

Sued

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were closed following orders of the then sub-divisional officer (north) of Chittagong on different occasions in 1976.

An investigation agency, designated to probe the war crimes, found Salauddin's involvement in 32 war crimes incidents including the offences for which the cases were filed in 1972.

On completion of his probe, investigation officer Nurul Islam submitted his report to the prosecution. The International Crimes Tribunal-1 indicted Salauddin on 23 charges on April 4, 2012.

During the 17-month trial proceedings and also at the pre-trial stage, Salauddin made several dramatic incidents at the courtroom.

He cancelled vokalatnama of his counsels twice and reappointed the same counsel thrice. Against the backdrop of his dramatic moves, the tribunal constantly kept a state-appointed defence counsel till the end of the case.

Sometimes Salauddin locked into arguments even with the judges of the tribunal for which he was cautioned several times.

The prosecution examined 40 witnesses including victims, eyewitnesses and hearsay witnesses to prove the charges in 12 months since May 14, 2012. Later the investigation officer gave deposition and was cross-examined by the defence.

Four defence witnesses including the convict himself gave deposition before the tribunal through which the defence tried to establish that Salauddin was not in Bangladesh from April 1971 to April 1974.

Both the prosecution and the defence completed placing their closing arguments on August 14 this year. The prosecution sought capital punishment, while the defence prayed for acquittal saying their client was not in Bangladesh during the war.

After the closing arguments the tribunal kept the case waiting for verdict.

Earlier on December 16, 2010, law enforcers arrested Salauddin at Banani in the capital in connection with torching a car at Moghbazar on June 26 that year.

He was shown arrested for his involvement in the crimes against humanity following an arrest warrant issued by the tribunal on December 19, 2010.

Nigeria signs \$1.3b power plant deal with China

AFP, Abuja

Nigeria has announced two major initiatives aimed at improving its woeful electricity supply, entering a \$1.3 billion (960 million euros) power plant deal with China and on Monday handing over state power assets to private investors.

The privatisation of most of state electricity firm PHCN has long been in the works in Africa's most populous nation, where blackouts occur multiple times daily despite the country's status as the continent's largest oil producer.

Those taking over assets include Seoul-based Korea Electric Power Corporation as well as local investors.

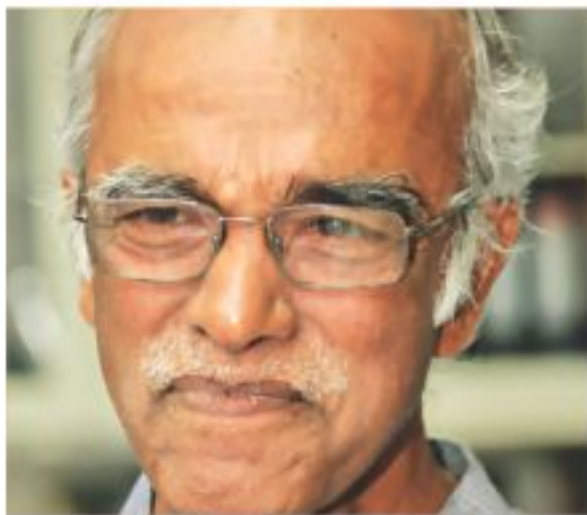
Separately, the deal with the Chinese government involves construction of a hydroelectric plant expected to add 700 megawatts to the national grid.

A loan from China's Export-Import Bank will pay for 75 percent of the plant while the Nigerian government will cover 25 percent of the cost, a statement by the finance ministry said.

It is not clear if the new plant will remain in state hands or if it too will be privatised.

Hundreds of PHCN workers and retirees on Monday staged protests in several parts of the country against the take-over of the company when the government has not paid all of them their severance financial benefits.

VERDICT PLEASES NATION



MOFIDUL HAQ

"Most of the star witnesses of this case were women. Even widows had the courage to come before the tribunal and vividly describe the atrocities committed by the accused," said Liberation War Museum trustee Mofidul Haq.

