

## Newham based Bangladeshi gay couple get married in secrecy

This past 14<sup>th</sup> of September 2017, a Bangladeshi couple quietly registered their union down at the Newham Council in East London.

Our London correspondent reports that Mr Nobi Hossain and his partner Zahirul were in a long standing relationship prior to getting married, and had been living together for quite a while before eventually deciding to get married.



The marriage ceremony meanwhile was conducted in as much secrecy as possible. In fact only a few of the newly-weds closets friends were present at the marriage. We were able to get in touch with one of them, a Mr Abdullah Al Hassan, who is a close friend of the couple. He informed us that Mr Hossain and Mr Islam's union is something to cherish, particularly if one is aware of the hardships and adversities they had to overcome to finally have their special moment. He continues that the celebrations were perhaps slightly muted because the couple had to conclude their union

in such haste and secrecy. He believes it is a shame that people like Mr Hossain and Mr Islam cannot openly celebrate what is perhaps the most important day of their lives. He blames the outdated mentalities of Bangladeshi communities across the world and their reluctance to recognise equal rights for LGBT people.

It is perhaps no surprise that Mr Hossain and Mr Islam had to register their marriage in such a manner. Same sex relationships are defined as a sin in Islam of course, and widely looked down upon in Asia, especially in Bangladesh where maintaining same sex relationships is a punishable offence under the Bangladesh Penal Code 377. Indeed individual who show homosexual tendencies in Bangladesh are often maltreated, ostracized, and even subjected to various forms of hormonal treatments in a bid to 'cure their sexual orientation'. Both Mr Islam and Mr Hossain were unavailable for comment.

It is worth noting that this particular [wedding follows](#) that of one Jahed Choudhury, a Bangladeshi, who is widely believed to be the first Muslim man to have committed to same sex marriage. He married his partner Sean Rogan on June

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Chandpur Hindu community shaken as local man commits blasphemy towards Islam



amentalists violently attacked the Hindu community located inside Puran Bazaar, Chandpur, riled over the actions of one Miltan Kumar Dey whom they accuse of producing blasphemous content against towards Islam.

The Hindu community, a minority group in terms of the Chandpur's (and Bangladesh's) geography, where shaken by an attack reportedly coordinated by local Awami League and some Jamaat-E-Islami members in the area. The attack took place sometime after midnight on Saturday.

The culprits mercilessly wrecked everything in their path, including Hindu symbols in sanctuaries, Puja mantles, with some even attacking Hindu households in the area and the people within. Some locals reported hearing loud, energetic chants of 'Naraye Takbir' during the incident.

Saturday's fiasco is intimately connected to a local Chandpur man named Miltan Kumar Dey, son of Mr Sammbhu Nath Dey and Mrs Mamata Rani Dey. Our local correspondent dug around for some information on him in and around Chandpur. He came to discover that Mr Kumar Dey is Hindu blogger and online activist currently on a study leave in London.

Now the fundamentalist group which laid siege to the peaceful Hindu community in the area claimed that Mr Kumar Dey is guilty of composing and uploading profane articles about Islam on his personal blog.

Aside from the concentrated attack on Hindu establishments, there were also reports that local Awami League cadets surrounded Mr Kumar Dey's home. Local people who live there said that previously area's local chairman reportedly summoned Mr Kumar Dey's parents, and openly threatened them to either make their son stop what he is doing, or simply leave the area. We did track down his house in Chandpur and were surprised to find it locked, and uninhabited. We asked the neighbours about the incident and they informed us that they have not seen Mr Kumar Dey or his family for a long time now. The neighbours believe that the Mr Kumar dey's family abandoned the premises out of fear for their lives, given the fiasco in Chandpur over Mr Kumar Dey's activities as a blogger and activist.

Worryingly enough the local people claimed that fundamentalists blamed right from the start and would rebuke them for seemingly trivial things such as celebrating their Puja festivals, performing 'kirtans', spiritual singing sessions etc and so on, claiming that the ensuing

ruckus distracts them from conducting their own prayer sessions ('namaaz') properly. Taranath Das, a local resident complained to our reporter that, "local police did not come on time. In fact, the local Police officer Mr. Shahin was reluctant to take proper action against the attackers".

Mr Kumar Dey was in the UK at the time when the incident occurred and his home was surrounded, so was thus unavailable for comment. Unfortunately, we were also unable to get a hold of him through our contacts in London.

Such uncertainty leaves the air inside Puran Bazaar feeling heavy. It is plausible that things may escalate again in this current climate.

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### 16 individuals have been slapped with an ICT lawsuit

Bangladesh has some broad media laws to tackle issues ranging from defamation to fake news, and the spread of propaganda, but many in the local media allege these laws are now being used to curb free speech and rein in press freedom in the country. Basically, section 57 of Bangladesh's Information and Communication Act is an attack on freedom of expression and repressive.

As it turned out a lawsuit was filed on 27th February 2017 against 16 individuals in accordance with section 57 of Bangladesh's Information and Communication Act 2006, the merits of which will be contested in the Magistrate's Court in Madaripur. The case number is 93/2017.

