The nightmare named Nizami

FROM PAGE 1 The villagers were taken beside a large ditch and shot dead.

The nightmare was not over yet. The occupation forces and their collaborators raped about 30-40 women of the three neighbouring villages, forcing many to

Nizami, president of Jamaat's the then student wing Islami Chhatra Sangha and ex-officio chief of notorious killing squad Al-Badr, was behind the pre-planned massacre.

But why Nizami and his men targeted the villages of the very upazila where his own village, Monmothpur, was located?

The reason is quite clear. The three villages were Hindu-dominated and the villagers used to sheltered freedom fighters, according to Abdur Razzak Khan, investigation officer of Nizami's

Ainul Haque, a teacher at Bausgari Ruposhi Primary School in 1971, said the headmaster of the school on May 10 told him that Nizami and his men had come to form "Peace Committee".

"The headmaster introduced Nizami

to me. I recognised another person, Dalal Asad, among them," he said in his testimony before International Crimes Tribunal-1. Talking to this newspaper, investigator

Razzak said Nizami's assurance that Pakistani soldiers were arriving for securing peace was nothing but a trick to saw Nizami, Asad, Quader and Sattar stop villagers from leaving. Razzak had investigated cases against

Jamaat leaders Abdul Quader Mollah, shooting indiscriminately," he said. Muhammed Kamaruzzaman and Ali committed against humanity during the Liberation War, 1971.

freedom fighter from Santhia upazila, said, "In the morning of May 14 [1971], the Pakistani army and local Razakar and ..." Al-Badr men raided Rupshi, Demra, Bausgari villages under the leadership of

Nizami and shot 450 people dead." They torched and torched 200-300 houses, mainly of the Hindus, and raped women, he added.

Johurul Haque, a freedom fighter of masterminding intellectual murders. Bausgari village, also described the day of the massacre.

The memorial in Bausgari of Pabna to more than 400 people, brutally killed by the Pakistan army and the Nizami-led Al Badr in 1971. The mass grave, inset, in Dhulauri village where 52 people were martyred. On May 14, 1971, he had woken up by the sound of gunshots at dawn. "I came

out from my house. Hiding in a bush, I along with the Pakistani army and collaborators advancing to the village,

"The Pakistani army, instructed by Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed. The trio Nizami, indiscriminately fired at a crowd were already executed for crimes and killed them," Johurul told the court.

About the atrocities, the tribunal in its October 2014 verdict said it was a In his testimony, Jamal Uddin, a "conspiracy" hatched by Nizami to commit atrocities in those villages. "The accused [Nizami] had direct complicity

> Apart from the three villages, Dhulauri was another target of Nizami and his men.

> The Supreme Court yesterday upheld the death penalty to Nizami for killing civilians of the four villages and

Nizami would be the second man after his party colleague, Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, who succeeded him as the Al-Badr chief in the latter part of the war, to walk gallows unless he is spared death following an SC review or granted presidential clemency.

DHULAURI MASSACRE

Around 3:30am on November 27, Nizami, his men and members of Pakistani military forces raided the house of village doctor Abdul Awal and other adjacent houses in the village on the pretext of finding out freedom fighters.

Around 6:30am, the high-command of Al-Badr along with his men and members of Pakistani military got hold of many men, women and children.

The villagers were brought to Dhulauri School field and shot indiscriminately. Some 30 unarmed persons lost their lives.

As the Pakistan military left, Nizami and his accomplices caught 22 other people who survived gunshots of the army. These villagers were taken to the bank of river Ichhamati and bayoneted to death.

Shahjahan Ali, a prosecution witness from the village, testified how local Razakars (collaborators) attempted to kill him by slitting his throat in presence of Motiur Rahman Nizami.

"Eight freedom fighters were caught. I was beaten brutally. As per Motiur Rahman Nizami's instruction, Sattar Razakar took four of us on the bank of the river," said Shahjahan.

"Nizami was present there. They cut my throat with a knife," the witness said, adding that he could not remember anything else.

About the Dhulauri massacre, the tribunal said, "... the accused, prior to committing the offence, had a common plan and purpose to apprehend valiant and brave guerrilla fighters to vanish them for ever so that they could not liberate the country."

Expressing satisfaction, Abdul Awal's son Liakot Ali said, "As the members of a martyred family, I'm happy with the verdict on Nizami, who was the master-

Victim families call for quick execution

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

For more than 44 years, Abdur Rouf Montu has been waiting for justice.

His father had been brutally killed in the Dhulauri massacre in Santhia upazila of Pabna by the ruthless militia of Motiur Rahman Nizami on the night of November 27, 1971.

Yesterday, he expressed satisfaction over the Supreme Court judgment upholding the death sentence of Nizami, now the Jamaat-e-Islami chief, for crimes against humanity during the country's Liberation War in 1971.