He said justice had prevailed through the verdict. He mentioned the murder of Sheikh Mozaffer Ahmed and his son Sheikh Alamgir and the mass killing at Unoshatturpara.

The eyewitness accounts of Umme Habiba and Janoti Bala Paul proved Salauddin's guilt beyond reasonable doubt, he said.

"The defence had called the prosecution witnesses vagabonds but it was these people who had shown how society's inner strength and the power of truth can prevail," he added.

SALEH UDDIN

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Science and Technology and a victim of torture at Goods Hill.

"The collaborators including Salauddin Quader Chowdhury had killed people indiscriminately in 1971. But we waited for a trial and did not resort to violence in retaliation for their atrocities," he said, adding that justice had finally been served.

"This verdict proves that no one is above the law no matter how powerful he or she is," he said.

Prof Saleh Uddin was a student of Chittagong University during the Liberation War. He was abducted in the third week of July, taken to Goods Hill and tortured.



SHAHRIAR KABIR

"His [Salauddin's] behaviour in court clearly shows that he has no respect for law," said Shahriar Kabir, executive president of Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee. "He is a criminal character and that has been proved."

Shahriar Kabir said, "In the tribunal's observation about his [Salauddin's] behaviour in court, it became clear that it is very much possible that this person can commit such crimes."

When asked about the small number of prosecution witnesses, he said that in the first few days of the trial, Salauddin threatened to teach witnesses a lesson, if they had dared to testify against him.

He said those who testified should be thanked and that he was worried about their security.

ANISUZZAMAN

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75-year-old academician Anisuzzaman.

Professor Emeritus Anisuzzaman, the first prosecution witness in the case against Salauddin, said it was a fair verdict and justice had been served.

Anisuzzaman was a Reader (associate professor) of Bangla department at Chittagong University in 1971. Along with his family, he had taken refuge in Kundeshwari Girls' Primary School, founded by Nutan.

PRAFULLA

FROM PAGE 1
Chandra Singha, son of Nutan Chandra Singha, who was murdered by Salauddin on April 13, 1971.

Salauddin was sentenced to death by a war crimes tribunal for the murder of Nutan, a philanthropist of the Hindu Community in Raozan.



SALIMULLAH

"When I was being tortured in Goods Hill [Salauddin Quader Chowdhury's family home in Chittagong] in 1971, I cried in pain and was thinking of my little daughter I left home... Today, these are tears of joy," Mohammad Salimullah, the second prosecution witness of the case, told The Daily Star over the phone.

He urged the BNP not to oppose the verdict and to expel Salauddin from the party's standing committee. "If they [BNP] do so, they too will be considered as pro-liberation force," Salimullah said.

He also urged the president not to pardon him.

Salimullah, who owned Muslim Press in Chittagong during the Liberation War, was abducted by Salauddin's men as he was heading towards Goods Hill to seek release of two of his Hindu employees who were kept there.

NIZAMUDDIN

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also a victim of the torture at Goods Hill.

He said he felt that it was not the time to be overly excited about the verdict. He said, "Which-ever political party comes to power next, I urge them to execute the verdict."

Nizamuddin said, "I was advised by my well-wishers not to testify before the tribunal as it might put my family at risk. But as a Muslim, I believe that life and death is decided by the Almighty Allah and if I do not testify then my conscience would be questioned."

NUKE POWER PLANT PM opens Rooppur project today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

The prime minister is scheduled to inaugurate the first phase of work for the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant today.

Sheikh Hasina will also address a public meeting at 3:00pm after the inauguration ceremony at 11:00am. She will launch 30 other development projects digitally from the meeting venue.

The projects include: the academic building of Pabna Edward College, administrative building of Pabna University of Science and Technology, academic building of Bangabandhu Adarsha High School, Chargargari Dakhil Madrasa, Pabna Town Extension Road, 50-bed Bera Upazila Health Complex, Faridpur Upazila Health Complex, Chatmohar Fire Station, Chatmohar Dakbangalow, silos of Bhangura and Ishwardi, academic buildings of Unus Ali High School and BP High School.

