

# Probe finds 'proof of war crimes'

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"Qaisar guided the Pakistani army in their operation against the Hindu community and freedom lovers of different villages (in Habiganj and Brahmanbaria districts)," he said.

Hannan revealed the information before the media at the agency's Dhanmondi office on completion of a 16-month-long probe against Qaisar, who was arrested on May 21 and is now on bail.

The probe body handed over its report to the prosecution yesterday.

After scrutinising the report and other documents, the prosecution will submit formal charges against Qaisar to the international crimes tribunal to begin the trial.

In an incident on November 15, 1971, Qaisar along with his force and the Pakistani army conducted operation in 20-22 villages under Nasirnagar Police Station and killed hundreds of people, looted and set fire to their houses, the probe body said.

Hannan said Qaisar, son of Late Syed Soeed Uddin Ahmed of Itakhola village of Madhabpur in Habiganj, was born in 1940. He went into hiding after victory and became active in politics in 1978.

The war crimes suspect contested the 1970's election as an independent candidate but was defeated.

During the liberation war, he was Razakar commander and member of peace committee of Habiganj sub-division, said the probe body.

"For the Qaisar Force, he also designed a new type of uniform which was different from uniforms of Al-Badr

and Razakar forces," said Hannan.

The coordinator of the investigation agency said Qaisar was involved in the killing of 526 persons, two rape incidents, looting of 1,200-1,300 houses and setting fire to 1,500-1,600 houses.

"After the war, Qaisar had fled to London. He also tried to escape from the country after the investigation had begun. But he did not get the opportunity," said Hannan.

The war crimes suspect was arrested on May 21 this year after the International Crimes Tribunal-2 had issued arrest warrant against him.

The court passed the order following a prosecution petition seeking his arrest for a "fair and effective investigation" into his alleged crimes against humanity.

The tribunal, however, on August 5 granted conditional bail to Qaisar.


Qaisar, as an independent candidate, was elected in the 1979 elections, joined BNP and subsequently became the president of Habiganj district unit BNP, Hannan said.

He joined Jatiya Party in 1986 and became the state minister for agriculture in 1988, added the coordinator of the investigation agency.

**ALLEGATIONS**

Sanaul Huq, a senior member of the agency, gave a brief description of the incidents of war crimes that Qaisar had been involved in.

In two separate incidents on April 27, 1971, Qaisar had accompanied the Pakistani army to kill many people and set fire to houses in villages of Bijoynagar in Brahmanbaria and



**SYED MD QAISAR**

former state minister for agriculture

**Status in 1971:** Founder and chief of Qaisar force that abetted Pakistani army, Razakar commander and peace committee member of Habiganj sub-division

**Crimes:** involvement in killing 526 persons, two rape incidents, looting of 1200-1300 houses and arson in about 1500-1600 houses, abduction and confinement

**Number of incidents:** 16

**Time and area of crimes:** April 27, 1971 to November 15, 1971

**Investigation:** March 28, 2012 to September 21, 2013

**Witness:** About 70 persons

Madhabpur in Habiganj.

On April 28, 1971, Sanaul said, Qaisar along with the Pakistani army looted and set fire to houses and a bazaar in Habiganj.

On the following day, two people from Shayestaganj thana of Habiganj were detained, tortured and later killed. Qaisar was involved in the incident.

On May 11 or 12 of 1971, Qaisar along with the Pakistani occupation force led an operation at Chunarughat thana and raped a woman from Santal community there.

Sanaul said the war crimes suspect was involved in the killing of eight people in Madhabpur on May 15, 1971.

"He [Qaisar] along with the Pakistani army raided a Shayestaganj area on May 29, 1971. They abducted six people and killed them after torture," he said.

Qaisar abducted a person on June 16, 1971 and kept

him confined for a day. The war crimes suspect handed the detainee over to the Pakistani army who killed him later.

Seven days later, Qaisar with the help of the members of his force looted house and set fire to shops, abducted people and collected ransom from different villages of Nasirnagar. They also killed a person on that day.

On August 18, 1971, Qaisar and his force detained four freedom fighters and tortured them. All the freedom fighters were later killed and their bodies were thrown into a well.

In the same way, Qaisar and his force detained four freedom fighters from Madhabpur and killed all of them.

In mid-October, Qaisar and his force raided a house in Madhabpur and abducted a freedom fighter. The freedom fighter was later killed.

# Verdict any day

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The court directed the prison authorities to take necessary steps taking into account Alim's physical condition. Farman Ali, senior jail super of Dhaka Central Jail, told The Daily Star last night that the accused had been sent to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University for a health checkup.

Alim was on bail since March 31 of 2011, four days after he was arrested on war crimes charges.