What is of greater importance however is the lawsuit's connection to the Prime Minister herself. Our court correspondence informs us that there is no direct. However, the plaintiff, one Mr MD Monir Hawlader, Sub Inspector of Rajoir Police Station states the accused individuals in this lawsuit have slandered the good name of the Prime Minister Hasina, her government, made seditious statements and conspired against Bangladesh.

Speaking of the accused, a total of 16 individual (listed below, starting with the primary defendant) have been named as defendants in this lawsuit. The defendants allegedly had an abusive statement published in the social media platform 'Facebook'. The said post, our correspondent states, contain 'vile and provocative' comments against Prime Minister Hasina.

The names of those accused in this lawsuit are as follows:

Kasem Sarder, Dilip Chandra Sarkar, Mohammad Hafizur Rahman, Toiyeb Ali, Nihar Ranjan Sarkar, Zafar Hawlader, Azgar Bepary, Yousuf Chokder, Sajib Khan, Rajib Khan, Dipak Majumder, Palash Kumar Das, Samir Kumar Shil, Kamal Das, Sudeb Mandal.

Our correspondent did try to get in touch with the plaintiff but was unsuccessful. Our correspondent also reached out to the Police for comments. We were refused entry into the station proper as a spokesperson for the police chose to speak to us outside instead. He stated, "These are very serious allegations and our officers are trying their best to coordinate their efforts into investigating them. Of course, we are yet to conclude primary investigations before producing a charge sheet, but nevertheless the media will be notified in due course if there are any significant developments."

Meanwhile, we got in touch with the Bangladesh Home ministry regarding this lawsuit and are yet

to receive a response, so watch this space.

Although the courts of Bangladesh are fairly saturated with defamation lawsuits, high profile ones such as this one tend to bear added implications rather than just legal ones.

According to Section 57 of Information and Communication Act 2016, the accused, if found guilty of slandering Prime Minister Hasina and government, will be liable to not only face a sizeable fine but also a significant amount of jail time.

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### Christian priest under threat by Islamic militant group

Christians are a minority in Bangladesh and are facing increasing threats of violent persecution from radical Muslims.



*Simon Halder, Priest of a Seventh Day  
Adventist Church*

Simon Halder, a Priest of Seventh Day Adventist Christian Church in Mongla, Bangladesh has been threatened with death by a letter from an Islamic Militant group saying that the Christians are exploiting Islam in Bangladesh by converting Muslims into Christians, so they will kill him and his family by any means. This threat was issued by Shayokh Mosaddek Al Arabi, spokesperson of Islami Khelafote Mujahidin Bangladesh (IKMB).

More than 2,000 Bangladeshi Christians gathered Monday to pray against brutal persecution at the hands of Islamic terrorists.

Christians comprise roughly one percent of the country's nearly 170-million people, but that number increases, according to Open Doors investigators. "As the Christian minority is growing, it faces more and more restrictions and challenges. This pressure is not driven by the government, but by radical Islamic groups, local religious leaders and families."

The killing by Islamic militants of four secular bloggers, an Italian and a Japanese citizen and, most recently, a secular publisher in October 2015 has prompted the government of President Abdul Hamid "to declare war" against radical elements, Open Doors noted.

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## SWIFT is responsible

### *Head of govt probe body on \$81m BB fund heist describes how SWIFT made the payment system vulnerable to cyber attack*

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A government committee probing the Bangladesh Bank heist has held SWIFT responsible for weakening the payment system which allowed cyber thieves to steal \$81 million from the central bank's account with the New York Fed.

"Primarily, SWIFT is responsible for the incident," Mohammed Farashuddin, the head of the three-member panel, told reporters at the BB yesterday at his first media briefing on the heist.

Since the unknown hackers pulled off the history's biggest cyber heist on February 4, the Brussels-based SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication) has repeatedly maintained that its core message system with the BB was not compromised.

But Farashuddin said SWIFT linked its platform to the real-time gross settlement system or RTGS by removing antivirus software on its own system which left the entire network vulnerable to cyber attacks. Secondly, SWIFT did not put in place a hardware security module, a computing device that safeguards and manages digital keys for strong authentication and provides crypto-processing.

The system's initial design included a backup, but there has been no such backup in place as of yet, according to Farashuddin.

Last week, SWIFT rejected allegations by officials in Bangladesh that technicians with the global messaging system made the BB more vulnerable to hacking.

Farashuddin said, "SWIFT said all responsibilities rested upon Bangladesh. But it's not correct. It doesn't mean that we are rebuking SWIFT."

"But SWIFT must accept responsibility for the incident. They should help Bangladesh Bank."

SWIFT now says its job is to provide solutions and it's the client's responsibility to ensure the safety of the system, Farashuddin said. "I admit that."

But he emphasised that if SWIFT or any individual provides any system, it is the provider's responsibility to supply a secure system and make sure that it doesn't become vulnerable midway.

The SWIFT system has been working in Bangladesh since 1995.

In March last year, SWIFT wrote to the BB that the Belgian organisation wants to link the SWIFT platform with RTGS.

"The letter contained nothing but excitement and flattery. It didn't explain how Bangladesh and the BB would benefit if the linking goes ahead," said Farashuddin.

Upon receiving the letter, the bank's executive committee approved it in an irresponsible manner, and the decision was "devoid of common sense", he said.