"Al-Badr and Razakar men along with the Pakistan army cordoned off my house and the whole of Dhulauri village in the dead of night on November 27. My father and I tried to save our lives, but the Razakar Bahini men caught my father and killed him mercilessly," said Montu.

Son of martyred freedom fighter Abul Kashem Fakir, Montu said he managed to escape the massacre by getting into a pond and remaining there the whole night.

Nizami led the Al-Badr, Razakar, and Pakistani troops to carry out the massacre in Dhulauri village. The SC verdict came as a consolation for those whose family members were killed, he

execution of the Supreme Court verdict. Local Awami League men, verdict.

Yesterday, the apex court upheld Nizami's death penalties in three charges for the killings of around 450 people and raping 30 to 40 women in three villages -- Bausgari, Demra and Ruposhi -- of Pabna, killing of 52 people in Dhulauri village, and the killing of intellectuals

The SC awarded him life sentence in two charges and acquitted him of three

other charges. Liakot Ali, son of Abdul Awal who was also killed in the Dhulauri massacre, told The Daily Star, "I'm happy with the verdict of Nizami who orchestrated the massacre."

Like Montu, Liakot also demanded quick execution of the verdict.

Talking to The Daily Star, Jamal Uddin who was a witness to the Dhulauri massacre said the SC judgement proved that Nizami was guilty of the massacre.

"Freedom fighters and family members of the victims are happy with the Supreme Court verdict," he said.

Born in 1943 in Monmothpur village under Santhia upazila, Nizami was the chief of Islami Chhatra Sangha, the then student wing of the Jamaat-e-Islami, until September in 1971. He was also the chief of Al-Badr, a notorious killing squad that massacred the brightest sons of our soil at the fag of the Liberation War.

"Freedom fighters of Santhia are happy with the verdict. Now we want to see the execution of the verdict," said Tofazzal Hossain, a freedom fighter and also a prosecution wit-

PROCESSION HAILING

THE VERDICT

People of Santhia brought out a Montu demanded immediate colourful procession hailing the freedom fighters, and people of all walks of life joined the procession that paraded the main streets of Santhia municipality. They were also seen distributing sweet meats.

Meanwhile, Jamaat men in Santhia, hometown of Nizami, did not stage any demonstration in the area, protesting the SC verdict.

Security was beefed up in Santhia and Pabna ahead of the verdict

Death stays for death designer

FROM PAGE 1

Tribunal-1 gave Nizami death penalty on four charges and life imprisonment on four more charges. He then challenged the verdict at the apex

The SC yesterday upheld his death sentence on three charges and life imprisonment on two charges. It, however, acquitted him of the other three charges.

A four-member SC bench headed by Chief Justice Surendra Kumar 9:07am in a crowded courtroom, said Tight security measures were put in place in and around the court.

Nazmun Ara Sultana, Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Hasan Foez Siddique.

campaigners, the prosecution and general people across the country were happy with the verdict.

and distributed sweetmeats in attorney general. Nizami's birthplace Pabna where he had committed many war crimes.

In his reaction to the SC judgment, freedom fighter Zahir Uddin Jalal, also a prosecution witness in Nizami's case, said, "I am satisfied with the verdict... I urge the government to execute Motiur Rahman Nizami immediately and free the country from stigma.

The Jamaat was unhappy with the verdict, and called a nationwide dawn-to-dusk hartal for today, protesting "the government's conspiracy to kill Motiur Rahman Nizami through false cases against him".

The war crimes convict, who is now in a condemned cell at Kashimpur Jail-2 in Gazipur, was yet to be informed about the SC verdict, Prasanta Kumar Banik, senior superintendent of the prison, told The Daily Star.

Jail sources, however, said Nizami

NEXT STEPS

The process of executing Nizami would start after the release of full text of the SC verdict, said Attorney General Mahbubey Alam.

"The process will be halted if he files a review petition with the apex court. But he must do it within 15 days from the date of the verdict's release," he told The Daily Star.

Upon disposal of the review petition, steps will be taken in line Sinha pronounced the short verdict at with the apex court's decision, he Usually, a review petition is enter-

tained in case of serious factual The other three judges are Justice mistakes in the verdict or wrongful application of the law. Earlier, talking to reporters at his

office, Mahbubey expressed satisfac-Justice seekers, war crimes tion at the verdict, and said it reflected the nation's expectations. "He [Nizami] was responsible for

mass killings and instigating atroci-People brought out processions ties during the 1971 war," said the In his reaction to the SC verdict,

Nizami's principal counsel Khandker Mahbub Hossain said, "As a lawyer, I have to accept the judgment delivered by the judges.

He said if his client asks them to file a petition seeking review of the judgment, they will certainly oblige.

