

Recalling

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"Santhia upazila parishad auditorium has been prepared for sheltering the prosecution witnesses. If they feel insecure, they can come and stay here," the OC told The Daily Star. "Special security measures have been taken across Santhia as it is Nizami's area. Additional police personnel have been deployed at important points. Police, Rab and BCB are patrolling in the upazila," he said, claiming that the situation was under control.

However, the prosecution witnesses hardly feel safe. They demanded a permanent solution to this as they feel that Jamaat men might not let go of them anytime soon.

DEMAND FOR QUICK EXECUTION The pro-liberation people of Santhia have demanded early execution of the verdict against Nizami.

"Freedom fighters of Santhia are happy at the punishment awarded to Motiur Rahman Nizami. But we want to see speedy execution of the verdict," said Md Abdul Latif, commander of Santhia Upazila Muktiyoddha Sangsad.

"The verdict would rid the soil of Santhia of the stigma of Razakar," local AL leader Robiul Karim Hiru told The Daily Star.

Hiru, also the joint convener of Santhia upazila Awami League, even said after the verdict is executed, they would not allow Nizami's body be buried in Santhia.

Following the pronouncement of the verdict, Santhia upazila AL brought out a procession hailing the judgment. They also distributed sweetmeats among people.

Meanwhile, Jamaat men tried to bring out a procession in Pabna yesterday afternoon to protest the verdict, but police foiled it.

"Law enforcement agencies have been kept alert in the district. Jamaat men would not be able to create violence," said Siddikur Rahman, additional superintendent of Pabna police, adding that 16 Jamaat-Shibir men were detained in the district yesterday.

Gonojagoron

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the 1971 Liberation War, the protesters hugged each other.

Welcoming the verdict, Imran said, "We are happy... This is a victory for the people... Justice delivered finally."

"But we want immediate execution of the verdict."

Both factions brought out processions that marched to the TSC on Dhaka University campus before turning to Shahbagh intersection. Kamal Pasha said the judgment reflected the aspirations and hope of the people of the country.

Meanwhile, Gonojagoron Mancha activists in Chittagong hailed the verdict and demanded immediate execution of it.

Following the verdict, the activists brought out a procession from Cheragi Pahar intersection and paraded different thoroughfares in the city.

Coordinator Sharif Chouhan termed the verdict a victory of the Gonojagoran Mancha movement.

EBOLA OUTBREAK

Patient zero was a toddler in Guinea

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Unicef has identified the first patient to be infected at the start of the current global Ebola outbreak as a two-year-old toddler from Guinea named Emile Ouamouno.

In a study for the New England Journal of Medicine, a team of experts had traced the disease to the village in Guéckédou, in southeastern Guinea, by reviewing hospital documents and speaking to those involved.

Now the identity of the very first traceable person to have contracted the disease – the so-called "Patient Zero" for the outbreak that has killed more than 4,900 people – has been revealed in a report exposing the long-lasting effects of stigma surrounding Ebola.

Speaking to the Daily Maverick's Suzanne Beakes, Etienne Ouamouno said his son Emile had "liked to listen to the radio" and "play with a ball" before he died on 6 December last year. His death was followed by that of his older sister and then his moth – but it was not until March 2014 that the spreading virus came to the attention of the World Health Organisation.

In the space of four months after

Emile's death, his village buried a total of 14 residents. But the agony is not over for those who survived – ostracised by nearby towns and cities, they became trapped in a cycle of isolation and further poverty.

Fassou Isidor Lama, a child protection officer for the charity Unicef, said: "We noticed that with this crisis, which is almost a humanitarian catastrophe, people flee their villages, and abandon their families and their children.

"They reject the infected children and the other infected family members."

Amadou Kamano, the chief of Emile's village, said residents were no longer able to sell their farmed goods in the wider region because "nobody wants to buy our products", and fear led those living at the Ebola epicentre to desperate measures. He said: "People burned everything. Now we are even poorer than we were before."

Charting the transmission of Ebola from Emile's family to the wider region and abroad, epidemiologists identified Guéckédou as lying at a crossroads between Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, giving the disease easy access to these three worst-affected countries.

'Truth has prevailed'

Syeda Salma Mahmud

"We wanted the highest punishment and we got it, but I can't say whether it would be upheld after appeal by the convict," said another prosecution witness Syeda Salma Mahmud, widow of martyr intellectual doctor Azharul Haque.

"I am happy that I could at least witness the trial and the post-1971 generation would be able to know what heinous crimes Nizami and Al-Badr perpetrated," she said.