Before the link was established, 13 steps should have been followed: some by SWIFT, some by the

BB and some jointly by the two, he said.

But the SWIFT platform at the BB was connected with the RTGS in November last year without following two or three major procedures, he said.

The connection was supposed to be established after SWIFT provided the BB with a hardware security module. But SWIFT didn't do so.

Later, the module was brought in, but it is yet to be installed, said the former BB governor.

While establishing the link, it was found that the connection could not be established due to the anti-virus embedded with the SWIFT platform.

When the link was established, the SWIFT engineers tried to disable the anti-virus in vain. Later, the anti-virus was uninstalled because the two systems couldn't be connected while it was active, according to Farashuddin.

It appears that the BB officials involved in the matter were not aware of the changes, he said.

An engineer from SWIFT gave an interim connection, and it was agreed that once the regular connection was established, the interim connection would be removed.

But the interim connection was not discarded even after the regular connection was established, said the former BB governor.

The system's initial design included a backup, but no such backup has yet been put in place in the BB system, he said.

"But even after the establishment of the connection, SWIFT has not yet explained to BB officials how the system operates and what types of problems could surface."

The SWIFT engineers gave BB officials instructions to keep the server running round-the-clock – first verbally before their departure and later through telephone correspondences.

"Because of all these reasons, we think that SWIFT system had been compromised."

There was no logic behind establishing the connection between the SWIFT platform at the BB and the RTGS, he said.

The BB carries out international transactions through SWIFT while the RTGS processes local transactions. "There is no logic behind connecting local transactions with international transactions."

Farashuddin said 18 messages with payment instructions worth \$500 million were sent from the BB back office to the Fed till 7:15pm on February 4.

Of the amount, \$200 million was sent for buying bonds from Basel Bank.

Later that night, the hackers broke into the BB system and sent 70 payment instructions involving \$950 million to the Fed.

"We haven't yet got evidence or proofs that BB officials have made those instructions."

The Fed outright rejected the payment instructions for 35 orders because intermediary banks were not at the recipients' ends.

Of the remaining 35, the Fed became suspicious and sought explanations from the BB about 12 payment instructions.

“But they should have known that it was already Friday in Bangladesh, and the Bangladesh Bank wouldn’t be able to give explanations,” said Farashuddin.

The Fed was suspicious about the 12 payment instructions and sought explanation from the BB, but didn’t get it. Still, the Fed carried out five payment orders.

“Why did they make payment? Why didn’t they issue the ‘stop payment’ order or recall the fund if they had felt it was suspicious?”

The Fed should have smelt a rat as it sent messages to the BB but didn’t receive any responses, he said.

Of the five payment orders, the beneficiaries of the four were individuals. Historically, BB’s payment instructions involving large amount are institutional. In case of individuals, the amount is small, said Farashuddin.

Farashuddin the hackers had made attempts to steal \$950 million. Of them, advices worth \$101 million were sent.

BB got back \$20 million because of misspelling of the beneficiary organisation in Sri Lanka. Now, the amount of the missing money stood at \$81.16 million.

He said the malware was created either in Pakistan or North Korea.

“We have got evidence that this malware was created to hack the BB’s reserves.”

Talking about the responsibility of the BB, he said the decision to establish connection between the SWIFT platform and the RTGS was inconsiderate.

“It should not have been done.”

BB’s officials were unskilled, negligent and careless about the issue, he said.

“We have no doubt about it. However, we have not received proof yet that they were part of the theft. We are trying to find it out.”

The Farashuddin-led probe body has tasked three professors from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) to find out whether anybody from the BB was involved with the scam.

Yesterday, the three-member team submitted an interim report to the probe committee.

The probe body is collecting information about two BB officials, said Farashuddin.

“However, the information we have received so far indicate that they were not a party to the crime.”

About the recovery of the stolen funds, he said the government and other departments concerned would work jointly to retrieve the money.

Quoting the Filipino-based Inquirer media outlet, which broke the news, Farashuddin said Philippine’s casino junket operator Kim Wong is believed to have been holding \$35 million and

remittance company Philrem \$17 million.

“It is possible to recover more than \$50 million.”

He said diplomatic strategies and legal tools have to be used to recover the stolen money, he said.

“We have to take assistance from the Fed. We have learnt that they are ready to help.”

Last week, the Fed, the BB and SWIFT vowed to work together to trace the stolen \$81 million, following their first-ever joint meeting in Basel, Switzerland.

Farashuddin said Bangladesh should try to convince the Fed to put pressure on the three US-based intermediary banks that channelled the \$81 to the Philippines.

The Fed could also pressurise Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation as it has a branch in Los Angeles.

“If we file lawsuits and work jointly, we will perhaps be able to recover the majority of the missing money.”

He said it was not right on the part of the BB to have kept the government in the dark about the theft.

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## Real face of secularism in Bangladesh

By Md Abdun Nafi

In an agitated response to a question posed to him by a journalist from Ekattor TV, former captain of the Bangladesh national cricket team and present Awamiligue Leader Mr. Rakibul Hasan baulked, “They are Hindus, they are agents of the Indian High Commissions, these \*\*\*\* (indecent word) are enemies in our own house...”