Wrapping up their arguments, Rana Dasgupta, conducting prosecutor of the case, sought death penalty for Alim, claiming that they had proved the charges against Alim beyond any shadow of reasonable doubt.

On September 19, Alim's counsel Ahsanul Huq Hena completed defence arguments. He on that day said the prosecution could not prove any charges brought against his client and that Alim might be acquitted.

The ICT-2 chairman and two other members --Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Justice Md Shahinur Islam -- heard prosecution's replies to defence's closing arguments before announcing that the case now awaited verdict.

The defence had said Alim was hiding during the war and he was not "involved" in any crimes.

Prosecutor Tureen Afroz yesterday said defence claims were not acceptable as documents showed that Alim had joined public rallies and a by-election during the Liberation War. Besides, there are eye-witnesses to his crimes.

She prayed to the court to consider Alim's position, educational background, level of participation in the alleged crimes, age and nature of the victims and cruelty of the crimes as the aggravating factors at the time of pronouncing the sentence.

Later, the court rejected a defence petition seeking continuation of Alim's bail until the pronouncement of the verdict.

The court in the order said some quarters had carried out grave violent activities crippling normal public life in the capital prior to the previous verdicts in war

crimes cases.

"The accused Alim, as it appears, did not misuse the privilege of conditional bail granted to him," it said. However, for the above reason, Alim should be kept in prison to ensure his "unhindered appearance" in the court during the delivery of the verdict, the tribunal added.

The two tribunals -- ICT-1 and ICT-2 holding war crimes trial -- have so far delivered judgements in six cases. The ICT-1 on August 14 kept the case against another BNP leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury waiting for verdict.

The Tribunal-2 sentenced to death expelled Jamaat member Abul Kalam Azad, Jamaat Assistant Secretary General Muhammad Kamaruzzaman and Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed and to life imprisonment another Assistant Secretary General Abdul Quader Mollah.

The Supreme Court upgraded the life sentence of Mollah to capital punishment on September 17.


The Tribunal-1 awarded Jamaat leader Delwar Hossain Sayedee capital punishment and handed down 90-year imprisonment to Jamaat former ameer Ghulam Azam.

The Tribunal-2 had taken 25 days for delivering the verdict in Azad's case after the proceedings were completed, 18 days in Quader Mollah's case, 22 days in Kamaruzzaman's case and the highest 41 days in Mojaheed's case.

**ALIM'S BACKGROUND**

Born on November 1 in 1930 in the West Bengal of India, Alim with his family migrated to Joypurhat in 1950-51. In 1958, he joined the Muslim League. He was an influential leader of the Convention Muslim League and vice-chairman of Bogra District Council in 1971, according to the prosecution.

Alim allegedly established a peace committee office and a training centre for Razakars and set up an accommodation for Pakistani Major Afzal, occupying the Gadi Ghar (trading office) of trader Shownlal Bajla of



**ABDUL ALIM**

Former BNP lawmaker and a member of Ziaur Rahman's cabinet

**Status in 1971:** Alleged Chairman of Joypurhat Peace Committee and Razakar Commander

**Charges:** Seventeen charges including genocide and murders

**Prosecution witness:** 35

**Defence witness:** Three

Joypurhat, after he had been compelled to go to India.

Members of the peace committee and the Razakar force collaborated with the Pakistani forces in committing genocide and mass killings during the nine-month-long war when 30 lakh Bangalees were killed and over two lakh women raped, according to historic documents.

Following the war, Alim was put in jail under the Collaborator Act-1972. But as Ziaur Rahman took over the helm of the country, he made Alim a minister in 1978. Alim also joined Zia's newly-formed party BNP at that time. He was elected lawmaker from Joypurhat in 1979, 1996 and 2001 elections, according to the defence and prosecution documents.

The special agency designated to probe war crimes began the investigation into Alim's involvement on March 6, 2011 and submitted a report to the prosecution on January 15, 2012.

The prosecution pressed charges against him on March 15, 2012 and the Tribunal-1 accepted the charges on March 27.

On April 16, the case was transferred to the ICT-2 which indicted him for 17 charges.