She noted the deaths of the intellectuals were not only someone's personal loss but a big loss for the nation. "The Pakistanis started the killing, targeting Dhaka University. When they were losing the war, they eliminated the country's intelligentsia."

Salma also spoke of her fear for all the prosecution witnesses. "They [the government] keep on assuring us of giving protection but I have not seen anything effective."

Zahir Uddin Jalal

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Holding a symbolic hangman's knot in his hand, the guerilla fighter popularly known as Bichchu Jalal, said: "He [Nizami] is responsible for the killing of my fellow fighters Bodi, Jewel and others."

He also thanked the government for bringing the war criminals to book.

Nasiruddin Yousuff

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"Nizami is responsible for the death of my fellow freedom fighters Bodi, Jewel, Rumi and Azad. He is also liable for the death of the intellectuals," said the guerilla fighter.

"This verdict has not only done justice but also established historical truths."

Shyamoli Nasreen

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world perpetrators of genocide are given death sentence," said Shyamoli.

"As the Al-Badr leader, Nizami had ordered the killing of my husband [doctor Alim Chowdhury] and other intellectuals. If his [Nizami's] death penalty gets commuted in the appeal [in the Supreme Court], then all our hopes and expectations of getting justice would be shattered."

Mofidul Hoque

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nature of the criminality."

He said that observing the ferocity of these criminal acts committed by Nizami, the tribunal gave him death sentence in four charges, which shows the gravity of the charges and the brutality with which he committed the crimes.

Mofidul noted there was a lot to learn from the judgment as it explained how the convict and the political party he belonged to misused Islam and demeaned its teachings to perpetrate heinous acts.

UN chief visits war-ravaged Somalia

AFP, Mogadishu

UN chief Ban Ki-moon met the president of Somalia, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, under heavy security yesterday in Mogadishu, his first visit to the dangerous capital of the war-torn nation in almost three years.

Ban, along with World Bank chief Jim Yong Kim, met Mohamud inside the fortified airport zone, guarded by troops from the 22,000-strong UN-backed African Union force, Somalia's presidency said in a statement.

They were not expected to travel outside the airport's concrete blast walls, manned by AU machine gunners, into the city itself.

Ban however was dressed in a suit and not the bullet-proof jacket he wore on his last visit to Mogadishu in 2011. At that time, the country was suffering a famine in which over 250,000 people died, half of them children.

Al-Qaeda-affiliated Shebab insurgents have in recent months lost swathes of territory and towns to the AU force and Somali government troops, but they remain a potent threat.

This year they have launched attacks in the heart of Mogadishu, including brazen commando raids on the presidential palace and parliament.

Ban's brief touchdown in Mogadishu follows a visit by UN Security Council ambassadors in August to the city, and comes amid repeated warnings of a humanitarian crisis and a shortfall in funding.

Why acquitted

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the four witnesses adduced hearsay evidence having no probative value to rely upon," the verdict reads.

The tribunal said the involvement of the accused in commissioning those offences appears to be doubtful, and as such the benefit of doubt must be given to the accused.

Another charge against Nizami was committing persecution by destroying the house of Anil Chandra Kundu and many others by setting fire to them in Sonatola village of Pabna.

The prosecution produced only one witness -- Rathindra Nath Kundu, who heard about the incident from his brother-in-law Anil.

The tribunal said that a reasonable doubt arises whether the alleged occurrence took place and whether the accused in any way was involved in commissioning the alleged offence.

Nizami was also charged for his alleged involvement in mass killings in Arpara and Vutergari under Ishwardi Police Station.

"In order to prove the charge, the prosecution did not examine any witness nor it submitted any documentary evidence in support of the prosecution case," the tribunal said.

One of the 16 charges against Nizami was frequently visiting the Rajakar camp at Santhia Pilot High School with Rajakar commander Samad Mia to conspire to commit crimes.

The prosecution examined three hearsay witnesses to prove the charge.

"There is no reliable evidence to prove that [the] accused was involved in making [hatching] conspiracy with his associates at Santhia [Santhia] Pilot School. In view of the fact, we are inclined to hold that the prosecution has failed to prove the instant charge beyond reasonable doubt," the tribunal said in the verdict.

Falu fined

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Services in 2010. He had a deposit of Tk 10.59 crore until June 15, 2011 against his investment of Tk 10.13 crore. He, however, did not withdraw any amount during the period.

The statement says Falu's explanations in favour of his share trading were not accepted by the regulatory probe body.

The stockmarket regulator also fined an investor, Golam Mostafa, Tk 3 crore for manipulative share trading.

BSEC found that Mostafa had created artificial demand for shares of Eastland Insurance Company, Navana CNG, Olympic Industries, Union Capital, LankaBangla Finance and First Lease International through unusual trading.