Mr Rakibul Hasan’s statement is symbolic to a certain extent. For the millions of Muslims residing in this country, have similar reservations. They think Hindus are agents, pimps of India. Everyone must have heard the story of the ‘red ant and the black ant’ at least once during their school days. I was told that Hindus were the red ants and Muslims were the black ants. In fact one of my lecturers even taught us that – “Hindu students are unclean and unhygienic”. But the Hindu students enrolled in my school were quite hygienic and ‘clean’ fellows.

Once there was a Hindu principal in charge of a well reputed school in Chittagong. There was a student one time who had trouble enrolling there. Frustrated by those adversities one of the student’s parents, a well-educated individual and someone I know personally, came out and complained to me, “When did Hindus grow so much in stature while living in this country?”

So according to this highly educated person, Hindus in Bangladesh should be mute, dumb and deadpan vegetarians. And one poke in the right spot should be enough to send them running for their lives to India. Mr Rakibul Hasan’s interview also had another important viewpoint. For at one stage Mr Rakibul Hasan said, “It will become difficult for that journalist to live in Dhaka.”



Now that last statement implies that it shouldn't be too difficult a task to chase Hindus away from a certain area (or country more like it). Consider the following warning issued by Minister Khondoker Musharraf just a few days ago, "If anyone even dares to eye Faridpur, I will pull his eyes out". Which means if a 'non-Muslim' in Dhaka city, Faridpur or anywhere in the country really decides to protest against any form of racism he has suffered against, or tries to report any influential individual, he will have his eyes gouged out and will be banished from the city of Dhaka. And that is why we tend to find regular reports on newspapers, where Hindu emigrants seem to go 'missing' from places, whenever an influential Muslim is in need to buy or acquire a piece of land or property.

Meanwhile even an army major resorted to deliver a dire warning to all the aboriginals settled in Bangladesh, "It will take only a month to wipe out all aboriginals".

That in fact is not too far from the truth. Aboriginals have been left toothless and defenseless for a while now after promises of a 'peace treaty' to be made, something which never materialised. If there were ever a group of people who would have taken a stand against this the religious oppression carried out in this country, it might have been the aboriginals. And now they are left in a limbo and have nothing. So as such how long do you think it would take for our "brave", heavily fortified army to discipline these toothless aboriginals?

The egotistic megalomaniac who threatened the aboriginals above also referred to them as 'thappa'. That is how aboriginals are perceived to be from the viewpoint of a major in the Bangladesh army. And someone like Mr Raqibul Hasan, a man amongst those who champion the ideals of freedom fighters, thinks that all non-Muslims are agents of India.

So, can you now see the secular and non-sectarian face of Bangladesh?

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### Bangladesh war crimes trial: Key accused

A controversial tribunal in Bangladesh has been investigating war crimes committed during the 1971 war of independence from Pakistan. BBC News profiles the main defendants.

