

# Razakars killed 5 on Yusuf's order

## Witness testifies at war tribunal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After two hearsay witnesses, an eyewitness yesterday testified that Razakars had killed five freedom fighters and an informer at Sarankhola upazila in Bagerhat during the Liberation War upon orders from Jamaat-e-Islami leader AKM Yusuf.

Abdur Rouf Mallik, also a freedom fighter from Sarankhola, told the International Crimes Tribunal-2 he had seen Yusuf hitting Zainul Fakir, one of the victims, with a rifle butt before ordering his cohorts to kill him.

At the last part of his testimony, the 60-year-old ninth prosecution witness in the case identified the accused, who was on the dock, and appealed for capital punishment of those involved in killings.

Earlier, Yusuf Ali Sikder and MA Khaleque, two freedom fighters and prosecution witnesses, testified that Razakars had killed the five freedom fighters and their informer Salam upon orders of Yusuf, who is historically known as the founder of Razakar force in 1971.

Abdul Malek Fakir, son of victim Zainul Fakir who witnessed his father's killing, also testified that his father was beaten up with rifle butts and he had recognised some local Razakars including Yusuf, a man from Sarankhola.

During his 47-minute testimony, Rouf, a former Chhatra League leader, said he along with Awami League and Juba League men had received one-month training after the proclamation of independence by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on March 26, 1971.

Rouf said after receiving training they had set up a student camp at Tetulbunia near the Sundarbans and he was the quarter master of the camp.

Like other witnesses in the case, Rouf said Yusuf, who was the chairman of Peace Committee in greater Khulna during the war, formed the Razakar force with members of Jamaat and Muslim League and provided them with training, arms and ammunition.

He added as they had received allegations of killing, looting and arson committed by Razakars, 20-25 of them under Capt Anwar took position near Rayenda Bazar Razakar camp on June 6 to attack the camp.

The witness said the information was leaked and Yusuf along with 20-25 Razakars had reached the camp as reinforcement around 3:00am on June 7.

The Razakars at one point started shooting, forcing the freedom fighters to retreat after two hours, said Rouf.

Around 10:00am next day, 10-15 Razakars led by Yusuf captured Capt Anwar, Asmat and Ismail and tortured them in front of RKDS Girls High School, said Rouf, adding, they were shot dead following Yusuf's order.

"I witnessed the incident hiding in a nearby garden," said Rouf, adding, locals had later buried the martyrs beside the school pond.

Rouf said on June 9, 1971, they had gone to Tafalbari market to collect food, but that information was also leaked.

Around 40 Razakars led by Yusuf reached Tafalbari on a launch and besieged the market, said Rouf.

The Razakars had picked up Zainul Fakir and Yusuf hit him with a rifle butt and crushed him under his legs, said Rouf, adding that another group of Razakars picked up Basarat Kha and brought him before Yusuf.

The Razakars following Yusuf's order took Zainul and Basarat by the Baleswar river and shot them dead, said Rouf. After three days relatives collected their bodies and buried them in their respective homes.

"I witnessed the incidents hiding inside Tafalbari High School," said the witness in response to a court query.

Rouf said they had sent informer Salam Khan to Rayenda Bazar where Yusuf was at a meeting with his fellows on July 29. But Salam was captured and was tortured and killed near the Baleswar river following Yusuf's order, the witness added.

"I have witnessed the incident from a house near the river," said Rouf, who is now deputy commander of Sarankhola upazila Muktiyoddha Sangsad.

The three-member tribunal led by Justice Obaidul Hassan with members Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Justice Md Shahnur Islam recorded his testimony before adjourning the proceeding until Sunday when Rouf would face cross-examination.

Earlier, Yusuf's counsel Syed Mizanur Rahman completed cross-examining MA Khaleque, eighth prosecution witness in the case. Yusuf is facing 13 charges of crimes against humanity and genocide committed in greater Khulna during the war.

## Portfolios of ministers

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Some ministers have retained their jobs while a few got additional duties.

Sheikh Hasina would be running the home ministry, said sources, who are Awami League-led 14-party alliance and government policy makers.

They said state minister for home Shamsul Hoque Tuku would retain his position and assist the prime minister with her additional workload.

Abul Hasan Mahamood Ali, who was the minister for disaster management and relief, would replace Dipu Moni at the foreign ministry, the sources claimed.

