

Court Correspondent

The cross-examinations of prosecution witness-21 M Shahidullah alais Shahid, a Liberation War hero, against war crimes accused Jamaat-e-Islami stalwart Maulana Abdus Sobhan, now in custody, continued for the second day on Sunday before the International Crimes Tribunal-2.

Defence counsel Mizanul Islam cross-examined the PW who had seen the massacre from a hideout into a nearby bamboo grove carried out by Maulana Sobhan in villages across Pabna in collaboration with Pakistan occupation forces during the 1971 Liberation War. The cross-examinations remain inconclusive.

On December 31, 2013, the tribunal framed charges against accused Jamaat-e-Islami leader Maulana Abdus Sobhan for his involvement in crimes against humanity, including genocide, during the Liberation War, dismissing his discharge plea.

On September 19, 2013, after perusing the formal charges along with relevant statements and documents submitted by the prosecution, the tribunal took cognizance of the charges against Maulana Sobhan as it found a strong prima facie case against the accused under sections 3(2), 4(1) and 4(2) of the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act 1973.

On September 20, 2012, Sobhan, the number three man in the Jamaat-e-Islami hierarchy, was held by the members of an army intelligence agency at the Bangabandhu Bridge toll plaza in Tangail in connection with a case of violence. Later, the accused was handed over to the police.

The tribunal, upon a prosecution plea, had shown Sobhan arrested in connection with the case of the 1971 crimes against humanity.

According to the prosecution, it received allegations like genocide, rape, arson and looting perpetrated by Sobhan, the then leader of Pabna Peace Committee (collaborator) and Pabna district Jamaat ameer, in collaboration with Pakistan occupation forces, including Razakar, Al

Badr and Al Shams, during the Liberation War.

Sobhan had allegedly played a key role in organising Razakar, Al Badr and Al Shams, the auxiliary forces of the Pakistani junta, in Pabna district.

Meanwhile, the cross-examinations of investigation officer (IO) of the case ASP (retired) Monowara Begum (PW-32) against war crimes accused SM Qaiser, former state minister during Ershad's military rule, also continued.

Defence counsel Abdus Sobhan Tarafder cross-examined the IO of the case.