## Ghulam Azam – died in custody

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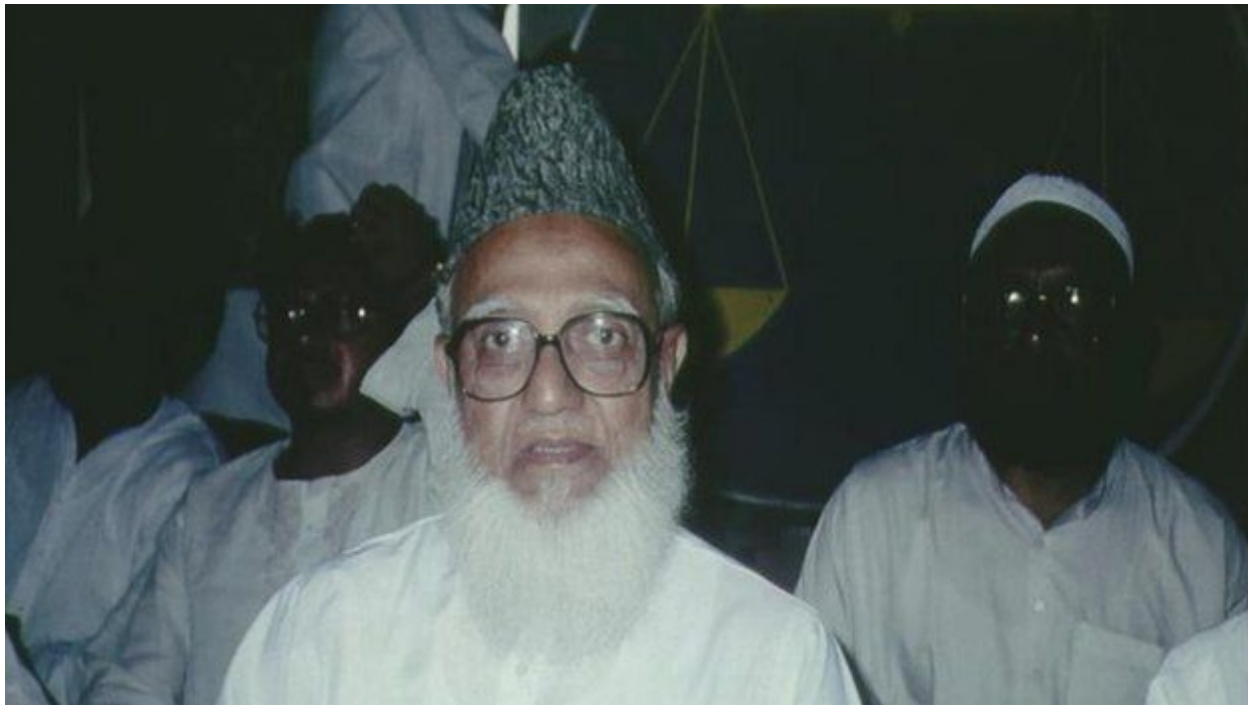
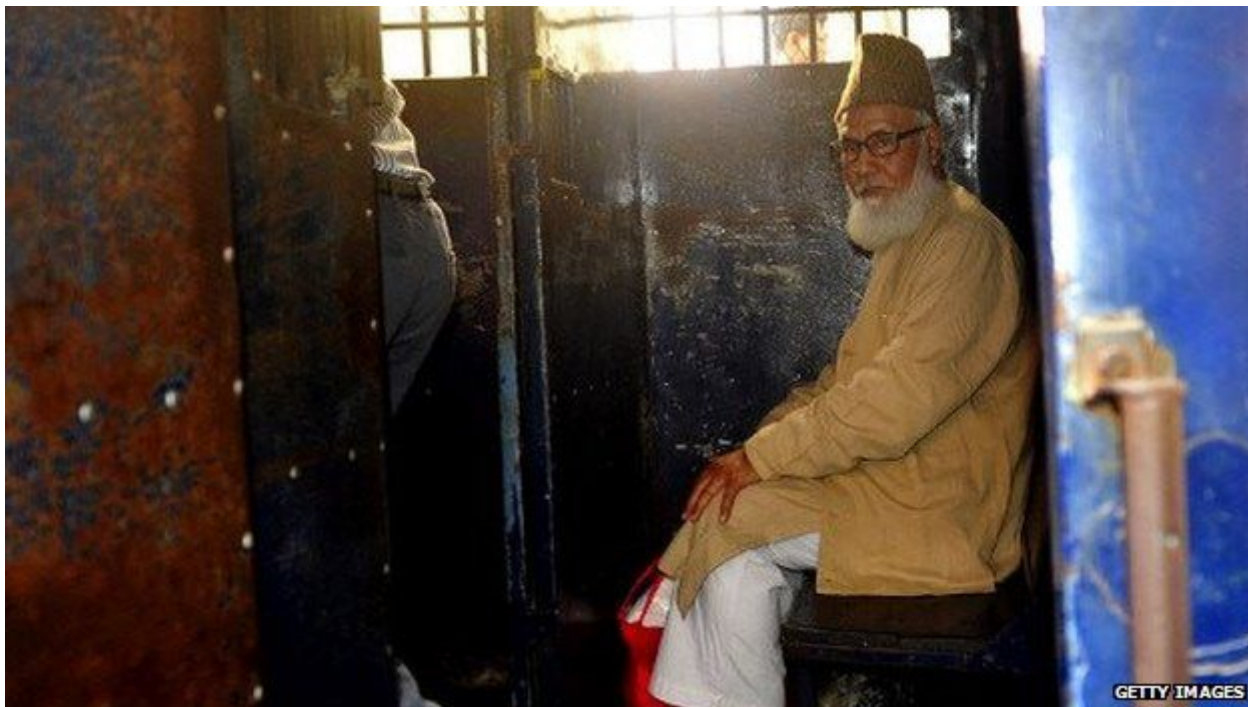


Image caption Mr Azam's supporters revered him as a scholar, but critics viewed him as a traitor. The former leader of Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh's largest Islamist party, was sentenced to 90 years in jail for crimes against humanity on 15 July 2013. Ghulam Azam, who was in his 90s, was the party's leader until 2000 when he retired from active politics. He died in October 2014 while an appeal against his conviction was pending. He had denied all the charges against him, which included genocide, murder, abduction and arson. Azam is alleged to have created and led pro-Pakistan militias which carried out numerous murders and rapes during the nine-month war. Described by his party colleagues as a writer and Islamic thinker, Azam was strongly opposed to Bangladesh's independence from Pakistan, arguing at the time that it would divide the Muslim community. He also cautioned that an independent Bangladesh would come under the political and economic influence of neighbouring India. Azam's supporters say he was widely respected across the Muslim world. But his detractors – mainly in the governing Awami League party – saw him as a traitor. In 1973, the government cancelled his citizenship for allegedly co-operating with Pakistani forces during the independence war. Azam lived as an exile in Pakistan and the UK but returned to Bangladesh in 1978 when the country was led by Gen Ziaur Rahman – the assassinated husband of the country's current opposition leader Khaleda Zia. The Supreme Court restored his citizenship in 1994.

