

SQ Chy had no link with Pak army

Claims his counsel

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The defence of war crimes accused Salauddin Quader Chowdhury yesterday claimed their client had no connection with the Pakistani occupation army during the Liberation War in 1971.

On the second day of their closing arguments, defence counsel Ahsanul Huq Hena also claimed SQ Chowdhury had no affiliation with any political party or student wing of any party and was not a Razakar.

He also told the International Crimes Tribunal-1 that the prosecution had brought the allegations against SQ Chowdhury because he was a follower of his father.

The lawyer further claimed Fazlul Quader Chowdhury, father of the accused, also did not have good relations with the Pakistani army.

He said the investigation officer of the case could neither produce a picture of his client with the Pakistani army nor his statement against the Hindus.

Referring to the charges of crimes allegedly committed at Fazlul Quader's

Goods Hill residence in Chittagong, Hena said the prosecution witnesses had claimed people were detained and tortured at that house.

Hena said there were many houses and shops around Goods Hill during the war.

"But why did no-one witness any detainees being taken in or out [of Goods Hill]?" he asked.

He claimed investigation officer Nurul Islam had intentionally skipped producing any neighbours as witnesses.

Recalling an earlier cross-examination when Nurul said he did not find it necessary to produce neighbours as witnesses, the defence counsel said, "How audacious he is!"

Hena sought an adjournment as he had another case to deal with at the International Crimes Tribunal-2. The tribunal adjourned the proceeding until today.

SQ Chowdhury, facing 23 war charges for his alleged involvement in the crimes against humanity, was produced before the tribunal.

Martyr's daughter

FROM PAGE 16

organisation Jamaat-e-Islami for depriving so many martyrs' children of their fathers' affection," said an emotion-choked Neepa.

As she completed her 68-minute testimony, state-appointed defence counsels Abdur Shukur Khan and Salma Hai Tuny completed her cross-examination.

The three-member tribunal led by Justice Obaidul Hassan adjourned the case proceedings until today.

Neepa, who is a doctor and is conducting research on eye diseases in the US, said her father was also an eye specialist and was involved in all progressive movements, including the Language Movement in 1952.

Alim Chaudhury along with other doctors, including martyred physician Fazle Rabbi, used to run a secret hospital to treat wounded freedom fighters and provide medical and monetary assistance to them, said the 45-year-old witness.

Neepa said she had been living with her parents and two-year-old sister Nuzhat Choudhury Shampa in their rented house in Dhaka's Purana Paltan in 1971.

Around 4:00pm on December 15, a microbus stopped in front of their house and two armed persons entered the ground floor where "so called" Moulana Mannan, an organiser of Al-Badr, resided, said Neepa.

After 20-30 minutes, the duo knocked on their door, she added.

Mannan later became a member of military dictator HM Ershad's cabinet.

The witness said her father had gone to Mannan through another stairway, but the latter didn't open the door, adding that as her father returned, the armed persons took him away on that microbus.

Neepa said her mother Shyamoli Nasrin Chaudhury had also gone to Mannan's house, but he didn't open the door. When her mother wanted to know about the armed persons, Mannan told her not to panic as they were his 'Al-Badr students', who also took away doctor Fazle Rabbi.

Mannan also said her father was taken to the Combined Military Hospital for treatment of war-wounded people. They did not get further information about her father after that, said Neepa.

"On the morning of December 16, Joy Bangla slogans were heard everywhere. My mother waited for my father to hoist a Bangladeshi flag, which was put down earlier. But my mother's wait never ended. My father never returned," said Neepa.

Her father's body was found at the Rayerbazar killing ground on December 18 and he was buried at Azimpur graveyard, she added.

'Death threat' to PM, family

Reveals Joy in Facebook post

STAR REPORT

Sajeed Wazed Joy yesterday said a 'self-proclaimed human rights activist' has issued death threats to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and members of her family, including himself.

In his Facebook post, Joy uploaded a screen-shot of a twitter account at 7:20pm that reads "@sajeedwazed Ask you mom to pack up its time to go For now on she will cook for you everyday. Wish she will end up like your Nanu @EconAsia."

Joy posted a status on his facebook page, "Self-proclaimed human rights activist threatens PM's family with death."

The status said "The following is a tweet that was sent directly to me by William Gomes. He claims to be a human rights activist and has been very active spreading false claims of human rights abuses by our Government."