Of the ministers sworn in on Monday, Awami League stalwart Amir Hossain Amu would be running the ministries for housing and public works, and disaster management and relief. Tofail Ahmed would be in charge of the ministries for industries and land.

Alliance member Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon got posts and telecommunications ministry while former Awami League ally Jatiya Party leader Anisul Islam Mahmud would be running the water resources ministry.

Jatiya Party leader Ruhul Amin Hawlader would lead the civil aviation and tourism ministry while his party colleague Rowshan Ershad the health and family welfare ministry.

Sworn in as state ministers on Monday, Jatiya Party leaders Mujibul Haque Chunnun and Salma Islam would have youth and sports ministry and women and children affairs ministry respectively.

Ministers Rajiuddin Ahmed Raju, Shahara Khatun, Rezaul Karim Hira, Faruk Khan and Abdur Razzaque would have no space in the interim cabinet, the sources claimed, adding that ministers Shafique Ahmed and Dilip Barua would become the prime minister's advisers.

The likelihood of Jatiya Party (Monju) Chairman Anwar Hossain Monju of becoming an adviser to the prime minister was very high.

At least 14 ministers and three state ministers of the 14-party alliance would keep their jobs and some would have more on their plates, the sources added.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith would have no additional duties but Agricultural Minister Matia Chowdhury would also have to run the food ministry and Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid would be in charge of the primary and mass education ministry as well.

Railways Minister Mujibul Haque would have religious affairs ministry as his additional duty while Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan would also run the liberation war affairs ministry.

Hasanul Haq Inu would get the cultural affairs ministry in addition to information ministry which he has been running.

Textiles and Jute Minister Abdul Latif Siddique, Planning Minister AK Khandker, LGRD Minister Syed Ashraf Islam, Communications Minister Obaidul Quader, Commerce Minister GM Quader and Forest Minister Hasan Mahmud would keep their jobs without additional duties, the sources claimed.

State ministers Promode Mankin and Qamrul Islam would continue with their job at the social welfare and the law ministries.

The fate of Ramesh Chandra Sen, who ran the water resources ministry, was yet to be determined.

## Uganda to charge opposition figure with inciting violence

REUTERS, Kampala

Uganda's government risked spurring further opposition protests on Tuesday by signalling it would bring charges against a former presidential candidate at the heart of violent unrest in 2011.

Kizza Besigye, who has lost to President Yoweri Museveni in three elections, led protests after the last presidential poll in early 2011 which were fuelled by alleged vote-rigging, corruption and high commodity prices.

He has since been arrested several times at public rallies and although he stepped down last year as leader of Uganda's biggest opposition party, Forum for Democratic Change, police have kept him under close scrutiny.

Besigye was arrested along with Kampala mayor Elias Lukwago on Tuesday evening as he addressed supporters in the capital.

"He's still with us and we're preparing charges related to inciting violence," police spokesman Ibn Ssekumbi said yesterday. "We'll take him to court any time from now."

## Nizami's trial finally ends

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case waiting for verdict.

The tribunal in an extraordinary move drew conclusion to the case against the backdrop of continuous failure of the defence to appear before the court. It also gave the defence an opportunity to place the rest part of their argument.

Nizami is facing 16 war crimes charges for his alleged involvement in the crimes against humanity and genocide during the Liberation War in 1971.

DEFENCE'S ARGUMENT

The defence in their argument said incitement to genocide was the only recognised international crime until 1973 and it was not recognised as an independent or inchoate offence under the international law.

Incitement could not have been committed by the speeches delivered by Nizami in the four occasions mentioned in the charges.

The statements given by Nizami to ICS members on August 03, 1971 at Chittagong Muslim Institute showed his 'patriotism' towards an 'undivided Pakistan'.

Nizami's address to the ICS members at the Arts Building on September 08, 1971 was nothing but his expression of hatred towards India.

His address to the members at the Jessore district Razakar headquarters on September 10,

## No policy decision

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ministers had already taken oath of office for the "all-party polls-time government" and that she would be very happy if main opposition BNP joined the interim cabinet.

She said gazette notifications regarding the interim cabinet would be made public today (Thursday).

Hasina said this would be the last session of this parliament, unless there was an emergency or a war in the country.

Expressing gratitude towards the people, she apologised for any mistakes she might have made during her tenure.

