

SQ CHY IN THE WAR CRIMES DOCK Prosecution starts closing arguments

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution in the war crimes case against Salauddin Quader Chowdhury has begun its closing arguments accusing him of carrying out torture on people at his father's home and killing the Hindus.

Prosecutor Sultan Mahmud Simon mentioned the charges and witness testimonies to make his point in front of the International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday.

Salauddin is facing 23 war crimes charges for the offences allegedly committed by him during the Liberation War.

The first charge was on alleged abduction of seven Hindus from the home of Motilal Chowdhury in Chittagong, of whom six were tortured and killed at Salauddin's father's Goods Hill home and one survived.

The prosecution brought in a hearsay witness as it could not find survivor Sunil.

Simon claimed that it had been proved from the witness's testimony that Salauddin committed genocide by killing the Hindus.

The second charge was on Salauddin's involvement in a Pakistani army raid at Maddhaya Gohira Hindu Para of Raozan in Chittagong in which houses of the Hindus were looted and several people were shot dead and injured.

Simon said the prosecution proved the charge with eyewitness and freedom fighter Nirmal Chandra Sharma, who had testified that five of his family members were killed in the raid led by Salauddin. His father was injured in the attack as well.

Simon said Salauddin committed genocide at Maddhaya Gohira Hindu Para on that day during the Liberation War.

The prosecution would continue placing their closing arguments today.

Hasina's trip

FROM PAGE 1

said Dhaka had received a formal invite from New Delhi for Hasina to visit India but made it clear that no decision had been taken as to when she would undertake that visit.

"Yes, we have received the invitation but no decision has been taken about the dates of her visit", she said in reply to a question from your correspondent on whether Bangladesh was looking at a tentative date for the visit.

Diplomatic sources here say that any prime ministerial visit has to be accompanied by at least some deliverables and for Hasina the two most important deliverables will be the signing of an interim accord on the Teesta and certainty about passage of the land boundary agreement in the Indian parliament.

However, since there has been little forward movement on the two issues in the last two years, Sheikh Hasina may not find it easy to pay an official visit to India unless things change dramatically over the next two months, say the sources.

There is recognition among Indian strategic affairs analysts that India has to deliver on its commitments on the two issues at a time when the Hasina government has done so much to address India's security concerns and faces fresh national elections amidst dimming prospects of a return to power.

Prime Minister Singh, during his meeting with Dipu Moni on July 26, conveyed to her the idea

that internal consultations were on in India to evolve a consensus on Teesta and LBA implementation.

The question doing the rounds in the Indian policy establishment is that even if the two issues are sorted out in the next few months, will it be the proverbial case of "two little too late" for the Hasina government to make them an effective election tool?

Much still depends on what stand West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who had opposed the signing of the Teesta deal in September 2011, adopts in the coming months ahead of parliamentary elections in India scheduled for early next year.

Only on July 22, Mamata told a panchayat election rally in Cooch Behar district adjoining Bangladesh that her government would sign the Teesta river water-sharing agreement with Bangladesh only when the people of the northern part of West Bengal wanted it and never at the cost of the region drying up.

"They (Bangladesh) want to draw the entire water. We have not agreed to it. I will agree if the people of Coochbehar give a green signal, not otherwise. I will agree to it if the people of north Bengal want it. I will not allow it to happen at any cost by drying up north Bengal," she had said.

Though foreign policy initiatives are the exclusive domain of India's federal government, will Manmohan Singh choose

to ignore Mamata's views and go ahead with signing the Teesta deal?

Singh has very little leverage on the issue of the LBA too. With his government lacking a two-thirds majority in either House of Parliament, the passage of a constitution amendment bill to pass the LBA requires a political consensus involving the main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party.

The BJP's units in the north-eastern state of Assam and West Bengal and its ally Asom Gono Parishad have been campaigning against the LBA.

BJP leader Arun Jaitley did not hold out any assurance to Dipu Moni on July 26 that his party would back the LBA in parliament when a bill in this regard is placed in the monsoon session of the House. The session begins on August 5.

The question is: can the LBA be approved by the Indian parliament if the BJP and ACP choose to stage a walk-out in protest?