"It cannot be said right now whether he [Nizami] will file a review petition... it entirely depends on my client," added the lawyer.

Nizami, who was also sentenced to death by a Chittagong court in the 10truck arms haul case, was arrested in June 2010 in a case for hurting religious sentiment. He was shown arrested in a war crimes case in August

In the five previous verdicts in war crimes cases, the SC handed down death penalty to Jamaat leader Abdul Quader Mollah, upheld death sentences of Jamaat leaders Muhammad Kamaruzzaman and learnt about the verdict through the Mojaheed, and BNP leader

NIZAMI's WAR CRIMES

TRIBUNAL AND SC PUNISHMENT			
CHARGE	CRIMES	TRIBUNAL	SUPREME COURT
1	Torture and killing of three people in Pabna	Life Sentence	Acquitted
2	Killing of about 450 people in three Pabna villages and rape of 30 to 40 women there	Death	Death
3	Committing different offences inside Mohammadpur Physical Training College in the capital	Life Sentence	Acquitted
4	Killing of 11 people and rape of 4 women in Pabna	Death	Acquitted
6	Killing of 52 people in a Dhulaura in Pabna	Death	Death
7	Killing of Sohrab Ali of Brishalikha in Pabna	Life Sentence	Life Sentence
8	Killing of freedom fighters Rumi, Bodi, Jewel and Azad in Dhaka's MP hostel	Life Sentence	Life Sentence
16	Killing of intellectuals	Doath	Dooth

Salauddin, and commuted capital punishment of Jamaat Nayeb-e-Ameer Delawar Hossain Sayedee to imprisonment till death.

Kamaruzzaman was executed on April 11 last year, Mojaheed and Salauddin on November 22 last year and Quader Mollah on December 12,

Appeals of nine war criminals are now pending with the apex court.

NIZAMI'S ROLE Nizami was president of Jamaat's student wing Islami Chhatra Sangha from 1966 to September 1971. He was also ex-officio chief of Al-Badr that was formed with Chhatra Sangha

Throughout the war, he visited different areas of the country and gave provocative speeches at rallies organ-

ised by Jamaat, Chhatra Sangha, Al-Badr and Razakars.

Death

veatn

He also wrote columns in newspapers. One of those, headlined "Badr Dibas [day]: Pakistan and Al-Badr", was published in daily Sangram on November 14, 1971.

In the write-up, he not only justified the formation of Al-Badr Bahini, but also asked its members to take oath to exterminate the so-called betrayers [pro-liberation Bangalees] of Pakistan and co-operate with the Pakistan army to achieve the goal.

"This single piece of document is enough to hold that accused Motiur Rahman Nizami was not only a High Command of Al-Badr Bahini, he was also a mastermind for forming the said Bahini in 1971, during the Liberation War and he had complicity

Pakistan shows

FROM PAGE 1

"What they did is not understandable to us ... This is not going to help the relations," he told a select group of reporters at his office yesterday afternoon.

"No explanations were given. They could not cite any valid reason," he said, adding that Bangladesh was closely observing the situation.

About Maushumi, the state minister said, "She has done a great job."

Shahriar said Dhaka could "foresee some sort of retaliation" following withdrawal of the Pakistan diplomat.

"We knew that something was being cooked ... We were prepared and that helped us make the quick decision to send her [Maushumi] to a fresh diplomatic assignment ... upholding the country's image."

Maushumi left Pakistan last night and is expected to reach Lisbon this afternoon, foreign ministry sources confirmed.

"She will join in the mission very soon," Imtiaz Ahmed, Bangladesh ambassador to Portugal, told The Daily Star yesterday.

summoned Bangladesh High Commissioner to Pakistan Suhrab Hossain on Tuesday afternoon and asked for Maushumi's withdrawal in 48 hours, without showing any reason.

Dhaka is yet to decide on Maushumi's replacement but will most likely to change the incumbent high commissioner when his contractual appointment expires in April, the state minister confirmed. "We have decided to appoint a new high commissioner there."

Asked if Bangladesh was considering severing or downgrading ties with Pakistan, Shahriar Alam said there is no such plan at the moment, but he did not rule out the possibility.

Dhaka would show patience in maintaining the bilateral ties but no one would be spared if they tried to tarnish the country's image or create trouble in Bangladesh using diplomatic immunity, he said. "We didn't spare anybody in the past either."

Responding to another query, he said there might be a discussion on Bangladesh-Pakistan current relations in parliament.

Diplomatic ties between Dhaka and Islamabad have soured after Bangladesh started executing the war criminals who had actively collaborated with the Pakistan army in the genocide of some three million Bangladeshis and the rape of no less than two lakh women during the 1971 Liberation War.