The premier of the country will also lay the foundation stones of the Padma bank protection work, repairing work of Pabna Amin Uddin Stadium, academic buildings of Bera College, Santhia Degree College, Jorgasa College, Nurul Hossain Degree College, Mashumdia Bhabanipur College, Nizamuddin Azgar Ali College, Yasin Ali Degree College, Bhangura Mahila College, Atghoria Pilot High School, Ishwardi Mahila College, Khidirpur Degree College, Banwarinagar CB Pilot High School, Bhangura Union High School, Chinanari Dakhil Madrasa, Boradnagar Dakhil Madrasa and 50-bed Bhangura Upazila Health Complex.

Earlier, the prime minister visited Pabna on February 2 this year to address a public meeting at Pabna Edward College.

Amusing alibi plea

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Chittagong during the Liberation War and was guilty of committing crimes against humanity and genocide there.

In the trial, Salauddin had produced an alibi that he was not in Bangladesh during the war as he had left for West Pakistan on 29 March 1971 and came back to Bangladesh on 20 April 1974. Four defence witnesses, including Salauddin, gave testimony on the alibi.

An alibi is a claim or piece of evidence that one was elsewhere when a criminal act is alleged to have taken place, according to legal experts.

In his testimony, the BNP lawmaker claimed that he had taken active part in the anti-Ayub movement in 1969 as well as in the non-cooperation movement for the cause of the independence of Bangladesh.

Interestingly, Salauddin's father Fazlul Quader Chowdhury was the Speaker of the Pakistan National Assembly when Ayub Khan was president of Pakistan.

"Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, the then pre-liberation hero, has surprisingly stated that instead of

joining the War of Liberation, he left Dhaka on March 29 1971 for West Pakistan to take higher education there and he came back to Bangladesh on 20 April 1974," said the judgment.

It added: The accused proudly claims that he is not a Bangalee; therefore it can be presumed that the accused as a non-Bangalee might have gone to West Pakistan as his first home during the war.

"But the fact remains that the defence did not produce any travel or residential documents to show the date of the so-called visit to West Pakistan and staying therein during the War of Liberation of Bangladesh," read the verdict.

The court said the investigation officer of the case, Nurul Islam, has provided it with a report of Dainik Pakistan of September 29, 1971 with the headline "Son of Fazlul Quader wounded in bomb attack: driver shot dead."

The report had stated that 'miscreants' had carried out an attack by hurling a bomb at the car in which the son of Fazlul Quader Chowdhury was present. "As a result the driver was killed while the

son of Fazlul Quader Chowdhury sustained severe injuries and was provided treatment in a hospital."

The investigation officer had also submitted a fortnightly report on the political situation for the second half of September 1971 from Special Branch, East Pakistan, Dacca, which was prepared on October 2, 1971 by MM Hossain, deputy inspector general of police, said the judgment.

The report, mentioned the verdict, had stated that on the evening of September 20, 1971, rebels fired at the car of Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, son of Fazlul Quader Chowdhury, president, Pakistan Muslim League (PML) at Chandrapara, Chittagong. They also threw a hand grenade in front of the car. Salauddin Quader Chowdhury was injured and his driver was killed.

Besides, two prosecution witnesses SM Mahub-Ul-Alam and Qazi Mohammad Nurul Afsar, who were among the attackers of Salauddin's car, also gave testimony narrating how they had carried out the attack.

The court said prosecu-

tion witness AKM Shafiullah testified that in 1971 he served at Chittagong Medical College Hospital and had treated Salauddin in late September that year. The witness also identified the accused at the dock.

The prosecution evidence, such as the report of Dainik Pakistan, SB report and Shafiullah's testimony are considered as most authentic and reliable evidence to hold that the accused was very much present in Bangladesh during the War of Liberation, said the judges.