In her 47-minute speech, Hasina, also the president of Awami League, claimed that the Election Commission was completely independent and that "relevant ministries would be under the Election Commission" during election time.

She said her government would not interfere in the job of the commission.

She said as per the constitutional guidelines, the elections must be held within 90 days before parliament tenure expires.

"I have already met the president and told him that we are ready for the elections. He [the president] suggested that we [the interim cabinet] continue running the government."

She said her government had no intention to rig the polls and that it was impossible to rig elections now since the media was independent and very strong.

"We have fought against election rigging for years and we want to ensure you that we would not rig the polls. If the opposition leader has the confidence to win in the next elections, I hope she will take part," Hasina said, adding,

## Ministries in a mess

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Early this month, all the 52 ministers and state ministers submitted resignation letters. But under the law, ministers and state ministers hold their posts until someone else takes over.

But as many ministers have stopped going to the secretariat, the administrative hub of the country yesterday looked deserted like the two previous days.

On Monday, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked the ministers to carry out their responsibilities till a gazette notification is issued, clarifying who will be in the election-time administration. But the ministers did not wait for the gazette.

Last night, Hasina told parliament that portfolios were already allocated and the gazette would come today.

Those who already bade farewell include Food Minister Abdur Razzaque, Cultural Affairs Minister Abul Kalam Azad, Primary and Mass Education Minister Afsarul Ameen and State Minister Mottahar Hossain, State Minister for Science and Technology Yeafesh Osman, State Minister for Power Enamul Huq, State Minister for LGRD Jahangir Kabir Nanak, State Minister for Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Dipankar Talukder and State Minister for Land Mustafizur Rahman.

The situation has left the secretariat in limbo. Officials have no idea about their duties. At the moment, they are coming to the offices, chatting with colleagues or doing some routine work and leaving early.

## Court lifts serial killer's stay of execution: report

AFP, Washington

A US appeals court yesterday lifted a stay of execution for a white supremacist serial killer just hours after judges granted it, CNN reported.

Joseph Paul Franklin, who was behind a string of racist killings between 1977 and 1980, was spared Tuesday night just hours before his planned execution by lethal injection.

A Missouri judge had granted him a stay of execution, ruling that the use of pentobarbital for a lethal injection carried a high risk of "unnecessary pain beyond that which is required to achieve death."

But the state appealed and early Wednesday the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled Franklin's lawyers had not provided enough evidence to warrant a stay of execution, CNN said.

It was not immediately clear if Franklin's

"Unfortunately we are not getting any response from the opposition party."

She said she had urged the opposition leader to give names of her party's lawmakers, who would be in the interim cabinet, but opposition leader Khaleda Zia did not do so.

Criticising Khaleda for demanding the caretaker government, the Awami League chief said if the non-party caretaker government returned, there would be no elections and people would not get the chance to exercise their democratic rights and all fundamental rights would be curbed.

Hasina alleged that the opposition leader had resorted to exploding bombs, carrying out arson attacks on people and their properties, and taking innocent lives because her demand for the caretaker government lacked people's support.

Later on, Speaker Shirin Sharmila Chowdhury thanked the MPs for cooperating with her in running the parliamentary affairs.

BNP'S REACTION

Rejecting Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's speech in parliament, acting BNP secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir said her statement worsened the crisis.

Speaking to the media at BNP chairperson's Gulshan office last night, Fakhru said the prime minister's statement has proved that the government had taken steps to hold a one-party election.

He urged the government to accept their demand for a non-party and neutral polls-time government. Otherwise, the government would have to take the responsibility for any violence that might occur, he added.

## Go to work, shun violence

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investigating the violence in the readymade garment factories in a bid to destabilise the sector, complained Hasina.

The government had already announced a 77 percent hike in minimum monthly wage for garment workers as per the recommendations of the wage board, she mentioned.

The prime minister said she had forced the owners to accept the minimum entry-level salary of Tk5,300, up from Tk3,000 set in November 2010.

"But it's a matter of great sorrow that we still see unrest in some parts of the country," Hasina noted.

"We'll have to grab the Christmas markets abroad. If we fail to do that, the buyers will not place any order in future," she warned, adding that the time was very crucial for the country's garment sector with the Christmas just around the corner.

If the unrest continued, around four million garment workers would be the worst sufferers, she added.

