

Prosecution arguments over
Defence begins today
Court Correspondent

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 on Wednesday asked the defence counsel to place his summing-up arguments at 12 pm on Thursday on the war crimes case against SM Qaiser, also a former state minister during HM Ershad's military rule.

The three-member tribunal, headed by Justice Obaidul Hassan, hinted at A Sobhan Tarafder as designated prosecutor Rana Dasgupta almost finished his summing-up arguments on the case, leaving some law-point interpretations on the war crimes charges for another engaged prosecutor Dr Tureen Afroz.

During the prosecution case summing-up arguments for the third day, the prosecutor claimed that he has been able to prove beyond any shadow of doubt all the war crimes charges made against Qaiser through evidence, including eyewitnesses and documents.

The trial process was disturbed due to power outage.

On February 2 this year, 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 cognisance 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 (retd) 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 had fled to London and returned home after the August 1975 political changeover.