"Today he tweeted me

wishing that my mother and family are murdered just as my family was murdered in 1975. This just proves that he does not believe in human rights at all, but is just using the guise to make false claims against us. He is really a terrorist," Joy claimed.

A status of the Bangla version of the same post was also uploaded on his page.

Till 10:40pm last night, 155 people had shared the status, while 1,126 people had liked it and 284 had commented on the status.

According to Wikipedia, William Gomes, also known as William Nicholas Gomes, is a Bangladeshi freelance journalist and human rights activist based in Britain.

Asif Kabir, assistant press secretary to the premier, told the BBC Bangla Service that after receiving the message, security for the PM and her family members had been beefed up.

Two arrested with 6kg gold bars at Ctg airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Customs officials arrested two persons along with 53 gold bars, weighing over 6kgs and worth around Tk 2.65 crore, at Shah Amanat International Airport in Chittagong yesterday.

The arrestees - Md Iqbal, 31, and Rashedul Islam, 32 - returned from Dubai.

Acting on a tip off, customs officials intercepted four passengers and seized 28 gold bars from Iqbal, said Sushanta Paul, assistant commissioner of Air Customs.

Later, Rashedul was intercepted and 25 other gold bars were seized from his possession, the official added.

The gold bars were found attached to their waist belts which were wrapped with scotch tapes, said the immigration sources.

N Korea cuts army drills short for flood relief

AFP, Seoul

North Korea has cut short summer military drills to mobilise troops for flood relief efforts after torrential rains left dozens killed and ravaged farmlands nationwide, a South Korean report said yesterday.

The North's military ordered troops based in the country's west and south-east regions to hold "minimum" summer exercises and to instead focus on post-floods reconstruction, Yonhap news agency said.

It cited an unnamed Seoul government source.

"Many military units stopped the exercises and have mobilised troops for floods relief works," said the source quoted by Yonhap.

The communist state has staged summer military drills that partially coincided with the annual Ulchi Freedom Guardian exercise conducted by its rival South Korea and the United States, that usually takes place in August.

"But this year's summer drill in the North will be scaled back considerably because it needs to focus on repairing floods damages," the source was quoted as saying.

Floods caused by heavy rains that pummeled the North since early July have destroyed some 6,000 houses, displaced more than 23,000 people and washed away a large swathes of farmlands, the North's state media said late last month.

The death toll has reached 33 across the nation and some 13,300 hectares of farmlands have been damaged, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) said last week, warning of "longer-term impact" on the country's food security.

Decades of deforestation and decrepit infrastructure have left the impoverished North vulnerable to floods, which led to some 170 deaths last summer.

Tarek 'underwent' fake surgery

FROM PAGE 1

official earlier told The Daily Star they had come to know that Tarek had accidentally been shot and injured by his accomplice during the Milky murder.

Ayesha Zaman, managing director of Fortune Hospital at Jasim Uddin Road in Uttara, said as per the record Tarek arrived at their hospital with a team of doctors, including his cousin Pappu, around 2:00am on Tuesday. She was not in the hospital at the time.

In the morning, she came to the hospital and learnt that the Rab had picked up three doctors and a patient.

The arrested were Kawser,

Rana, Riaz and Tarek.

Ayesha said she heard that the doctors had carried out an operation and recovered a bullet from Tarek's back. However, she did not show any file or hospital record of the surgery.

"Dr Pappu's relatives are orthopaedic surgeons at this hospital. Tarek came to the hospital with Pappu, Kawser and Rana. Riaz was the duty doctor at that time and Kawser performed a surgery here two years ago," she added.

Following the Milky murder, which was captured on CCTV at Shoppers World in Gulshan, Rab arrested the doctors from Fortune Hospital for operating on a

patient with bullet injuries without informing the police.

Tarek, the prime suspect in the murder, was killed in a "shootout between his associates and Rab personnel" on Wednesday night hours after the Rab had applied to the home ministry for transferring the case to it from the police.

Pappu is still absconding.

THE MAN IN WHITE

Several Jubo League leaders and workers claim that in the CCTV footage of the murder scene, the person in white punjabi, pyjama and cap was Shakhawat Hossain Chanchal, organising secretary of Dhaka city (north)

unit Jubo League, and the man in jeans and sneakers shooting at Milky was Tarek.

They say intra-party conflict in the pro-Awami League youth organisation to gain control over tender businesses and extortions led to the planning of the killing.

Milky and Tarek, both born and brought up in Motijheel's AGB Colony, were very close. Milky was Tarek's mentor in Jubo League and underworld politics.