"Thus, the above mentioned unshakeable evidence has totally destroyed the plea of alibi taken by the defence," they mentioned.

Moreover, said the verdict, at least 14 prosecution witnesses had testified that they saw accused Salauddin accompanied by Pakistan army soldiers and Razakars during committing genocide and other crimes.

"The evidence adduced by those eye-witnesses has been accepted as true and reliable. Thus, we hold that the plea of alibi taken by the defence in the instant case stands rejected," announced the court.

Judgment 'farcical'

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Protesting the judgment, BNP's local units have called dawn-to-dusk hartal in Chittagong, the home district of Salauddin, and Rangamati.

In the wake of the latest developments, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia last night held an urgent meeting with some senior party leaders to discuss how to cash in on the issue, party sources said.

"The government has given the nation the biggest surprise [alleged leak of the judgment]. We have long been saying the war crimes trial could not maintain international standards. The leak of the verdict now proves our claim," a senior BNP leader said, wishing anonymity.

Party insiders said the BNP would now use the leak incident to prove "the war crimes trials are farcical and a mere government design to persecute the opposition leaders".

The main opposition party has so far kept mum on the trials of its leaders Salauddin and Abdul Alim, while the government has been claiming the BNP is

against war crimes trials.

The party has remained almost silent also on the verdicts in the cases against some senior leaders of its key ally Jamaat-e-Islami.

Yesterday's developments have made Jamaat happy, as it believes the BNP would now protest the war crimes verdicts.

"We have been claiming for long that all the verdicts against our leaders were predetermined. The leak of the verdict [against Salauddin] has proved us right," Abu Taleb Mandal, secretary general of Pabna district Jamaat, told The Daily Star.

Speaking at the press conference yesterday, some senior BNP leaders termed the verdict on Salauddin "farcical".

"We have never heard of any judgment being leaked before its delivery by court. But that's what has happened now. And it is even more regretful that the law ministry might have been the author of the judgment," said Moudud Ahmed, a member of the BNP standing committee.

The tribunal should clarify its stance on the alleged

leak. Otherwise, people's confusion about the trial would increase, he added.

"This trial is farcical," Moudud said adding, "We too want trial of war criminals. But it must maintain international standards."

BNP leaders said the defence will file an appeal with the Supreme Court against the verdict on Salauddin.

The ruling Awami League, its ally Workers Party of Bangladesh and different political parties have expressed satisfaction over the verdict.

BNP REACTION TODAY
The BNP will come up with its formal reaction today on the SQ Chowdhury verdict, party's acting secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir said last night.

He was talking to reporters after a two-hour meeting chaired by Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan office.

A BNP standing committee member, who attended the meeting, told The Daily Star the party would hold rallies across the country tomorrow in protest against the verdict.

Death

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participated in the horrendous atrocities committed on unarmed civilians with the intent to destroy the Hindu community.

"Thereby, he committed offences of genocide and crimes against humanity," said the three-member tribunal led by Justice Kabir.

Tribunal members Justice Jahangir Hossain and Justice Anwarul Haque read out parts of the summary of the 172-page verdict amid tight security on and around the court premises.

The judgment said the accused, aided by the Pakistani army, committed genocide by his active participation in different places of Chittagong. He sought to wipe out the Hindus by launching large-scale systematic attacks and killed unarmed civilians, unleashing a reign of terror in the locality.

"As a result, millions of people were compelled to leave the country and took refuge in India during the War of Liberation of Bangladesh," it added.

The tribunal found Salauddin's conduct "disrespectful to the court", and said, "His art of deliberation, actions and conduct as shown in the courtroom were not in conformity with rightness, decency and convention of good behaviour."

Wearing a white punjabi and pyjamas, Salauddin, who enjoyed the status of a minister during the previous BNP-led government's tenure, looked nonchalant in the courtroom.

He jibed, and even mocked, and chuckled at times, as the judges delivered the verdict.

