

WAR CRIMES TRIAL Kamaruzzaman to appeal to SC today for acquittal

Says his lawyer
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The lawyer of Jamaat-e-Islami leader Muhammad Kamaruzzaman will file an appeal with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court today, challenging the death penalty handed down to him and seeking his acquittal, defence lawyer Tajul Islam told The Daily Star last night.

On May 9, the International Crimes Tribunal-2 sentenced Kamaruzzaman, one of the key organisers of the infamous Al Badr force, to death after finding him guilty of committing crimes against humanity during the Liberation War in 1971.

Tajul said, "We think, the judgment is not tenable in the eye of law. It's a wrong judgement. We will appeal to seek justice. We hope our appeal will be accepted and the judgement will be set aside."

According to the relevant laws, a convict has the right to appeal against the verdict within 30 days of the pronouncement of the judgement.

The tribunal acquitted Kamaruzzaman, assistant secretary general of Jamaat, of two of the seven charges brought against him.

Additional Attorney General MK Rahman, who was chief coordinator of the prosecution team, told The Daily Star that the government would not file any appeal challenging the acquittal order on the two charges against Kamaruzzaman but would oppose the defence appeal.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina hands over an award to a woman for her contribution to the tree plantation campaign at the inaugural ceremony of National Tree Plantation Campaign and Tree Fair 2013 at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital yesterday. Several individuals and organisations were awarded for their role in the wildlife and environment conservation on the occasion of World Environment Day.

PHOTO: BSS

TREE FELLING DURING ANTI-GOVT DEMOS Stern action must against culprits:PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said stern action must be taken against those who cut down trees during recent anti-government movements.

"Action must be taken against them under the environment act so that no one dares to fell trees in the future again in the name of movements," she said.

The prime minister was addressing "World Environment Day and National Tree Plantation Campaign and Tree Fair" at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital.

Holding BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami and Hefajat-e-Islam responsible for the recent felling of trees, she said thousands of roadside trees have been cut across the country in the name of movements. Even during Hefajat's Dhaka siege programme on May 5, trees were cut indiscriminately in and around the Motijheel area.

Hasina, also president of the ruling Awami League, urged the opposition parties to take part in the campaign for tree plantation across the country instead of cutting down trees in the name of movements.

The World Environment Day was being observed around the world yesterday with the UN theme "Think, Eat, Save" while National Tree Plantation Campaign was observed with the theme "Gaach lagiye bhorabo desh, toiree korbo sukher poribesh" (let's fill the country with trees to build a nice environment).

Hasina distributed the "Environment Medal-2013", "National Award for Tree Plantation-2012" and "Bangabandhu Award for Wild Life Conservation-2013" among different organisations and people for their contribution in protecting environment and wildlife.

Upazila Parishad Assoc decries bureaucratic control

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although the Upazila Parishad Act empowers elected representatives to carry out annual planning, designing and implementing budget of the parishads, it is the government bureaucrats who always perform the duties, said leaders of Upazila Parishad Association of Bangladesh (UZPAB).

In fact, the chairmen and vice chairmen of the parishads did not have a say in the budgeting process as the bureaucrats mainly provided necessary data to prepare it, they said.

They were speaking at a press conference organised by the UZPAB at the Dhaka Reporters' Unity yesterday.

Faizur Rahman Fakir, president of the organisation, said the section of upazila parishad act that allows removal of its chairmen and vice chairmen, in case of any criminal charge sheet against them is accepted, should be scrapped.

Demanding empowerment of the parishads, he said the bureaucratic control over the elected representatives should be stopped.

Momena's statements contradictory

Quader Mollah's lawyer tells SC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prosecution witness Momena Begum's statements before the International Crimes Tribunal-2 regarding Abdul Quader Mollah's involvement in killing her family in 1971 are contradictory, Mollah's lawyer told the Supreme Court yesterday.

Abdur Razzaq, a lawyer for Mollah, was placing arguments on the ninth day of the hearing on convicted Jamaat-e-Islami leader Quader Mollah's appeal seeking acquittal in the case.

Some Biharis and Pakistani soldiers killed Momena's father Hazrat Ali Lashkar and five members of his family on March 26, 1971 under Mollah's leadership, accord-

ing to a charge proved before the tribunal.

