

# Key man behind forming Al-Badr at Rangpur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Because of his profound belief in united Pakistan, he ended up becoming the chief of Rangpur district unit Al-Badr, notorious auxiliary force of the Pakistani occupation army, during the Liberation War in 1971. He actively took part in mass killing and acts of genocide and several other crimes against humanity.

The man -- ATM Azharul Islam -- went into hiding soon after the independence, but his devotion for Pakistan has never ceased as he never repented for his crimes.

Like many other collaborators, who fought tooth and nail to thwart the birth of Bangladesh, Azhar reappeared after the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on August 15, 1975 and became active in the politics of the Jamaat-e-Islami that opposed the country's independence.

Azhar has, meanwhile, not only become an influential leader of Jamaat but also managed party tickets for several times to contest the national elections. Like in 1971, people of

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Bangladesh, however, gave him the taste of defeat in the polls he contested.

Born on February 28, 1952 at Batason Lohani Para village in Rangpur, he became president of Islami Chhatra Sangha, the then student wing of Jamaat, in Rangpur in 1971 when he was a higher secondary student of Carmichael College, according to the prosecution.

As a Jamaat supporter and student leader, he campaigned for party candidates Mokhlesur Rahman and Mir Afzal Hossain who contested from Badarganj of Rangpur in the national and provincial elections in 1970.

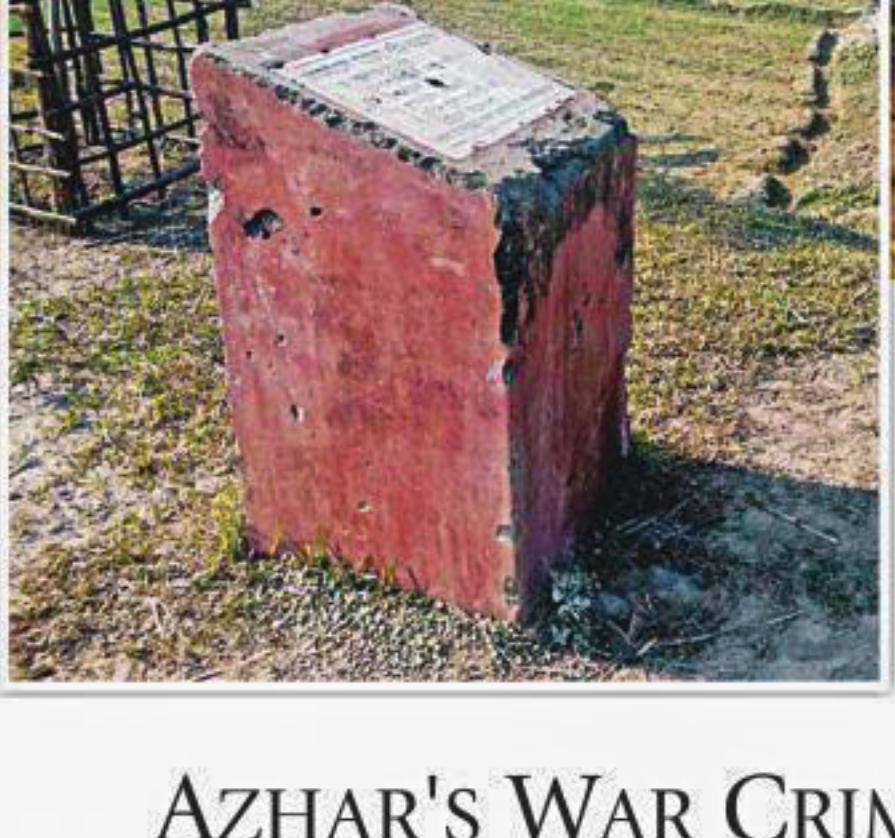
According to the prosecution, the war crimes convict organised Jamaat's activists and local Biharis against the pro-liberation force.

He provided the Pakistani occupation army with information of the freedom fighters, local Awami League leaders, intellectuals and Hindus. He also helped the army in detaining, torturing and killing civilian Bangalees. A newspaper report of Jamaat's mouthpiece Daily Sangram shows how much he opposed the birth



Poorly maintained tablet and plaque mark the places at Damdama of Rangpur where four Hindu teachers of Carmichael College and the wife of one of them were killed after the Pakistan army accompanied by Jamaat leader ATM Azhar picked them up from their homes during the Liberation War.

PHOTO: STAR



## Let them be in the textbooks

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delivering the verdict in the case against Jamaat leader ATM Azharul Islam.

Expressing dismay, the tribunal said rehabilitation of the war heroines stopped after the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975, and the subsequent military rulers rather rehabilitated the local collaborators of the Pakistan army.

The three-member tribunal led by Justice M Enayetur Rahim came up with the observations while adjudicating a prosecution plea for compensating a victim of sexual violence.