**Motiur Rahman Nizami – executed in May 2016**

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Image

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Image captionNizami had campaigned vociferously against independence

Nizami, who led Jamaat-e-Islami, was hanged in Dhaka's prison early on 11 May after refusing to seek mercy from Bangladesh's president. He was sentenced to death for war crimes in October 2014. The Supreme Court rejected his final appeal on 5 May 2016. Motiur Rahman Nizami, 73, faced 16 charges including genocide, murder, torture and rape. Nizami, born in 1943, had been an active supporter of the party since he was a student. At the time of the 1971 war, he was president of Islami Chhatra Sangha, then the party's student wing, and vociferously campaigned against the division of Pakistan. He was accused of setting up the al-Badr group, an auxiliary force that helped the Pakistani army identify and kill pro-independence Bengali activists.

Nizami, a Dhaka University graduate, was twice elected to the Bangladeshi parliament, serving as a minister in the government led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) between 2001 and 2006. He had described the accusations against him as "the worst falsehood in history".

His supporters consider him to have been a competent and honest minister and an authority on Islamic teaching. They say he was widely respected in the Muslim world. Nizami wrote about 20 books, mostly on Islam. In 2009, he was judged to be among the top 50 most influential Muslims by an American Islamic think-tank.

## Delwar Hossain Sayeedi – sentenced to life in jail



Image

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Image caption Sayeedi has previously travelled to the US and Europe to give lectures on the Koran

A prolific speaker and a well-known leader of the Jamaat-e-Islami, the 72-year-old former MP had his death sentence overturned on appeal and is now serving life in jail. He was found guilty in February 2013 of charges including murder, torture and rape. Arrested in June 2010, he was the first suspect to be indicted by the tribunal in 2011. State prosecutors accused him of working with the al-Badr group during the independence struggle and of carrying out numerous atrocities, including forcibly converting Hindus to Islam. His critics say that during the war he formed a small group to loot and seize the property of Bengali Hindus and those who supported independence. He denied all the allegations and after he was convicted there were widespread protests across Dhaka. Sayeedi's supporters say that – like many of his co-accused – he is an Islamic scholar and a conscientious member of various social organisations. He has travelled to the US and Europe to give lectures on the Koran and has written books on interpreting Islam. Some British MPs opposed his visit to the UK in 2006 because of his alleged extreme views, particularly his comments against the US and British role in Afghanistan and Iraq.

## Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid – executed in November 2015

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Image

copyrightAFP

Image captionAli Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid was regarded for his oratory

Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid, 64, was the secretary-general of Jamaat-e-Islami and an influential figure within the party. He was executed in November 2015 after being sentenced to death in July 2013 – a decision that was upheld in June 2015 when the Supreme Court rejected his appeal. He was highly regarded for his organisational skills and oratory. He was social welfare minister in the BNP-led government from 2001-2006. A student leader in 1971, he was among those who supported Bangladesh remaining part of Pakistan. His critics say he was also an al-Badr leader responsible for the killings of a number of pro-independence Bangladeshi leaders and intellectuals. He strongly denied the allegations but the tribunal found him guilty of five charges, including abduction and murder. Like many other Jamaat leaders he went into hiding soon after independence, but resurfaced after Gen Ziaur Rahman came to power in a military coup in 1977. His supporters say his trial was nothing but a political vendetta by the ruling Awami League. They also say he was a successful minister known for his honesty and integrity.

## Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury – executed in November 2015



Image captionSalahuddin Chowdhury was convicted of genocide and murder

A former minister, Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury was a BNP MP and the most senior leader from the party to be sentenced for crimes against humanity. He was executed in November 2015 after the

Supreme Court rejected his appeal in June 2015.

Better known as Saqa, he was the eldest son of the late Muslim League and Chittagong-based leader Fazlul Quader Chowdhury and a member of the BNP's main policymaking body.

His father was the speaker of the National Assembly of undivided Pakistan in 1965 and campaigned for a united Pakistan.

The tribunal found him guilty of nine out of 23 charges including genocide, arson and persecuting people on religious and political grounds.

He was also accused of forcefully converting a number of Hindus to Islam.

The prosecution said that his father's residence in Chittagong was turned into a torture cell during the war. Chowdhury denied all the charges and the BNP – which did not exist at the time of the war – described his trial as a political vendetta.

Chowdhury complained at the time of his conviction that the verdict had come “from the [law] ministry”, saying it had been made available on the internet before it was formally announced in court.

Chowdhury's family alleged he was tortured while in custody. The authorities rejected the allegations.

## Muhammad Kamaruzzaman – executed in April 2015

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Image

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Image captionKamaruzzaman's lawyers said he did not receive a fair trial

The assistant secretary-general of Jamaat-e-Islami was found guilty in May 2013 of masterminding what the prosecution described as one of the bloodiest single episodes in the independence war.

The Supreme Court later upheld his death sentence on appeal and he was hanged in April 2015.

The war crimes tribunal heard that he played a prominent role alongside Pakistani troops in the “slaughter” of at least 120 unarmed farmers in the remote northern village of Sohagpur which subsequently became known as the “village of widows”.

Three women widowed as a result of the killings testified against Kamaruzzaman during his trial. They described how he led Pakistani troops to the village and helped the soldiers to line up and execute the farmers.

Kamaruzzaman was found guilty on five out of seven charges of crimes against humanity, including the murder and torture of unarmed civilians. His lawyers insisted that he did not receive a fair trial.

Working as a journalist after independence, Kamaruzzaman tried on several occasions to become an MP but was unsuccessful in each attempt.

