

Heartless, hateful against Hindus

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massacred in the 10-and-a-half-hours raid.

They killed widely respected philanthropist Natun Chandra Sinha when he was offering morning prayers. They abducted Sheikh Mozaffar Ahmed, founder of the Awami League in Chittagong, and his son Sheikh Alamgir from road and killed them in a Pak army camp.

Forty-four years later, justice finally caught up with the self-declared brigadier of Chittagong as he walked the gallows early today.

He was executed three days after the Supreme Court dismissed his petition to review his death sentences, handed down by a special tribunal in 2013.

Narrating Salauddin's brutality in its judgment on July 29, the SC said: "Accused Salauddin Quader Chowdhury has committed crimes with highest ruthlessness and extreme atrocity. He persecuted civilian and unarmed people, tortured them to death, caused disappearance of innocent people and helped in disappearing people in collaboration with the occupier Pakistani Army."

The accused also rampantly looted and assisted in plundering people's property, it said in the judgment written in English.

"The offences were not the one envisaged in the penal laws of any country, the accused in committing those crimes in the synchronised plan and design that were developed and

put into execution with cool blood.

"Salauddin Quader Chowdhury persecuted, killed and caused disappearance of civilian people solely on religious and political grounds. He had direct involvement in the killing of innocent people."

"The prosecution has been able to establish clearly that he had thoroughly designed plan and common objectives to commit those crimes, especially he had done all these brutal offences with specific intention to exterminate the Hindu religious community and his political opponents from that locality," added the SC bench headed by Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha.

Investigators and witnesses said Salauddin carried out all those atrocities largely because of the high-voltage 1970 general election in which his father Fazlul Quader Chowdhury, a top politician of the then East Pakistan, lost his Raigan constituency to Awami League candidate.

They blamed the defeat on the Hindu community.

Also, his family's conviction for Pakistan's unity drove them to join hands with the Pak army to execute the latter's plan to annihilate the Hindu population or to forcefully convert them to Islam or drive them from the country, according to the prosecution.

On April 13, 1971, Salauddin along with his accomplices and the Pak army raided five villages -- Maddhya Gohira Hindupara, Gohira, Jagotmallopura, Sultanpur Banikpara and

Unasattarpura -- with the intent to destroy the Hindu community in whole or in part.

All these villages were located around Gohira Chowdhurypara, Salauddin's ancestral home.

The attacks took place between 6:30am and 5:00pm.

Salauddin's men called the people out of their homes on the pretext of holding a meeting and assembled them in a place. They then lined the people up before the Pakistani army opened fire.

Once done with killing people, they also looted and torched homes and destroyed the neighbourhoods.

The terror of the raids forced thousands of survivors of the villages to flee to India as refugees.

The marauders, guided by Salauddin, first attacked Maddhya Gohira Hindupara around 6:30am and killed five of a Hindu family, including a woman.

They then went to the house of Natun Chandra in Gohira village between 9:30am and 10:00am. The army men stormed the house and found septuagenarian Natun, owner of herbal medicine manufacturer Kundeshwari Owshadhaloy, offering his morning prayers at a temple inside the compound.

They had a brief conversation with him and left. Natun resumed his prayers.

But Salauddin and the Pak soldiers returned there in a while. They dragged

Natun out of the temple.

He cried out in protest but in vain.

"I have an order from my father to kill you," shouted Salauddin, whose father Fazlul Quader was the chief of Convention Muslim League that actively opposed the Bangladeshi struggle for independence.

The soldiers then opened fire on Natun. But he was not dead yet.

As Natun was groaning in excruciating pain, Salauddin shot him two to three times to make sure his death.

The raid on Jagotmallopura village began between 10:30am and 11:00am. Thirty-two villagers were massacred and their houses torched.

Salauddin, his men and Pak soldiers swooped on Sultanpur Banikpara around 1:00pm. They looted and destroyed houses there.

The last place Salauddin and his gang attacked was Unasattarpura. They reached the village between 4:00pm and 5:00pm and killed 70 people there.

On April 17, 1971, Salauddin with some Pakistan army personnel stopped the car of Sheikh Mozaffar Ahmed when he along with his family was returning from Raigan to his home in Rahamatganj.

They picked up the AL leader and his son from there.

Later, the family members came to know that the two were taken to a nearby army camp and killed.

The family did not even get the bodies back for burial despite repeated requests.

Ahmed, Prof Anwar Pasha, and Prof Santosh Chandra Bhattacharyya; journalists Serajuddin Hossain, Syed Najmul Haque, ANM Golam Mostafa, Nizam Uddin Ahmed, Selina Pervin, Shahidullah Kaiser, and physicians Fazle Rabbee and Alim Chaudhury.