Justice Rahim said there was no provision either in the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973 or the Penal Code of Bangladesh that allowed the tribunal to issue an order on such victims' compensation.

The tribunal could not make an order against Azharul Islam for reparations to the first prosecution witness, a victim of sexual violence, he added.

"But we feel that all the victims, including the first prosecution wit-

ness, of sexual violence committed during the Liberation War in 1971 should be adequately compensated and rehabilitated by the state itself without further delay because they are the Biranganas [War Heroines] as declared and honoured by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman," the tribunal chairman said.

The government should take necessary measures to include in the curriculum of both school and college levels their sacrifices and painful experiences."

He said it should be done so the new generations could learn about the sacrifices of the Biranganas and the barbaric atrocities, including sexual violence, committed by the Pakistan army and their local collaborators -- members of Razakar, Al-Badr, Al-Shams and the Peace Committee.

"It is also the moral obligation of the nation to come forward to accept, recognise and honour the Biranganas in the society. They are the pride of the whole nation, like the freedom fighters and martyrs."

Justice Rahim further said Bangabandhu had taken measures to compensate and rehabilitate the war heroines and it continued till 1975.

"Surprisingly, it discontinued after his assassination in 1975 and the process of rehabilitation, both socially and politically, of the collaborators of the Pakistani junta started in the country by military rulers," the court said.

After the political changeover in 1975, many collaborators, who had vehemently opposed the birth of Bangladesh, were rehabilitated and they went on to serve a country they had never believed in. Well-known collaborators were entrusted with state power during the military rules of Ziaur Rahman and HM Ershad.

Ghulam Azam, who was considered the symbol of war crimes, was allowed to come and live in Bangladesh. Shah Azizur Rahman, who was sent to the UN for opposing the cause of the Bangalees, was made prime minister, while anti-liberation elements like Abdul Alim and Maulana Mannan were made ministers.

The Collaborator Act, 1972, under which trial of around 11,000 alleged collaborators was going on, was repealed on December 31, 1975.

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 in its verdict also in the case against Syed Mohammad Qaisar on December 23 said they were not empowered to order the accused to compensate the victims and observed that the government should compensate them.

Prosecutor Tureen Afroz, who argued for compensating Biranganas, told The Daily Star that the ICT Act should be amended to incorporate necessary provisions so that the tribunal could order the accused to compensate the victims. "I think lawmakers should consider it immediately."

Tureen thanked the husband of the victim for his support to his wife and for testifying against Azhar.

According to historical documents, 200,000 to 400,000 women and girls were raped by the Pakistani occupation army and their local collaborators in 1971.

## AZHAR'S WAR CRIMES

# Pregnant woman got no mercy

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN and HAFIZ HASAN, RANGPUR

She was six months pregnant and begged for mercy from the Pakistan army and war crimes convict ATM Azharul Islam.

But her pleas fell on deaf ears and three army men gang raped her at her neighbour's house until she lost all consciousness around noon on a day between August and September, 1971.

Azharul and the army men also looted valuables of her house and Tk 1,600, which her husband had left her for food and maintenance before he left for training in India to join the Liberation War.

That is not where the nightmare ended though, the monstrous men then forcibly took the pregnant housewife to Rangpur Town Hall where she was raped for 18 more days resulting in the miscarriage of the child she was carrying.

"The horror still haunts her," the victim's husband, a freedom fighter, told The Daily Star over the telephone yesterday. "She still suffers from cervical complications caused by the inhumane physical torture she was subjected to in the Town Hall."

The couple now lives a life of limited means. "If my house was not looted, if all that money [not a meagre amount in 1971] was not taken, perhaps things would be different," he said.

The freedom fighter who earned a livelihood by pulling a rickshaw until recently, is now old and cannot work. His wife has had two eye operations recently. His elder son is a labourer while the younger son is a rickshaw puller.

"I'm happy with this verdict though I will not get back what I had lost," he said.

The victim, who testified as the first

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This year's results, published simultaneously, show 12 lakh boys and 14.27 lakh girls passed the examinations in all six subjects, held between November 23 and November 30.

Students learnt about their results from their own institutions, online and through mobile phone SMS service soon after the press conference.

The results also showed a fall in other indicators. The number of failed pupils rose to 55 thousands from 35 thousands and the number of schools with the cent percent pass rate came down to 72,057 from 73,600. No student from 134 schools passed this year whereas the number of such institutions was 46 last year.

Girls are slightly ahead of boys in terms of success rate, which are 97.97 and 97.88.

They also outshone boys in achieving the highest score with some 1.20 lakh girls and 1.03 lakh boys securing GPA-5.

Ministry officials say that though there is a slight fall in the overall results, students have done well in English and mathematics.