**CHARGES**

The charges Abdul Alim is facing are--

1. Looting of Awami League leader Meher Uddin's house in Panchbibi, Joypurhat on April 20, 1971, setting the house ablaze and forcing the family to leave the area.
2. Killing of 370 Hindus in Karai Kadipur, Chawkpara, Sonapara, Palpara, Munshipara of Joypurhat on April 26.
3. Killing of 22 pro-liberation and Awami League men in Joypurhat on June 18.
4. Killing of 19 pro-liberation civilians in Koktara, Ghorapa, Bagjana and Kutakara in Joypurhat in early May.
5. Killing of 67 Hindus at Pagla Dewan in Joypurhat between May 9 and 15.
6. Killing of nine people in Akkelpur, Joypurhat in May, 1971.
7. Killing of four people of Nowda village of Panchbibi, Joypurhat on May 26.
8. Killing of 10 Hindu people of Uttar Hatsahar and Harunja Hat of Khetlal, Joypurhat towards the end of May.
9. Killing of 15 youths at West Amatra of Joypurhat on June 14.
10. Killing of 26 youths at Joypurhat College in late June.
11. Killing of 19 bullock-cart pullers at Khanjanpur Khuthibari between June 25 and 30.
12. Killing of Awami League leader Abul Kashem of Devipur Kajipara on July 26.
13. Killing of 11 youths at Bara Ghati Pukur in the first week of September.
14. Killing of three freedom fighters at Khanjanpur Khuthibari in October.
15. Killing of 25 people inside the Joypurhat Sugar Mill between October 25 and November 2.
16. Confining 29 civilians to Joypurhat Sugar Mill between October 25 and November 2. And
17. Killing of Jabbal Hossain towards the end of November, 1971.

# Meeting or mission?

FROM PAGE 1

has been working sincerely to check terrorism and Islamist militancy, and has been a patron of liberalism, they said.

The prime minister was initially against the idea of attending the UN General Assembly, as she had little indication that she would get an appointment with top leaders like US President Barack Obama or Manmohan Singh.

Earlier this month, senior AL leaders Tofail Ahmed and Amir Hossain Amu were hastily dispatched to New Delhi to set the meeting with Manmohan, said the sources.

Hasina decided to go to the UN only when Manmohan agreed to hold the meeting, said sources in the AL. One or two of her family members might attend the meeting with the

Indian premier, they said.

The inclusion of senior AL leaders like Amu and Tofail in her delegation indicates the significance of the bilateral meeting.

Apart from the two AL leaders, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon and Jatiya Party leader Anisul Islam Mahmud, and some other key leaders of the AL-led alliance are expected to attend the meeting.

The AL-led government expects it would give the world an impression that the ruling party has full support from all its allies on the issue of holding the election without a caretaker government.

When Indian President Pranab Mukherjee visited Bangladesh in March, he had conveyed the message that India wants to see unity within the AL, not divisive-

ness that the AL chief created by sidelining some veteran leaders.

Hasina wants to convince the Indian leadership that elections under a caretaker government cannot be a solution in a democracy, and that political parties have to earn the trust sooner or later for holding elections.

The sources said she would assert her position that the elections would be held in line with the current constitutional framework, and scope is there for holding dialogue with the opposition on the issue.

The meeting takes place at a time when the AL-led government's relations with the US have cooled to some extent over a number of issues, as exemplified by the cancellation of GSP facilities.

At the same time, the

government is under pressure from the UN as well as the international community to hold dialogue with the opposition to find a way for holding the next polls with participation of all political parties.

The government hasn't yet responded either to a UN call or a letter from the US Secretary of State for holding dialogue with the opposition to end the stalemate over the issue of a polls-time government.

Sources said there was little possibility that the prime minister would meet any high-level US officials.

But some of the AL leaders might hold meetings with mid-level US officials, who would then brief the US administration about the government's views on the elections, they said.



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# Grameen Bank

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before appointing its managing director, send statements to the banking regulator regularly and take permission before opening new branches, said Mohammad Shahjahan, acting managing director of Grameen Bank.

The central bank also regularly inspects the Grameen Bank.

"We also send statistical information to the central bank whenever instructed," he said yesterday, adding that the government could impose some articles of the Banking Companies Act on Grameen Bank if necessary.

Speaking to journalists at the secretariat, Muhith said the Commission would

submit its final report on Grameen Bank and its associate organisations at the end of this month.

He said a new law would replace the Ordinance. "I do not think there will be so many changes in the law."

But he added the government was not bringing any major changes in Grameen Bank's structure. The ownership structure would remain the same with the borrower-shareholders owning 75 percent and the government the remaining 25 percent.

The number of government-appointed directors in the 12-member board would also remain three as it is now.

According to him, the appointment of a permanent managing director for the

bank was of utmost importance now.

Muhith has also said the government is taking steps to have the High Court petition, which has stalled the process of appointing the managing director, withdrawn so that it can appoint the next chief executive.

"Once the injunction is withdrawn, we will appoint the MD."

"There is no regular managing director at the Grameen Bank. The main reason [behind the delay] is Prof Yunus, because he wants one of his own people as MD."

The finance minister added the current chairman of the bank, although very unwell, would continue until a successor was chosen.