

Summing-up arguments begin

Staff reporter

The designated prosecutor on Wednesday assured the International Crimes Tribunal-2 that the prosecution will be able to prove the charges of the 1971 war crimes made against SM Qaiser, the turncoat politician from Habiganj.

Prosecutor Rana Dasgupta came up with the assurance while submitting the prosecution case summing-up arguments, following the tribunal order.

The prosecutor said accused Qaiser, also an ex-state minister during Ershad's military rule, not only opposed Bangladesh's liberation struggle like that of his Pakistan Muslim League (Convention) activists father and maternal uncle, but also he had committed the crimes against humanity during the 1971 Liberation War under the section 3(2) of the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act 1973.

Earlier, the three-member tribunal, headed by Justice Obaidul Hassan, closed the cross-examinations chapter allowing the defence counsel an hour in this regard.

The prosecution so far placed 32 prosecution witnesses (PWs), including ASP (ret'd) Monwara Begum, the investigation officer of the case, before the tribunal to prove all the 16 counts of war crimes charges made against accused Qaiser.

Qaiser has been accused of perpetrating the 1971 war crimes both individually and in collaboration with the Pakistan occupation army, argued prosecutor Rana Dasgupta.

He further said that during the trial, the defence counsel for accused Qaiser did not deny the incidents in 1971, but claims that his client was not involved in any way whatever might be the incident, alleging that the case was filed with an ill political motive.

The prosecution case summing-up arguments remained inconclusive.

On February 2, the tribunal indicted Syed Mohammad Qaiser for his involvement in crimes against humanity, including genocide in 1971 Liberation War.

On August 5, 2013, responding to a petition, the tribunal granted Qaiser bail, subject to conditions, on medical and humanitarian grounds.

Septuagenarian Qaiser, a turncoat politician, was arrested on May 21 last year in connection with the war crimes case.

On November 14, 2013, after perusing the formal charge with 18 counts of offences submitted by the prosecution and the relevant documents, the tribunal took cognizance of the formal charge as it found prima facie case against the accused under sections 3(2) and 4(1) (2) of the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act 1973.

According to the investigation agency, after the independence of Bangladesh, Qaiser, a former Pakistan Convention Muslim League activist, entered politics by joining BNP and subsequently became the president of Habiganj BNP.

Later, he quit BNP to join Ershad's Jatiya Party and became state minister for agriculture in 1989. According to information, he lately joined the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) of Col (ret'd) Oli Ahmad.

Qaiser, as a local Peace Committee leader during the Liberation War, had formed a vigilante group 'Qaiser Force' after his name comprising 500-700 of his trusted men in Habiganj and committed crimes against humanity, including genocide, in collaboration with the Pakistani occupation army.

At the latter part of the Liberation War, he fled to London and returned home after the August

1975 political changeover.