Salauddin was later taken to Kashimpur Jail-1 and kept in a condemn cell of the prison, a jail official told

The Daily Star last night.

People across the country have expressed satisfaction over the verdict, while Salauddin's family and defence lawyers said they would challenge the verdict in the Supreme Court.

According to the law, a war crimes convict can file appeal with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court within 30 days from the date of pronouncement of the verdict.

The convict's lawyer Fakhru Islam alleged that the verdict "was dictated by the law ministry", saying it was available on the internet before the tribunal sat yesterday.

DEATH ON FOUR CHARGES

Nutan's killing: Salauddin had led the Pakistani Army to Kundeshwari Oushadhalay at Gohira and raided the house of its owner Nutan Chandra Singha between 9:30am and 10:00am on April 13, 1971.

Nutan, who was performing rites in a prayer room, was dragged out of it by Salauddin and his followers.

Salauddin told the Pakistani army that his father instructed him to kill Nutan, and then the army personnel fired at Nutan, who fell on the ground, according to the charge.

While Nutan was groaning with pain, Salauddin shot him to confirm his death, and then left the place with the Pakistani army.

The tribunal said oral and documentary evidence have proved beyond reasonable doubt that accused Salauddin with the help of Pakistani army killed Nutan Chandra in a planned way.

Genocide in Sultampur: Salauddin and his accomplices along with the

Pakistani army attacked members of the Hindu community at Bonik Para of Sultampur village in Raozan around 1:00pm on April 13, 1971, according to the fifth charge against the BNP leader.

Salauddin, his father and their accomplices, along with the Pakistani army, opened fire on Hindu people, and killed Nepal Chandra Dhar, Monindra Lal Dhar, Upendro Lal Dhar and Onil Barun Dhar.

"After assessing the evidence on record, we are inclined to hold that the prosecution has been able to prove this charge 5 beyond reasonable doubt that the accused with intent to destroy in whole or in part the members of Hindu community actively participated in the killing of unarmed civilians of village Sultampur," said the judgment.

Genocide at Unosattur Para: Salauddin along with his accomplices and the Pakistani army attacked the Hindu-inhabited Unosattur Para around 4:00pm on April 13, 1971, according to the sixth charge.

They brought the Hindu people near the pond behind Khitish Mohajan's house, and then sprayed the unarmed people with bullets in Salauddin's presence, leaving about 70 people dead.

The court said considering both oral and documentary evidence, it was proved that the accused and his accomplices attacked the Hindus at Unosattur Para and killed 60 to 70 unarmed Hindu people there.

Killing of Mozaffar and his son: On Salauddin's instructions, the Pakistan army took Chittagong Awami League's founder Sheikh Mozaffar Ahmed and his son Sheikh Alamgir

to a nearby camp around 11:00am on April 17, 1971.

When Mozaffar's relatives approached Salauddin's father Fazlul Quader Chowdhury to have them released, Fazlul told them that Salauddin was dealing with the matter.

They contacted Fazlul several times but all to no avail. "The said victims did not return as they were subsequently killed," said the court.

The evidence proved that the accused had direct complicity in abduction and murder of the duo, it added.

CONVICTION ON FIVE OTHER CHARGES

The three charges that got Salauddin 20 years' imprisonment each are acts of genocide at Madhya Gohira Hindu Para, and acts of genocide, persecution and deportation at Jagotmallo Para, and the killing of Satish Chandra Palit in Raozan.

He was given five years' imprisonment each on two other charges.

Salauddin was found guilty of abducting, confining and torturing Saleh Uddin (who later became vice-chancellor of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology), and Nizamuddin Ahmed (who later became a journalist) at his father's Goods Hill Torture Centre in Chittagong in 1971.

The tribunal acquitted Salauddin on eight charges that include genocide, race killing, murder, abduction, torture, deportation, confinement, looting, and acts of arson at different places in Chittagong.

The prosecution failed to produce witnesses to prove six other charges that include abduction, torture, confinement, murder and race killing in Chittagong.