Gulam Mostafa and his wife Nasima Akter Lata invested Tk 53.97 crore through two accounts -- one single and the other joint -- opened at Prime Bank Investment, a merchant bank, according to the findings of a government probe committee in 2011.

They withdrew Tk 109.77 crore from an account that had a deposit of Tk 7.02 crore after share prices swelled in manipulative share transaction.

Operated like Gestapo

FROM PAGE 1

When the defeat of Pakistani occupation force and collaborator groups was imminent, the Al-Badr mounted "Gestapo-like attacks" to ensure that Bangladesh is devoid of professionals and intellectuals, said the charge against Nizami.

The Gestapo, Germany's secret police during the WWII, was infamous for its operations to hunt out those considered a threat to Nazi Germany, with the ability to rely on a network of informers and enjoying the power to arrest and imprison anyone without trial.

The agency was declared a criminal organisation by the Nuremberg Trial after the war.

Like Gestapo, Al-Badr traced houses of pro-liberation people, especially intellectuals of different professions, and dragged them out. Often blindfolded, the victims were then taken away only to be tortured and murdered with extreme brutality.

"Their bodies were dumped in mass graves and other places. Such attacks were largely carried out on or around 14th December 1971," said the charge relating to the killing of intellectuals.

The court yesterday mentioned discovering of nine human skulls from the Al-Badr headquarters at Mohammadpur Physical Training Institute in Dhaka and 100/150 gouged human eyes behind the camp on December 17, 1971.

The findings are "envisaged to be vital and material which prove beyond reasonable doubt" that Al-Badr men exterminated many Liberation War supporters, including intellectuals of different professions, brutality at the training institute.

The martyred intellectuals include Alim Chaudhury and Azharul Huq, the doctors who had secretly treated wounded freedom fighters during the war.

Widows of Alim and Azharul narrated in their testimonies before the tribunal how their husbands had been picked up from their houses on Nizami's instruction.

Similar were the stories of other martyred intellectuals, including journalist Serajuddin Hossain, Syed Najmul Haque, ANM Golam Mostafa, Nizam Uddin Ahmed, Selina Parvin, Shahidullah Kaiser, Dhaka University professors Giasuddin Ahmed, Sirajul Haque Khan, Dr Abul Khayer, Dr Faizul Mohiuddin, Rashidul Hasan, Anwar Pasha, Santosh Chandra Bhattacharyya, Munier Chowdhury and Mofazzal Haidar Choudhury, physicians Mohammad Martuza and Fazle Rabbi, and many more.

Testifying before the tribunal, Shyamoli Nasrin Chaudhury, widow of Alim, said her husband was a Language Movement veteran.

After the crackdown on March 25, 1971, many freedom fighters took shelter at Alim's house. He had moved many leaders and freedom fighters to

safe places during the nine-month war. Syed Nazrul Islam, who was the acting president of the Bangladesh government in exile, also took shelter at his Purana Paltan house, she said.

During the war, Alim used to visit some hospitals where he treated injured freedom fighters secretly, said an emotion-choked Shyamoli in her testimony.

"Suddenly in the afternoon of December 15, we saw a microbus smeared with mud parked outside the house of Mannan [one of the perpetrators of Alim's abduction] house. We went inside. After around 35 minutes, we saw three armed Al-Badr members knocking on our doors," Shyamoli said.

When Alim asked why they came, they said, "You will learn once you come with us. We have got directive from our high command Motiur Rahman Nizami."

The Al-Badr men blindfolded and took him in the vehicle. His body was found beside another martyred intellectual Dr Fazle Rabbi at Rayerbazar killing field on December 18, 1971.

Azharul, a doctor of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, practised at Sayda Pharmacy at Hatirpool where he secretly provided treatment to freedom fighters.

On November 15, 1971, Azharul was getting ready at his house on Free School Street in Hatirpool to go to the hospital when the Pakistani soldiers and their local collaborators cordoned off nearby streets.

Azhar decided to go to the hospital on an ambulance but could not make it. They caught him in front of his house along with Humayun, also a doctor who lived next door. Azhar's wife Syeda Salma Mahmud asked them to identify themselves.

"We are here to take Azhar with us on the instructions of Al-Badr leader Motiur Rahman Nizami," said one of the Al-Badr members.

The following day, two physicians of Dhaka Medical College Hospital came to her house and said the bodies of Humayun and Azhar were at the hospital morgue. The bodies were found on a culvert near Notre Dame College.

The tribunal yesterday said it is proved beyond reasonable doubt that the accused was a top leader of Al-Badr Bahini who killed numerous intellectuals and professionals including Abdul Alim Chaudhury, Azharul Haque and Humayun Kabir at the age end of the Liberation War.

