest places. "But they burnt it. I don't know if so many copies of the holy Quran had ever been burnt."

There was no doubt that the BNP and Jamaat men were involved in the heinous acts "because arson is their habit", the prime minister said, adding that opposition parties usually set fire to vehicles and houses, and now they had started burning the holy Quran.

Hasina also asked Hefajat, "What sort of Islam you want to protect by burning the holy Quran?"

Mirpur fire

FROM PAGE 20

the capital's Mirpur area, said police.

They tried to come out of the 11-storey building but failed, said the fire-fighters.

The dead include Mahbubur Rahman, managing director of Tung Hai Groups and also a local Awami League leader, his friends ZM Morshed, additional deputy inspector general of police, Sohul Mostofa Swapan, Comilla district unit president of

Jubo League, and Emadur Rahman Badal, a hotelier.

Mahbubur, who owned six garment factories, was also a director of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

His chamber was on the building's ninth floor and its ground floor was used as a storeroom.

The packaging and ironing sections were on its first and second floor from where the fire is suspected to have

originated.

"It was an act of sabotage. Somebody might have set fire to the factory to kill its owner," alleged Jubo League leader Nazrul Islam.

Mahbubur's business partner Tofazzal Hossain also made a similar allegation.

The fire broke out when Mahbubur was in his chamber with his friends and staff. The factory had shut for the day around 10:00pm.

Accused US kidnapper ordered held on \$8m bond

REUTERS, Cleveland

A former school bus driver accused of kidnapping three young women and raping them during a decade of captivity in his house was yesterday ordered held on \$8 million (5 million pounds) bond in a Cleveland court, his head bowed and his face turned away from spectators.

It was the first time the dark-haired, balding Ariel Castro, 52, had been seen in public since his arrest on Monday following the escape of three women and a child from his house in a low-income neighbourhood of Cleveland, Ohio.

Opposition

FROM PAGE 20

The programme was announced after a meeting of the BNP standing committee at its Chairperson Khaleda Zia's Gulshan office last night.

"Due to the gruesome attack on Hefajat-e Islam on May 5, we could not go on with our own programme even though the government turned down our 48-hour ultimatum to accept the demand for a restoration of the caretaker government system," Moudud Ahmed, a BNP standing committee member, told reporters after the meeting.

The opposition enforced two days' hartal from Wednesday, protesting "massacre of Hefajat activists by law enforcers" and could not declare any action regarding

the caretaker issue, he added.

"Now we have returned to our prime demand for restoring the caretaker government system. And in this context, we are announcing a fresh programme -- a rally in front of the BNP's Nayapaltn central office on May 13 [Monday]."

Presided over by Khaleda, also chief of the alliance, the BNP's highest policy-making body also decided in principle to enforce a hartal on Tuesday or Wednesday if the government creates any obstacle to the rally.

Earlier on May 4, Khaleda