A year ago, distance grew between the two over negotiations relating to money from tenders in the Motijheel area, sources said.

Chanchal, who was also Milky's friend, mediated the dispute. He maintained good relations with both men, they added. However, a few days ahead of Milky's murder, a dispute rose among the three over negotiation money of another tender.

Sources said the trio were supposed to sit at Shoppers World at Chanchal's invitation and come to an agreement, as in the past.

Reaching the spot before Milky early Tuesday, Tarek planned the murder with Chanchal, instead of settling the dispute, added the sources.

Rescuers slip

FROM PAGE 1

extent so extreme that it would hamper their professional and family lives, said Dr Abul Kashem, assistant registrar of the National Institute of Mental Health.

Take, for example, Swapan Hossain, 32, who often screams in his sleep at night.

"Right under the pillar there lies a woman. Time is running out. Let us save her," Swapan is quoted as saying on some nights by his brother, Ripon.

He still lives under an illusion that had been a reality three months ago, when he, along with many other brave hearts, raced against time to save those trapped under the wreckage of Rana Plaza following its collapse on April 24.

Untrained volunteers and fire service and army rescuers saved 2,438 lives and recovered 1,115 bodies from the debris of the nine-storey building that housed five garment factories.

At least 1,132 people were killed in the collapse, with several dozens still missing.

"At night, he [Swapan] often goes under the bed and says he must make a way out of these pillars and bricks to rescue people," Ripon told The Daily Star.

"He is in constant fear. He had to give up his poultry business due to his psychological complications," Ripon added.

Dr Kashem said many of these rescuers might have to live with the disorder throughout their lives if they are not given regular counseling and, in some cases, pathological treatment.

Including him, a team of 12 psychiatrists and a psychologist has been giving counseling and treatment to many of the rescuers for

free.

"We treated many such patients at our hospital and at different camps, including those at Enam Medical College Hospital and Adhar Chandra High School in Savar," said Kashem.

He added that his team was making a list of such rescuers, some of whom have lost their jobs due to their mental unfitness.

Another civilian rescuer, Mamun, is now unable to run his tailoring shop in Keraniganj. Now extremely forgetful, he often finds it hard to recall what he said or did only a few minutes earlier. The 24-year-old often freaks out at the sight of high-rises.

"I failed to save a woman who was desperate to come out of the rubble as the lower portion of her body got pinned under a beam. In my dreams, I still hear the woman screaming for help," Mamun told The Daily Star recently.

He is frustrated that the government has shown little care about knowing how the civilian rescuers are now coping with lives.

"While rescuing, another woman was entreating me to save her life by cutting both of her hands that got stuck under a heavy machine. I had to do so, but it pains me so much that I have had a person mutilated for life," he added.

Saydia Gulrukh, a labour rights activist, said that the government must rehabilitate these people so they could return to normal life.

On May 7, a 26-year-old civilian rescuer, Omar Faruq, died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, three days after he had been admitted there with high fever and mental disorder.

None cared for them

FROM PAGE 1

My daughter will never come back ..." wailed Kohinur, holding a bunch of papers and a photograph of her missing daughter Mamtaj, whose body is yet to be found.

Kohinur said every year Mamtaj along with her family members would go to their village home at Sirajganj to celebrate Eid. Mamtaj used to buy clothes for her three daughters and other children of the family.

"Now, who will buy clothes for the three children? They cry for their mother and I cannot console them anymore; it's extremely painful," said Kohinur, choking with emotion.

"Many received help, but no one gave us anything," she said.

Kohinur is not alone. Many like her are yet to receive any help as the bodies of the victims have not been identified so far, even though over 100 days have gone by since the tragedy.

The collapse of the nine-storey building, which

housed several garment factories, on April 24 claimed 1,132 lives. At least 2,438 were rescued, with many of them becoming maimed.

Relatives of the missing, who are almost certainly deceased and yet to be identified, go to the local Upazila Nirbahi Office and gather at the site with photographs in their hands.

Whenever anyone enquires of them about anything, they jump up, requesting them that the names of their missing relatives be noted down, as if writing down the names of the missing will somehow help.

Behind the site sat Mina Rani, aged around 50.

"We too have not got anything," she said. She was clutching a photograph of her missing daughter Pushpa Rani, who worked on the second floor of the building just as Mamtaj did.

She said after her husband suffered a stroke, Pushpa and her son used to provide for her family. "Now, who will run our family and raise her [Pushpa's] two little

kids," she asked.