Whether or not the Teesta deal is signed or the LBA is passed by Parliament, what the Hasina government has succeeded in doing in India by extending cooperation on the security front is to create a groundswell of opinion that strongly advocates New Delhi reciprocating by resolving the two issues.

Teesta and the LBA are not the be-all and end-all of India-Bangladesh relations, but they represent the two major silver wares of both sides.



A mudslide induced by heavy rain destroys a home at the foot of a hill in Lalkhan Bazar in Chittagong city, killing two persons. Many families decided to stay in places identified as high risk to landslides even though the authorities concerned had asked them to move to safer places.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Two killed in landslide

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The authorities evacuated some families from places vulnerable to landslides at the beginning of the rainy season one and a half months ago.

Around 5,000 families live beneath 14 vulnerable hills, mostly owned by the Public Works Department, Railway, Water Supply and Sewerage Authority and Chittagong City

Corporation. Most of the hills are in Lal Khan Bazar, Moti Jharna, Tankir Pahar and Akbar Shah areas.

Additional Deputy Commissioner of

Chittagong Humayun Kabir told The Daily Star that the administration had asked people living at the foothills in Tiger Pass, Batali Hill and Tankir Pahar to move to shelters like schools or tents

set up by the district administration in the Tiger Pass area.

Since 2007, 166 men, women and children have lost their lives in landslides in the port city.

The Slumdog Footman

FROM PAGE 16

Buckingham Palace, it was Badar Azim who strode proudly across the courtyard with the Queen's Press Secretary Ailsa Anderson to mount the official acknowledgement of the baby's safe arrival on an ornate easel.

Resplendent in his scarlet and black footman's outfit, the uniform gave no clue to his humble background.

It is hard to imagine a prouder moment for a young man who has worked his way up from one of the most poverty-stricken corners of the world.

It was a mere twist of fate

that Badar, 25, happened to be on duty at the Privy Purse door after the Duchess of Cambridge gave birth to the third in line to the Throne.

But this simple coincidence seems fitting in a 21st Century fairytale that has delighted his impoverished family in India.

Badar's father Mohammed Rahim, a 52-year-old welder who earns £33 a month, and his mother Mumtaz Begum, 41, still live in the same slum dwelling in a rundown area of Kolkata where Badar spent his childhood. They are overwhelmed to be

thrown into the spotlight thanks to their son's success.

But according to the footman's brother Mazhar, 20, who spoke to him after his starring role in delivering the news of the Royal birth, Badar himself has taken the whole experience in his stride.

"He acted very normal about it but it was a proud moment for him," said Mazhar. "My parents are so proud. They knew nothing about the British Royal Family before he got the job. They were really surprised."

After struggling at a pub-

lic school in the city, Badar was taken in by the charitable St Mary's Orphanage and Day School.

"He is a funny guy and very creative," added Mazhar. "He used to play sports a lot. He was very enthusiastic but also serious about his studies."

The orphanage later sponsored Badar to go to the International Institute of Hotel Management College in Kolkata, where he embarked on a degree in hospitality management.

After completing his first two years at the Institute, the orphanage raised

£10,000 to fly Badar to Scotland, where he completed his degree at Edinburgh's Napier University.

He lived in digs in the Scottish capital, where he cooked his own curries because he could not get used to British cuisine. During his final year at Napier, Badar organised a ten-mile charity walk to raise money for the orphanage's sponsorship scheme.

He graduated on June 15, 2011, and landed a job as a junior footman at Buckingham Palace in February the following year.

PM stresses need for media policy

FROM PAGE 1

arranged to mark the distribution of cheques of financial assistance among the families of dead, sick, insolvent and injured journalists.

Hasina said global media organisations like CNN and BBC were being run as per their own policies. "We also need a policy in our country."

The premier also said she had long been asking the information ministry to formulate such a policy, but it could not do that yet.

"They [information ministry] have been saying they are doing it," she added.

Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu was sitting beside the premier.

Hasina said the present government believed in

complete freedom of the mass media and free flow of information to strengthen democracy and establish the rule of law.

"Journalists will enjoy freedom, but at the same time they should have responsibility and accountability," she added.