Pakistan's parliament and a provincial assembly adopted resolutions after executions of the war criminals while senior government ministers and the Pakistan foreign ministry launched a propaganda campaign by distorting the established truths of the

Mojaheed and BNP leader Salauddin moned the Bangladeshi envoy there to

lodge a formal protest on Nov 30.

It was Moushumi Rahman, acting high commissioner in Islamabad back then, who had met the Pakistan authorities.

Bangladesh last year asked Pakistan to take back two of its diplomats stationed in Dhaka for their direct involvement in terror financing and circulating fake Indian currency. Farina Arshad flew back home on

December 23 after the intelligence agencies of Bangladesh uncovered her close connections and financial transactions with some militant groups, including Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh.

On January 31, Pakistan recalled its diplomatic official Mazhar Khan from Dhaka for his alleged links with terror financing and currency forgery rackets. BILATERAL MEETING UNCERTAIN

The annual Foreign Office Consultation (FOC) between Bangladesh and Pakistan has become uncertain due to the ongoing diplomatic tension.

Diplomatic sources said Pakistan Foreign Secretary Aizaz Ahmad The Pakistan foreign ministry Chaudhry was scheduled to visit Dhaka late February to join the FOC with his Bangladesh counterpart Md Shahidul Haque.

The last FOC between the countries was held in Islamabad in 2010.

Foreign ministry officials said Pakistan's recent statement on war crimes trials, summoning of Bangladeshi envoys and finally asking for Maushumi's withdrawal have seriously affected the bilateral ties.

"The Pakistan foreign ministry has made it very difficult for Dhaka to engage with Islamabad," said a highly placed source in the ministry.

Dhaka condemns attacks on Saudi embassy in Tehran

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has condemned the recent attacks on the Saudi embassy in Tehran and its consulate at Mashhad in Iran as such acts are a clear violation of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

A foreign ministry press release yesterday said, "It is the responsibility of the host government to accord necessary protection to the diplomatic and consular missions within its jurisdiction as these are inviolable under the international law."

Bangladesh also called upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to take urgent necessary measures to stop recurrence of such incidents, the release added.

On January 3, Iranian protesters set fire to the Saudi embassy in Tehran during a demonstration against the Following the execution of top execution of Shia Muslim cleric Nimral-Jamaat leader Ali Ahsan Mohammad Nimr by the Saudi authorities. Protesters also attacked the Saudi different international media.

Happy, yet not happy enough After Ghulam Azam quit his party the nation as a whole," reads the tating freedom fighters and victims the then chief of Jamaat's East Pakistan post in 2000, Nizami was elected the

ter (2003-2006).

wing, in forming the Shanti Committee, Jamaat ameer, a post he still holds. Razakar Bahini, Al-Badr, Al-Shams. Nizami was elected a member of 2014. Up to September 1971, Nizami was parliament in 1991 and was the leader of the president of Jamaat's then student Jamaat's parliamentary party from 1991 wing Islami Chhatra Sangha and the exofficio chief of notorious killing squad

Al-Badr. After the war, he became active in politics again during Gen Ziaur Rahman's regime in 1979 and was the ameer of Jamaat's Dhaka city unit and member of its central executive committee from 1978 to 1982. Nizami was also assistant secretary general of Jamaat-e-Islami from 1983 to 1988 and became

its secretary general in December

1988. He remained in the post until

until December 28, 1994. After he was elected a member of parliament again in 2001, he became the agriculture minister

(2001-2003) and the industries minis-

even appalled the court. The tribunal in its judgment termed it said. a slap in the face for the Liberation War,

the independence struggle.

judgment of the International Crimes Tribunal-1 delivered on October 29,

Shahriar Kabir said, "In many cases it is found that they killed only breadwinners of a family. For the last 45 years, members of those families had suffered financially. How these sufferings will be compensated?" After the Liberation War, they amassed

His accession to power and wealth wealth. After 1975, they evicted family members of martyrs from their land, he Germany confiscated the properties

Bangladesh should follow it, Kabir

of the Liberation War. Johurul Haque, a witness in Nizami's

case and the president of the advisory council of Santhia Muktijoddha Sangsad, said, "We're happy and hope he will soon be executed. But we request the government to confiscate the properties of all war criminals and use the money for the rehabilitation of the poor victims." Member of the advisory council of the

Sangsad, Jamaluddin made the same Talking to The Daily Star, war crimes | war.

the martyrs, and the women who were of Nazi high commands to compen- trial prosecutor Tureen Afroz said violated and brutally murdered during sate the victims of World War II. reparation could be obtained from war criminals through a separate law or by "This shameful act [appointing said, adding that the government bringing amendments to the Quader Chowdhury, Pakistan sum- consulate in Mashhad, according to Nizami as a minister] was disgraceful for should revive the initiative of rehabili- International Crimes (Tribunals) Act,