Asking the garment owners to settle the issue with the workers immediately, the PM said: "You should go to your respective factories and clear up the misunderstanding."

Under the new pay scale, Tk3,000 has been set as basic pay, Tk1,280 house rent, Tk320 medical allowance, Tk200 transport allowance, and Tk500 food subsidy for entry-level workers.

Apart from them, workers of other six grades will also enjoy the 77 percent increase in their basic wages from December onwards.

On June 26, the government formed a six-member panel headed by judge AK Roy to recommend a new salary structure for the garment workers.

The workers' representatives at the wage board demanded the minimum pay be hiked to Tk8,114. But the owners initially offered to pay Tk3,600, and later Tk4,500.

But the garment workers rejected the offer. After a series of meetings, the wage board on

November 4 fixed the minimum salary at Tk5,300.

The garment owners initially rejected the salary structure, which sparked labour unrest. But after a meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on November 13, they agreed to pay the amount.

MINISTER WARNS WORKERS

Labour and Employment Minister Rajiuddin Ahmed Raju yesterday directed the intelligence agencies to prepare a list of those who have been instigating unrest in the garment sector.

He urged garment workers to join work form today and warned of stern punitive action against the perpetrators of violence over wage hike.

"We have all information about your [workers' leaders] activities. So stay calm and accept what will be offered [in upcoming wage board] to you," he told a meeting with the leaders of RMG workers at his secretariat office.

The government has taken steps to increase the workers' wages twice in the last five years, he added.

State Minister for Labour and Employment Begum Monnujan Sufian assured the leaders of releasing the workers, who have been arrested and implicated in cases over the last few days in connection with labour unrest, on the condition that the agitating workers would return to work today.

Several workers' leaders at the meeting said their agitation intensified as police killed two of their fellow workers, arrested several leaders and implicated them in false cases.

However, superintendent of Gazipur police Mohammad Abdul Baten claimed that none of the two victims died in police firing.

Chiefs of Rapid Action Battalion and Border Guard Bangladesh and leaders of the BGMEA attended the meeting, among others.

Talking to The Daily Star, a workers' leader said though the minimum wage has been fixed at Tk5,300, the reduced basic salary of Tk3,000, declared by the minister, will adversely affect the overtime and other benefits of the workers.

parliamentary affairs ministry had recommended that the House scrap the proposed provision.

But nothing could prevent the government from introducing the provision to the benefit of public servants.

On November 17, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) sent a letter to Bangabhaban, urging the president not to give consent to the bill.

The anti-corruption watchdog also requested the president to exercise his constitutional authority to send the bill back to Jatiya Sangsad for reconsideration.

TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman expressed disappointment at the president's consent to the bill.

"This provision will make many public servants more crime prone," he added.

## President okays ACC bill

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bill ratified by Jatiya Sangsad on November 10 to amend the Anti-Corruption Commission Act, 2004, sources at Parliament Secretariat said.

The secretariat published a gazette notification, completing the procedure for the introduction of the provision.

The bill was placed in parliament in February, 2011. The government's move to amend the act drew widespread criticism from different NGOs, civil society members, donor agencies and the country's development partners. Finance Minister AMA Muhith also opposed the new provision in the bill.

The ACC itself strongly opposed the provision, terming it unconstitutional.

Scrutinising the bill, the parliamentary standing committee on the law, justice and

whom he was addressing? What was the mental state of the audience?" said Tureen.

He [Nizami] was a popular Islamic student leader. The audience was the 'reasonable members of ICS, Razakar and Al-Badr', who had committed and assisted Pakistani occupation army in committing crimes against humanity and genocide.

She then explained how Nizami's speech had influenced the members.

There is an easy way to understand the effect -- how the then newspapers had published reports of the said four occasions. "My lord, I will request you to see the reports in The Daily Sangram which prosecution had submitted," said Tureen.

Earlier in the day, the prosecution referred to a relevant section of the book "Sectarianism and politico-religious Terrorism in Pakistan" by Musa Khan Jalazai, where Nizami was shown the chief of Al-Badr.

The section reads, "The decision to join Al-Badr and Al-Shams was taken at the time by Motiur Rahman Nizami, Jamaat's Nazim-i-Ala (president of student wing), who was stationed at Dacca University."

Yesterday, defence again sought time to reply the rebuttal of prosecution but the tribunal did not entertain the defence's request and asked them to submit their reply, if any, in