Defaming someone in the name of freedom of speech as well as false propaganda was a threat to independent journalism and democracy, she told her audience.

Hasina said the media in the country were expressing their views independently. But everybody should remember that independence and responsiveness are closely related.

The premier said the present government had been working relentlessly to keep the freedom of the mass media unaffected.

The Right to Information Act 2009 has been put in place to ensure free flow of information.

The Information Commission has been constituted to ensure transparency and accountability at different tiers of the administration, she said.

Hasina hoped that the media would play a more responsible role in disseminating information and performing their duties.

During the tenure of her government, she said, licenses had been provided

to 15 more TV channels, seven FM radio channels and 16 community radio stations.

Mentioning the vital role of the journalists, the premier said, "Political parties depend on your writing because you play a big role in creating public opinion."

She apprehended that the Journalist Assistance Fund could be rolled back if the government is changed.

She suggested that journalists turn the fund into a Trust Fund to keep it unharmed even after a change of government.

Hasina assured them of providing initial funds and advised them to mobilise more for the Trust Fund to

make it a permanent measure.

Referring to the BNP's close links with the Jamaat-e-Islami and Hefajat, the premier said if this alliance came to power, female workers of garment factories would not be allowed to work.

Hasina also said her government for the first time in the country's history had constituted a Trust Fund for Imams and Muezzins although her party was being branded as an atheistic one.

PM's Media Adviser Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, secretary general of BFUJ Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan, president of DUJ Omar Faruq, among others, addressed the function.

Extortionists shoot student

FROM PAGE 1

"I went to the door after I heard a few knocks at 4:30am. Three young men pushed me aside, entered the room and shot me twice after I opened the door," the injured told The Daily Star from his bed at DMCH. "They ran away

when other residents of the building started coming to the flat."

Mahmadullah added that the local extortionists threatened to kill him two days ago if he failed to pay them Tk 2 lakh.

Kawser Ali said that he had already paid Tk 1.13

lakh to several other extortion groups over the past six months. He had not informed the law enforcers in fear of more problems he might have to face.

Banani Police Station Operation Officer Abu Baker Siddique said a case was filed in this connection.

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Morsi supporters

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But the violence and the warning did not appear to have thinned the ranks at the Cairo demonstration, where a core group of several thousand protesters remained.

And Gehad El-Haddad, a spokesman for the Muslim Brotherhood, said demonstrators were angry but "hugely defiant" after Saturday's deaths.

"For us, if we die, we meet our creator and we did so for a just cause... Either we die or we succeed," he told AFP.

At Rabaa al-Adawiya, hundreds of protesters at a time staged mini demonstrations to keep the mood buoyant.

The violence early on Saturday was the bloodiest incident since Morsi's July 3 ouster following huge demonstrations against his rule.

The health ministry said 72 people were killed in Cairo on Saturday, along with nine dead in second city Alexandria a day earlier.

Medics in a Brotherhood field hospital there earlier Saturday had put the death toll at 66, with another 61 on life support and thousands more wounded.

Morsi supporters on Saturday accused security forces of using live fire against unarmed protesters, but the interior ministry insisted that its forces had fired only tear gas.

He also accused thugs for the bloodsheds.

Interior Minister Mohammed Ibrahim, speaking at a police graduation ceremony yesterday, sounded a firm line.

"We will not allow any mercenary or person bearing a grudge to try to disrupt the atmosphere of unity, and we will confront them with the greatest of force and firmness," he said.

The violence prompted international condemnation, with Human Rights Watch accusing Egyptian authorities of "criminal disregard for people's lives".

US Secretary of State John Kerry, whose country contributes hundreds of millions of dollars in military and economic aid to Egypt, expressed Washington's "deep concern".

In a statement, Kerry called on the authorities to "respect the right of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression".

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan denounced what he described as massacres.

British Foreign Secretary William Hague urged the authorities to "cease the use of violence against protesters, including live fire, and to hold to account those responsible".

The violence also prompted domestic criticism, with Vice President Mohamed ElBaradei, a former opposition activist who joined the transitional government, denouncing "excessive use of force" by the authorities.