The bodies of scores of victims were recovered from the killing fields while those of many others could not be traced.

Just two hours before Pakistan army's surrender on December 16, Mojaheed gave a speech at the Al-Badr headquarters, terming the day painful and the surrender a tragedy.

He urged Al-Badr members to spread out without being "ashamed" of their deeds, according to a book titled "Al-Badr" by Selim Mansur Khalid. The prosecution used this book as evidence.

Every year, the nation observes December 14 as Martyred Intellectual Day with the victims' family members and relatives voicing demand for trial and punishment for the perpetrators.

In its order, the apex court touched on the long, agonising wait of the bereaved family members for justice.

"While awarding the sentence, the court must take into consideration the unbearable pains, tears rolling down the cheeks and sufferings of the widows and children of the victims who cried for getting justice for about 43 years," it said.

Goods Hill residence, according to Saleh Uddin's testimony before a tribunal.

After independence, Mojaheed and Salauddin succeeded to dodge arrest.

Following the murder of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Rahman and a bloody political changeover in August 1975, the two started to re-emerge in politics.

Mojaheed became Jamaat's secretary general on December 8, 2000, and social welfare minister of the BNP-led four-party government in 2001. He served as a technocrat minister until 2006.

Having survived an attack by the freedom fighters, he fled to Pakistan in September 1971 and from there he later went to London. He returned to Bangladesh in 1974 but remained in hiding until the assassination of Bangabandhu.

In the 80s, he became a minister under Ershad's military regime. He was elected lawmaker several times.

During the BNP-led four-party rule from 2001 to 2006, Salauddin, a standing committee member of the party, was the parliamentary affairs adviser of the then prime minister Khaleda Zia and enjoyed the status of a minister.

After 44 long years, justice finally caught up with these two arrogant and powerful men at 12:55pm today.

ted pleas for presidential clemency through the magistrates."

On the other hand, Salauddin's son Humman Quader Chowdhury said his father did not seek presidential clemency.

"We have asked him whether he had sought presidential clemency. He wanted to know who are talking such rubbish," said Humman after meeting his father. "My father didn't seek presidential clemency."

After meeting Mojaheed, his son Ali Ahmed Mabruj said his father told them that he did not seek the clemency.

Several other outgoing passengers were seen facing the same difficulties on their way to the airport.

Brussels on lockdown over terror threat

Metro closed, alert raised to highest level fearing Paris-style attack

AFP, Brussels

In grieving Paris, citizens defiantly poured into the streets and on to cafe terraces Friday night to mark one week since the carnage, with a noisy minute of non-silence as urged by several artists in the country.

The country has been shaken to its core by a dramatic week which began with the attacks and saw a violent shootout on Wednesday between police and jihadis holed up in a Paris apartment.

Suspected attack ringleader Abdelhamid Abaaoud was killed in the police assault along with his cousin Hasna Aitboulaheen and an unidentified suicide bomber.

Police on Saturday released seven people arrested during the siege, but kept hold of d Jawad Bendaoud, who has admitted lending the apartment to two people from Belgium "as a favour".

Abaoud was a notorious Belgian jihadist thought to be fighting in Syria and his presence in Europe raised troubling questions about a breakdown in intelligence and border security.

The European Union agreed Friday to rush through reforms to the passport-free Schengen zone by the end of the year and immediately tighten border controls.

Prosecutors said Friday that two of the three men who blew themselves up near the Stade de France stadium -- the first of the wave of attacks -- may have entered Europe through Greece, posing as refugees fleeing the Syrian war.

Seven attackers were killed or blew themselves up during their assault on Paris.

Another, Salah Abdeslam, is believed to have fled to Belgium and a huge manhunt is under way to find him. His brother Brahim blew himself up outside a Paris bar.

Both grew up in the poor Molenbeek district of Brussels, described as an extremist hotbed, before going to join the Islamic State group in Syria.

Belgium's OCAM national crisis centre raised its alert level to 4 early Saturday, "signifying a very serious threat for the Brussels region".

The centre urged citizens to avoid crowded areas such as concerts and transport hubs in Belgium's capital and recommended that authorities in the Brussels region "consider cancelling major events" in order to free up police.

In their final hours

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They then had a simple meal -- rice, vegetable, chicken and pulse -- provided by the jail authorities around 9:00pm, said prison sources.

Later, Dhaka Civil Surgeon Abdul Malek Mridha checked their health.

Moulana Monir Hossain, imam of Dhaka Central Jail Mosque, first administered tawba (pardon) to Salauddin and then to Mojaheed.