The workers who sustained injuries in the collapse were also in trouble.

Mohammad Pintu, who worked on the fourth floor, sustained severe injuries to his hand and chest. So far, he has received a month's salary and Tk 16,000 from the British retailer Primark.

"I will not be able to work like I used to. How will I survive if I get nothing more," Pintu asked.

Mohammad Sohag has stopped paying tuitions for his two children, one in class-III and the other in class-I, as he cannot even afford the cost of the treatment of his wife Nupur.

She worked on the seventh floor and had severe head injuries. "Now, I don't have the money to buy the costly medicine," he said.

Against this backdrop, over 200 victim workers and their relatives blocked the Dhaka-Aricha highway in front of the Rana Plaza site in Savar yesterday afternoon.

They demanded salaries for three months from May, Eid bonuses, compensation

and costs of rehabilitation and treatment.

At least 15 people were injured as police charged truncheons on them, reported our Savar correspondent.

Traffic movement on a 10km stretch remained suspended for about 45 minutes, said Farhad Hossain, traffic inspector of the highway.

Mostafa Kamal, officer-in-charge of Savar Model Police Station, said, "It is a busy highway and people were going home ahead of Eid. Therefore, it was our duty to clear the highway."

The workers claimed that police swooped on them and beat them up without any provocation.

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters' Association (BGMEA) had earlier paid the workers the salary for April.

Under labour rules, the authorities of a factory must pay salaries for three months when they declare a factory closed, claimed Mohammad Jalal, a worker who was injured.

Lailatul Qadr

FROM PAGE 1

President Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia yesterday greeted the countrymen on the eve of Lailatul Qadr.

In separate messages, they prayed for continued peace, progress and prosperity of the country and Muslim Ummah.

A special munajat and waz mahfil organised by the Islamic Foundation will be held at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque in the capital tonight.

Bangladesh Television, Bangladesh Betar and private TV channels and radio stations will air special programmes while newspapers will publish special supplements highlighting the significance of the night.

'It was an act of God'

FROM PAGE 16

Once it is established that an incident falls under Section 12, the factory owner has the right to lay off workers in line with Section 16.

Section 20 says the workers laid-off under Section 16 are entitled to 30 days' gratuity for each year's service.

"We paid the workers following this formula," said Islam. He noted that the BGMEA had paid a month's salary and overtime payments to every worker who survived the collapse.

The trade body has paid some 2,785 workers of the complex from the Tk 7 crore

months' salaries under the termination benefit scheme.

"It is unfortunate that the BGMEA opted for another scheme that is inapplicable for the circumstances."

He said the Rana Plaza collapse was not an "act of God" by any stretch of imagination. "There was no flood, cyclone, earthquake or heavy downpour."

"How can it be an act of God when it was gross negligence on the part of the employers and the building owner that brought about the catastrophe?"

As an instance of their negligence, the lawyer men-

tioned that workers were forced to enter the building despite detection of big cracks in its pillars the previous day.

"The BGMEA is now saying such things to avoid paying full compensation to the workers."

Tanjib-ul-Alam, a Supreme Court lawyer, echoed Nasim's words, and termed the trade body's attitude very irresponsible.

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

For
**Building Community Resilience through Integrated Water Management
Provision of sweet water supply scheme and water-based livelihood
training of beneficiaries in Dhakkin Bedkashi, Koyra Upazila,
Khulna District, Khulna Division**

Reference: RFP-BD-2013-055

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bangladesh seeks Proposals from interested Firms/NGOs to implement the EKN-UNDP Programme for Building Community Resilience through Integrated Water Management, Provision of sweet water supply scheme and water-based livelihood training of beneficiaries in Dhakkin Bedkashi, Koyra Upazila, Khulna District, Khulna Division. All interested firms/NGOs may download the Bidding documents (RFP) from http://www.undp.org.bd/proc_more.php through a formal registration process that will register bidders into the participants list, so any correspondence, questions regarding the bidding documents and respective answers can be sent to all bidders.

Submission of Proposal: The envelope should state the tender subject mentioned above and the Proposals must be submitted as per the instructions specified in the RFP document by the deadline mentioned below to the **Registry, UNDP Bangladesh, IDB Bhaban (12th Floor), Begum Rokeya Sharani, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.**

The deadline for submission of Proposals is **Sunday, 25 August 2013, 1:30 p.m. Local time.**



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