## Abdul Kader Mullah – executed in December 2013



Image

copyrightAFP

Image caption Abdul Kader Mullah was convicted in February 2013 and hanged the following December

Abdul Kader Mullah, assistant secretary general of the Jamaat-e-Islami party since 2010 and a former executive editor of The Daily Sangram, was found guilty on five of six counts of crimes against humanity and war crimes on 5 February 2013.

He was sentenced to death in September of that year after a failed appeal and hanged in December.

Mullah, who denied all the charges, was convicted of killing 344 civilians as well as rape and other crimes. Many of the atrocities for which he was convicted took place in Dhaka's Mirpur area, earning him the name "Butcher of Mirpur".

He was sentenced by the tribunal to life in prison – which caused huge anger among many Bangladeshis who took to the streets demanding he be put to death. Prosecution and defence lawyers appealed to the Supreme Court. On 17 September the court increased his life jail term to a death sentence.

Mullah was born in 1948 in Faridpur district. He joined Jamaat's student wing, then known as Islami Chatra Sangha (ICS), while studying for a science degree at Rajendra College in Faridpur in 1966. When leaders of the Jamaat opposed the independence movement in East Pakistan in 1971, Mullah joined the feared paramilitary force al-Badr, prosecutors said.

He was charged in December 2011 with abetting the Pakistani army and actively participating in the 1971 atrocities. Following his death sentence the attorney general ruled out an appeal, meaning his only chance of clemency would have been a presidential pardon.

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### Pakistan, BD exchange protests on JI leader's hanging

As bilateral relations between Islamabad and Dhaka further deteriorated after the execution of Motiur Rehman Nizami, both the countries on Thursday summoned each other's envoys to record strong protests.

Pakistan brushed aside the charges by the Bangladesh government that Islamabad was interfering in its domestic policies related to the hanging of Motiur Rahman Nizami for alleged war crimes in 1971.

"It is not a matter of interference. The flawed trials pertain to the events before December 1971 and these gentlemen (who have been hanged) are being implicated for upholding the laws of Pakistan. The attempts by the government of Bangladesh to malign Pakistan, despite our keen desire to develop brotherly relations with it, are regrettable," the Spokesman at the Foreign Office said at the weekly media briefing.

Later, the director general South Asia at the Foreign Office summoned the acting high commissioner of Bangladesh and a strong protest was lodged at what it called "the unfortunate hanging" of Motiur Rahman Nizami on the alleged crimes committed before December 1971 through a "flawed judicial process".

"We have expressed our serious concern on the hanging and our concerns are conveyed through diplomatic channels. Let me clarify one thing, this was not a tit for tat response," said the spokesman.

The spokesman brushed aside impressions that Pakistan's response had been weak. "I don't agree that our response is weak. It is not a matter of weak or strong response, the aim is to convey our feelings. We have already expressed our deep concerns on the flawed trials. You might have seen the Human Rights Commission's response to the hanging as well as of those of the European Union," he added.

Pakistan says that it is seriously concerned as could be seen by a resolution adopted by parliament. "The 1974 Tripartite Agreement is the cornerstone of relations between the two countries. It needs to be emphasised that, as part of the agreement, the government of Bangladesh decided not to proceed with the trials as an act of clemency," said the spokesman.

Nevertheless, he pointed out that Pakistan reiterates its desire for friendly relations with Bangladesh. Turning to matters on its western borders, to a query, the spokesman said that the next round of QCG meeting was tentatively scheduled to take place this month.

"After the last QCG round, it was expected that talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban would take place before the next round. This was an expectation and not a compulsion. The challenge of bringing the Taliban and other groups to the table is a shared responsibility of the QCG members. Bringing parties in conflict to the negotiating table is an arduous task, requiring patience and persistence," he advised.



Pakistan feels that all the QCG members were of the view that the Taliban and other groups would gain more through negotiations than without them. "The fifth QCG meeting is tentatively scheduled to take place in May. In the meantime, efforts will continue to bring the Taliban to the negotiating table," he said.

Commenting on the closure of the Pak-Afghan border, the spokesman admitted that there were differences between the two sides on implementation of measures to manage and regulate the border, due to which the border had been temporarily closed. He explained that because the border was porous, illegal crossings and other associated issues were major challenges for both countries.

"To address the situation, the Government of Pakistan has decided to implement measures at Torkham for effective border management. It is in the interest of both the countries to have a well-regulated border," he said. He added that both sides are in contact with each other through a military-to-military channel to address this issue.

To another query, the spokesman said that dialogue with India was not linked to the forthcoming Saarc Summit. "In the context of dialogue, Pakistan is ready to start the dialogue but India is not. Whenever India is ready, we are ready to start it. I have also mentioned previously as well dialogue is the best and only option," he added.

Meanwhile, the Pakistani principal of City School in Dhaka Yasmeen was arrested by the Bangladesh's police. However, the Foreign Office said she was under protective custody of the Bangladesh police.

Reuters adds: Bangladesh has in the past few years been prosecuting people accused of carrying out crimes during the 1971 war, and has executed five of them, the most recent one, Motiur Rehman Nizami, on Wednesday. Bangladesh summoned the Pakistani ambassador in Dhaka to register its "strong protest" over statements by Pakistan.