"The accused was aware of the consequence of his act and conduct that substantially encouraged, endorsed, approved, provided moral support to the Al-Badr men in committing the killing of intellectuals and professionals."

After the verdict, Shyamoli, also an eminent educationist, told The Daily Star, "The judgment met our expectation. We are happy with the verdict."

Indian probe agency

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manufacturing improvised explosive devices (IEDs). One person, Abdul Hakim alias Hassan, was injured and arrested besides three others, including two women.

Informing that the visit is necessary, official sources yesterday said NIA has come across information about JMB's activities across India and their links in the neighbouring country.

Earlier India sought details on two JMB militants, Asif Adnan, 26, and Fazle Elahi Tanjil, 24, recently arrested in Dhaka's Segunbagicha.

Their interrogation may lead to the seizure of 120 IEDs transported to Bangladesh in four consignments from India, as per information gleaned from all of the 10 persons arrested following the blast, Indian intelligence sources said.

The two main suspects, Sheikh Kausar and Yusuf, who are on the run, are Bangladeshi nationals with wide contacts in that country, said the sources.

India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval visited Burdwan two days ago and conveyed to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee about a deep-rooted conspiracy being hatched from her state targeting Bangladesh.

Official sources said India would hand over to the Bangladesh government a dossier on ways to counter the threat posed by JMB to installations and personalities in Bangladesh.

Hackers breach White House computer system

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE

Hackers have recently breached the White House's unclassified computer network.

The White House says it has taken steps to address suspicious activity detected on its network. No details were released on who may have been responsible or when the activity occurred.

An official said "activity of concern"

was detected while assessing numerous possible cyberthreats that the Executive Office of the President is made aware of daily.

The situation was dealt with immediately and work continues, although the new measures have led to temporary shut-downs of the network and loss of connectivity for some White House employees, the official said.

Reasons for long delay

FROM PAGE 1

December 12 last year after the Appellate Division had disposed of this case, Nizami's case faced a long delay.

The case took around 29 months, the longest from indictment to the verdict, due to changes of prosecutors, alleged delaying tactic by the defence, the Chittagong arms haul case in which Nizami is an accused, reconstitution of the Tribunal-1, and the convict's "illness" on the day scheduled earlier for verdict.

The verdict came 11 months after the trial ended.

Tribunal-1 Chairman Justice M Enayetur Rahim said everybody was waiting for the verdict for a long time and so was the tribunal.

Questions were raised by different quarters and the media for the long delay, he said.

"As a judge, there is no scope to take these [remarks] into cognisance or make any response. And it should not be proper to respond to the remarks."

"We would like to say one thing: no-one should be condemned unheard for the sake of justice and the rule of law," he added.

Justice Enayetur added: "We cannot go to streets or take part in talk shows. We cannot give speeches or issue statements. Please remember these before making any comment on the court or judges."

Nizami's was among the four cases whose investigation began in July 2010, soon after the war crimes tribunal was set up. Through yesterday's verdict, the Tribunal-1 has disposed of all the four.

Nizami's trial was bogged down mainly because of his being an accused in the sensational 10-truck arms haul case of 2004. In this case, he had to appear before a Chittagong court almost every

month.

The tribunal overcame this barrier with an order that Nizami need not be produced in the Chittagong court (which also sentenced him to death this year) if proceedings of the two cases coincided.

Besides, change of the conducting prosecutor twice, poor preparatory work by the prosecution, their failure to produce witnesses, an array of time petitions from the defence and absence of senior counsels on scheduled dates also caused delays.

Altab Uddin Ahmed, conducting prosecutor of the case, was replaced by Mir Iqbal Hossain last year. Iqbal was replaced by Mohammad Ali on May 12 after a prosecution witness turned hostile.

Progress in the case had stalled for a couple of weeks in December 2012 in the wake of the "Skype scandal". The defence had filed petitions for a retrial, but it was rejected on January 3, 2013.

Against the backdrop of continuous failure of the defence to appear before the court, the tribunal on November 13 last year drew a conclusion to the case. The tribunal, however, gave the defence an opportunity later to place their arguments. The case finally ended on November 20 last year.

Nizami was arrested on June 29, 2010 in a case filed in connection with hurting religious sentiments of the Muslims. He was shown arrested in the war crimes case on August 2 the same year.

Investigators submitted a 411-page probe report on Nizami in October 2011. On December 11 the same year, the prosecution pressed charges against him, Jamaat's Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed and Assistant Secretary General Muhammad Kamaruzzaman.