Entering Hazrat's house that day, accomplices of Quader Mollah killed Hazrat and his wife, daughters and son. However, Hazrat's eldest daughter Momena Begum escaped, according to the charge.

Razzaq told the SC that Momena stated before the ICT-2 that she, hidden under a bed, saw Mollah and his accomplices drag her father away from their house on the day.

However, Momena also stated before the tribunal that she heard from one Kamal that Mollah and his accomplices killed Hazrat, the defence counsel said, arguing that her statements are contradictory.

The Appellate Division fixed today for further hearing.

Consultant physicians continue strike in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Patients continued to suffer as Chittagong city's consultant physicians continued their indefinite strike for the second day yesterday protesting a court order that sent to jail a fellow on June 3 on charge of negligence in surgery.

Meanwhile, the consultants, demanding Dr Shurman Ali's release, formed a human chain under the banner "Bangladesh Medical Association, Chittagong chapter" in Probortak intersection around noon, causing a moderate tailback.

A youth's mother filed a case on Tuesday stating that Dr Shurman left a needle in the youth during a haemorrhoid surgery and one, Dr GM Zakir Hossain, had failed to find it during a "follow up surgery".

Chittagong Medical College Teachers' Association President Dr Nur Hossain Bhuiyan alleged that police investigations could not judge negligence in surgery. However, SM Nazer Hossain, president of Consumers Association of Bangladesh, told The Daily Star that the doctors could have appealed with the higher court. "The doctors are keeping patients hostage."

Legal notice served on ACC chief for departure

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Supreme Court lawyer sent a legal notice to Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chairman Ghulam Rahman yesterday asking him to leave his office in two days as "his tenure expired on May 1 this year".

SC lawyer Mirza Al Mahmood issued the notice saying that appropriate legal steps will be taken against the ACC chief if he does not leave the office in two days.

According to the notice, the government appointed Ghulam Rahman as a commissioner of the ACC on April 30, 2009; and he was made its chairman on May 2, 2009 for next four years.

Although his tenure expired on May 1 this year, he is still holding the office and performing day to day functions, it said.

"... after expiry of tenure of the chairman, all actions and performing day to day functions under the capacity of the chairman has been done or taken without lawful authority and is of no legal effect," the legal notice said.

In the notice, Mahmood also asked the ACC chairman to explain under which authority he was holding office of the ACC chairman.

ACC Chairman Ghulam Rahman told The Daily Star that he joined the office of ACC chairman on June 24, 2009 for next four years.

The cabinet division has earlier issued a clearance stating that the four years' tenure of ACC chairman will be counted from the date of his joining the office, he said.

18 Shibir men held in Savar, Ctg

CITY DESK

Police arrested 13 alleged activists of Jamaat-e-Islami backed Islami Chhatra Shibir at three coaching centres in Chawk Bazar area in two cases yesterday.

The cases were filed for attacking Ovi Afsar, joint secretary of BCL Chittagong Medical College unit, on May 26 and an internecine doctor, former president of BCLCMC unit, on June 1.

They were arrested at Retina, Index and Probaho coaching centres. Police said all the arrestees are Shibir activists and of them Sharif Uddin, who is the main accused in one of the cases, is the general secretary of Shibir CMC unit.

However, Yasir Arafat, publicity secretary of Shibir Chittagong city (north) unit, claimed the 13 are the teachers and staff of the coaching centres and none of them are Shibir member. Police are arresting general citizens claiming them to be Shibir men, he alleged.

Meanwhile, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab)-4 yesterday arrested five Shibir leaders and activists with 18 cocktails, donation receipts, books on Jihad and anti-state leaflets at a house in Majidpur of Savar.

They are Abdur Rakib, Dhaka district (north) unit president; Md Alauddin, student welfare secretary of Savar Municipality unit; its office secretary Fazal Ahmed; its publicity secretary Ahsiquur Rahman and activist Mahmudul Hasan.

Rab officials said the arrestees were planning to carry out subversive activities ahead of war crimes trials' verdicts.



Five development and volunteer organisations bring out a procession from TSC of Dhaka University to mark World Environment Day yesterday.

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The last date for receiving responses under the RFI is June 11, 2013.