"The government of Bangladesh deeply regrets that despite Bangladesh's repeated overtures, the malicious campaign by Pakistan against the trials of the crimes against humanity and genocide in Bangladesh is continuing," Bangladesh said in a statement.

International human rights groups say the tribunal's procedures fall short of international standards but Bangladesh rejects that and the trials are supported by many Bangladeshis. Turkey withdrew its ambassador to Bangladesh on Thursday over Nizami's hanging.

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### Bangladesh hangs War Criminal Nizami

Bangladesh hanged Islamist party leader Motiur Rahman Nizami on Wednesday for genocide and other crimes committed during the 1971 war of independence from Pakistan, the law minister said, risking an angry reaction from his supporters.

Nizami, head of the Jamaat-e-Islami party, was hanged at Dhaka Central jail just after midnight, Law Minister Anisul Haq told Reuters, after the Supreme Court rejected his final plea against a death sentence imposed by a special tribunal for genocide, rape and orchestrating the massacre of top intellectuals during the war.

Nizami, 73, a former legislator and minister during opposition leader Khaleda Zia's last term as prime minister, was sentenced to death in 2014

Hundreds of people flooded the streets of the capital, Dhaka, to cheer the execution. "We have waited for this day for a long 45 years," said war veteran Akram Hossain. "Justice has finally been served." But the war crimes tribunal set up by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in 2010 has sparked violence and drawn criticism from opposition politicians, including leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami, that it is victimising Hasina's political opponents. Thousands of extra police and border guards were deployed in Dhaka and other major cities. Previous similar judgments and executions have triggered violence that killed around 200 people, mainly Jamaat activists and police. Five opposition politicians, including four Jamaat-e-Islami leaders, have been executed since late 2013 after being convicted by the tribunal. STRIKE CALL Jamaat-e-Islami, which has said the charges against Nizami were baseless, called for a nationwide strike on Wednesday in protest.

Calling Nizami a 'martyr', it said he was deprived of justice and made a victim of a political vendetta. The U.S. State Department said that while it supported justice being carried out for the 1971 atrocities, it was vital that the trials of those accused are free, fair and transparent and conducted in accordance with international agreements. "While we have seen limited progress in some cases, we still believe that further improvements to the ... process could ensure these proceedings meet domestic and international obligations," State Department spokeswoman Elizabeth Trudeau said in a statement. "Until these obligations can be consistently met, we have concerns about proceeding with executions." About three million people were killed, the government says, and thousands of women were raped during the 1971 war in which some factions, including the Jamaat-e-Islami, opposed the break from what was then called West Pakistan. The party denies that its leaders committed any atrocities. International human rights groups say the tribunal's procedures fall short of international standards.

The government denies the accusations. The execution comes as the Muslim-majority nation suffers a surge in militant violence in which atheist bloggers, academics, religious minorities and foreign aid workers have been killed. In April alone, five people, including a university teacher, two gay activists and a Hindu, were hacked to death by suspected Islamist militants. International human rights groups say a climate of intolerance in Bangladeshi politics has both motivated and provided cover for perpetrators of crimes of religious hatred. – See more at: <http://indianexpress.com/article/world/world-news/bangladesh-hangs-motiur-rahman-nizami-1971-war-crimes-2794434/#sthash.ig1rlxk5.dpuf>

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### ICR Foundation expressed their satisfaction over Nizami's verdict

The [International Crimes Research Foundation](#), a London based global research organisation has expressed their satisfaction over Matiur Rahman Nizami's review petition verdict. ICRF sent us a press release earlier today where they mentioned that "not only is the tribunal an embodiment of righteousness and justice in the country, today it is a role model for others around the

world to follow and leads by example when it comes to tackling the culture of non-justice. Even though it was established in 1971 in a bid to resolve international crimes and took nearly 39 years to come into full force, the tribunal has nonetheless managed to prove to the civil world that it is better to start late rather than not do it at all. Perhaps that won't change things significantly or instantly, but it is a significant step towards battling non-justice under any circumstances."

ICRF welcomed the death penalty given by the apex court of Bangladesh as this punishment is "within the justice system of Bangladesh and they express their utmost respect to that ICRF went further saying that that they fully respect the current ideas and opinions of those in favor of death penalties and those who are not, it is their belief that each nation reserves the right to enforce capital punishment, the way its constitution permits or allows it, which after all is one of its most fundamental rights. Therefore they respect the laws and the boundaries each nation has set out for them and they are fully entitled to deliver capital punishment the way they have devised them to be."

Though ICRF is satisfied about the standard and procedure of the ICTBD trial but they also commented that "there is still room for improvement regarding the security of ICTBD personnel as well as witness protection. ICRF thanked Bangladeshi government on that note who embarked and are successfully concluding this quest"

ICRF also mentioned that "Nizami's verdict and subsequent upholding by the Supreme Court as well as appellate division is another giant step forward for the justice system of Bangladesh and its implications. The whole world in fact is a beneficiary of the ICTBD's actions for the nature of international crimes is such that, they can be perceived as transgressions towards the whole of the human race in general. We hope that the ICTBD will reinvigorate and inspire justice systems around the world to jump into action."