The hangmen handcuffed the two and put nooses around their necks at the condemned cells.

Around 12:50am, Salauddin and Mojaheed were brought to the gallows from their cells.

It took them a few minutes to reach the gallows where 12 armed prison guards had already taken position.

A hangman was waiting there for the jail super's nod to pull the levers to the scaffolds.

As the clock struck 12:55am, Senior Jail Super Jahangir Kabir gave the nod by dropping a handkerchief from his hand. The hangman immediately pulled the levers.

After meeting his father, Humman Quader Chowdhury, eldest son of Salauddin, said, "My father's last words were that he would be killed because he had remained undefeated in elections."

Later, at least 20 members of Mojaheed's family entered the jail around 11:00pm.

Mojaheed's brother Ali Afzal Mohammad Khalej said his brother sought blessings from the countrymen.

Khaleda back home

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Water canons, riot cars and fire brigade vehicles were deployed at different points of entrance to the airport. Joint forces of Rab, Armed Police Battalion, police and Ansar were seen deployed at different intersections from the airport to Banani.

Commuters, especially elderly people and children, faced untold sufferings as transport communications were snapped on the airport road stretching from the Airport Intersection to Hotel Radisson for at least one and a half hours since 5:37pm.

Public vehicles were seen stranded on the road for hours since Khaleda came out of the airport to go to her residence at Gulshan-2 at 5:37pm forcing many to go to their destinations on foot.

The law-enforcement agencies forced outgoing passengers to leave CNGs and other hired vehicles at the Airport Intersection although many were carrying heavy luggage.

"I have three pieces of big luggage in addition to other small bags. How will I take those to the terminal alone?" Md Selim, an Oman-bound expatriate, told The Daily Star after being forced to leave his vehicle by the law enforcers.

Several other outgoing passengers were seen facing the same difficulties on their way to the airport.

With around 50 motorcycles in front of her motorcade, Khaleda reached her residence around 7:25pm.

Police were seen taking video footage of Khaleda's motorcade until she entered her residence. Asked, a police official told The Daily Star that they had instruction from the higher authorities.

After reaching her residence, Khaleda did not talk to the media.

Earlier in the day, BNP sought necessary security from the police for the party chief.

The party also sent copies of a letter to the Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner, the deputy police commissioner of Uttara and the officer-in-charge of Airport police seeking adequate security measures for Khaleda, says a press release.

The release adds the party sought the police security as it is worried about her safety.

Khaleda left Heathrow Airport for Bangladesh in an Emirates flight at 10:30pm [local time] on Friday.

She reached London on September 16 on a personal tour for her eye treatment and celebrating the Eid-ul-Azha there with her family members.

Though initially it was a two-week tour, she delayed her return at least eight times, triggering various speculations at home and abroad.

Arrogance, their middle name

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national elections, he said, "The constitution does not support the demand. Besides, there are no war criminals in Bangladesh."

He added, "It is the imaginary and self-created bizarre idea of those talking about war crimes ... there are no anti-liberation forces in Bangladesh."

Asked about his party's role in 1971 Liberation War, he said, "These accusations are all false and ill-motivated."

The Jamaat leader was arrested in June 2010.

In 1971, Mojaheed and Salauddin led their armed gangs and abetted Pakistan occupation forces in massacre of peace-loving and freedom-seeking Bangalees during the war.

Salauddin's father Fazlul Quader Chowdhury was the president of Convention Muslim League while Mojaheed's father Maulana Abdul Ali was the ameer of Faridpur Jamaat-e-Islami during the Liberation War.

Both Jamaat and Muslim League stood against the Liberation War.

Abdul Ali, a member of Pakistan provincial assembly in 1962-64, was one of the top leaders of Shanti Committee, an anti-liberation organisation, in Faridpur.

Fazlul Quader, witnesses said, formed auxiliary force Al-Shams in Chittagong in 1971.

Their sons followed in their footsteps.

Mojaheed was the central president

Govt, family versions contradict

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The mercy petitions reached his desk around 2:30pm, the minister told this newspaper at 4:55pm.

He said the petitions, labelled "Appeal for mercy" on top, were then sent to the Prime Minister's Office to be forwarded to the president.

In the meantime, families of both the war criminals held separate press conferences.

At one press conference, held at Supreme Court Bar Association auditorium around noon, Mojaheed's family members indirectly requested the president to halt the execution until the end of the trial.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, too, said both Mojaheed and Salauddin in the presence of two magistrates conveyed their decision to seek mercy.

Mojaheed was the central president

of Jamaat's erstwhile student wing Islami Chhatra Sangha.