This year, 98.89 percent of the examinees passed in English while the

pass rate in mathematics is 98.21 percent.

Monipur High School in the capital occupied for the fourth time the top position among 20 best schools across the country. National Ideal School and Milestone Preparatory KG School remained in the second and third positions for the last two years.

Like the previous year, Barisal has been ranked first among seven divisions, with 98.71 percent success rate. Sylhet is at the bottom of the list with 94.95 percent pass rate.

A total of 3,563 children with special needs took the exams and over 95 percent of them succeeded.

URBAN SCHOOLS FARED BETTER

Like previous years, the same renowned schools in the urban areas, especially in Dhaka, came up on the chart of the best schools.

Seventeen of the top 20 schools -- in terms of the number of registered students, GPA-5 holders and pass rate -- are from Dhaka city. The three others are from Chittagong, Comilla and Khulna.

Urban students do better because they have more access to private tu-

ition and go through extensive classroom activities, teachers say.

A huge number of rural schools lack infrastructure and efficient and trained teachers, which is why their students do not do well in the terminal exams, said the head teacher of a school in Dhaka.

Besides, guardians in the urban areas are more conscious and spend more on their children's education.

STATE-RUN SCHOOLS LAG BEHIND

Schools affiliated with Primary Training Institute saw more than 99.84 percent of their students pass the exams this year while the success rate of government primary schools that have adequate infrastructure and other facilities is 98.30 percent.

Asked why the government schools are lagging behind, the minister said the authorities would look into the matter.

Sources, however, said the government did not have a proper mechanism to monitor the state-run schools. Besides the schools have teachers' crisis contributing to their poor performance.

hartals enforced by Jamaat-e-Islami.

As in previous years, the highest 97.92 percent examinees passed from Barisal Board. Chittagong Board is at the bottom among the eight boards with 84.29 percent pass rate while Dhaka was the seventh with 85.36 percent pass rate.

In Dhaka board, Rajuk Uttara Model High School and College topped the list of 20 best institutions followed by Vigarunnisa Noon School and Motijheel Ideal School and College.

Like in the past few years, city schools fared better than the rural ones.

In Dhaka Board, only seven institutions from outside the city made it in the top 20 institutions.

Asked about the trend, the education

minister said, "Things are changing. Now many schools from outside the capital are coming up, which did not happen earlier."

Asked whether the government will abolish the JSC exams if the primary education is extended up to class-VIII, Nahid said they had no plan to do so anytime soon.

"There are still some jobs that require at least a class-VIII degree. If the students can pass this exam, they will get a certificate which will boost their confidence," Nahid said, adding that enriching the quality of education still remains a big challenge.

He also announced to increase the number of scholarship recipients in all terminal examinations in future.

## JSC RESULTS COMPARISON

Board	Pass Rate 2014	Pass Rate 2013	GPA-5 2014	GPA-5 2013
Dhaka	85.36	87.93	46188	55223
Rajshahi	95.32	93.88	23606	20523
Comilla	93.75	90.45	17264	16095
Jessore	91.96	89.03	10685	14704
Chittagong	84.29	86.13	10487	14105
Barisal	97.92	96.60	10285	10763
Sylhet	91.57	91.15	4010	5748
Dinajpur	90.10	88.91	14420	15836
<b>Total</b>	<b>89.85</b>	<b>89.71</b>	<b>136945</b>	<b>152997</b>

## PRIMARY RESULTS COMPARISON

Division	Pass Rate 2014	Pass Rate 2013	GPA-5 2014	GPA-5 2013
Dhaka	98.28	98.70	99485	105646
Rajshahi	98.04	98.58	26705	26663
Khulna	97.95	99.00	19964	23594
Chittagong	98.19	98.79	38368	38441
Barisal	98.71	99.25	7790	11759
Sylhet	94.95	96.54	5842	6196
Rangpur	97.74	98.38	26257	28662
<b>Total</b>	<b>97.92</b>	<b>98.58</b>	<b>224411</b>	<b>240961</b>

## Delight for JSC students

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guardians said the number of GPA-5 achievers could go higher if the students could adopt the creative method in Mathematics.

"The government introduced creative system in maths this year without giving the students enough time to get used to it. So students could not adopt the method. We have seen many students failing in their class tests," said a teacher of a city school.

They also blamed this on the lack of teachers for the newly introduced subjects -- Physical Education and Health, and Art and Crafts.

In many schools, there's no teacher for any of these subjects, they alleged.

The schools had to make do

with whatever available to impart lessons on these subjects," said a parent.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid also admitted this partially, saying the problem would be addressed soon.

"We could not do many things due to financial constraints. We need many teachers but we could not appoint them. We need to increase the teachers' salaries as well," he told reporters while announcing the