



Hasina sentenced to death

ICT also hands down capital punishment to ex-home boss Asaduzzaman Khan for crimes against humanity; ex-IGP Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, who turned a state witness, given 5yrs

SHARIFUL ISLAM and
SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

In its first judgment on crimes against humanity committed during the July uprising, International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday sentenced deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina to death.

The Awami League chief was found guilty of incitement, abetment, inaction, conspiracy, and superior command responsibility that led to the murder and torture of protesters across the country.

The three-judge panel said the five-time premier received imprisonment until natural death for one charge, and death for another charge, including the murder of six protesters in Chankharpul and another six in Ashulia.

The announcement of the death sentence prompted loud celebrations inside the courtroom.

Former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal was also sentenced to death, while former inspector general of police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, who testified as an approver, was given five years in prison.

Mamun, the first accused to become a state witness since the



Sheikh Hasina, Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal and Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun acted jointly ... and committed atrocities in order to kill protesters across the country.

ICT-1 Chairman Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder

tribunal's establishment in 2010, remains in custody and has pleaded guilty.

As the judgment was read out, the former IGP sat in the dock with his head bowed; tears rolled down his face when the chair announced his sentence.

Hasina and Asaduzzaman remain fugitives.

As the death penalty was

pronounced, around 40 family members of martyrs, wounded victims and movement organisers burst into cheers, some crying "Alhamdulillah".

Tears streamed down the face of Zartaj Parveen, mother of July martyr Shafiq Uddin Ahmed Ahnaf, who sat silently in the packed gallery. Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman urged the crowd to

maintain decorum.

Reading portions of the 453-page judgment over two and a half hours, tribunal chief Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder said, "As prime minister, Sheikh Hasina exercised ultimate authority over the law-enforcement chain -- from the home minister to the inspector general of police. Given the pattern of impunity, the ongoing student

protests, and the role of state and ruling party actors in the alleged atrocities, it is evident that she could not have been ignorant of these events."

The court premises and surrounding area were under tight security from early morning. With arson and crude bomb attacks in recent days, security had already been heightened nationwide.

THE CHARGES

CHARGE 1

FIRST COUNT
Incitement

SECOND COUNT

Ordering the killings

THIRD COUNT

Failure to prevent atrocities or take punitive action against perpetrators

PUNISHMENT

Imprisonment until natural death.

CHARGE 2

FIRST COUNT

Crimes against humanity by issuing order to deploy drones, helicopters, and lethal weapons to kill protesters

MORE ON PAGE 2

A courtroom of tears and prayers

Families welcome verdict, unhappy over ex-IGP's 5-yr term

SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

From the early hours, the air inside the courtroom of the International Crimes Tribunal-1 felt thick with anticipation and grief.

In the front rows of the packed chamber sat families of those killed in last year's July uprising, waiting for a verdict they hoped would finally deliver justice.

The emotions were palpable as parents who lost their children prayed quietly, tears slipping down their faces.

Before the delivery of the verdict began, Mir Mustafizur Rahman, father of martyr Mahfuzur Rahman Mughdo, was holding a bottle of water when someone requested some. He softly said, "Of course. My son embraced martyrdom while handing out water to the July protesters."

The words were spoken with both sorrow and pride.

Around 12:30pm, the three-member ICT-1, led by Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder, began reading portions of the 453-page judgement.

After an almost two-and-hour wait, the verdict was finally pronounced: "...For all these three counts we have decided to inflict her [Sheikh Hasina] with only one sentence, that is sentence of death."

The chamber erupted in both applause and tears.

Reacting to the death sentences of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal for crimes against humanity during the July uprising, the victims' families described it as "bringing relief but not healing". They said closure would come only when the punishments are carried out.

Speaking to reporters following the verdict, Mughdo's brother

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Verdict shows no one is above the law: Yunus

India under obligation to return Hasina: govt

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

India under obligation to return Hasina: govt

Chief Adviser

Professor

Muhammad

Yunus yesterday

said sentencing

of ousted prime

minister Sheikh

Hasina and her

associates shows that no one is above the

law, as the government intensified its push

to bring her back from India.

"Today, the courts of Bangladesh have

spoken with a clarity that resonates across

the nation and beyond. The conviction and

sentencing affirm a fundamental principle:

no one, regardless of power, is above the

law," he said in a statement issued by his

press wing yesterday.

His statement came after Dhaka urged

New Delhi to immediately extradite

Hasina, who was sentenced to death in a

crimes against humanity case filed over

last year's uprising, saying it was "an

obligatory responsibility for India".



BNP, Jamaat, NCP hail the verdict

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Major political parties yesterday welcomed the International Crimes Tribunal's decision to sentence ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina to death.

Following the ICT verdict, Jamaat-e-Islami urged India to return Hasina so that she may face her punishment, while BNP leaders said the verdict against Hasina would serve as a warning against future fascism.

Meanwhile, NCP demanded that Hasina's death sentence be carried out within a month and insisted that the Awami League, as a political party, be also brought to trial.

Speaking at a press briefing at the party's central office, Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar said, "We believe there is no scope for anyone to question this trial. It was transparent, impartial and met international standards."

"Those who have provided shelter to a fugitive death-row convict, in our view, have taken a stand in favour of the heinous criminal. We demand that she be returned to Bangladesh."

In a Facebook post, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said, "We believe that today's verdict is not just a judgement on Sheikh Hasina's crimes, but a burial of all forms of dictatorship on this country's soil."

BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed said that the verdict delivers justice and serves as a warning against future dictatorship.

"It sends a message that no one can ever again establish a fascist regime in this country, no one can become a fascist ruler, and dictatorship must never return."

"This is a lesson for the future, not just a judgement for the past, and we must remember that," he told reporters at Dhaka University.

Calling the verdict a "milestone", he said, "Through today's

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

REACTION

Evidence strong, but defence did bare minimum

DAVID BERGMAN

One must distinguish between two separate issues: the evidence presented by the prosecution against deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, and the fairness of the process and procedure of the trial itself.

The evidentiary record points toward Hasina's involvement in crimes against humanity. Substantial evidence demonstrated the existence of a "widespread or systematic attack directed against a civilian population" carried out "pursuant to, or in furtherance of, a State or organisational policy".

In relation to Hasina's own connection to this attack and policy, the prosecution relied on her statements captured in intercepted communications as well as testimony from the former inspector general of police Chowdhury Abdullah

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Protesters try to demolish Mujib's house, clash with cops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcers clashed with demonstrators yesterday in and around Dhanmondi 32 in the capital, as the latter attempted to demolish the remaining parts of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's house with diggers.

Members of army, police, Rab, and BGB guarded the site and used truncheons, sound grenades, and teargas shells to disperse the agitating people.

"Several sound grenades were used to disperse the demonstrators," said Masud Alam, deputy commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Ramna division.

Over 20 people, including demonstrators and law enforcers, were injured in the sporadic clashes.

Vehicular movement on Mirpur Road and surrounding areas was

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Protesters bring an excavator to completely tear down the already damaged Dhanmondi-32 house of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the verdict against Sheikh Hasina was being declared by the ICT yesterday. The army and police barred the demonstrators, leading to chase and counter-chase. The photo was taken around 1:00pm.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON