

Court Correspondent

Corroborating the evidence of other two prosecution witnesses (PWs), Abdul Maker, a grocer, on Monday said accused Engineer Jabbar at a meeting on May 17 during the Liberation War in 1971 had ordered Razakar commander Iskander Ali Mridha to produce freedom fighters Abdur Razzaq Biswas and Motleb Sharif dead or alive.

"And within a very short time, the meeting was informed that both the freedom fighters were gunned down at Fuljhuri village," Abdul recalled while testifying against accused Jabbar, now on the run, before the International Crimes Tribunal-1 as PW-3.

Hailing from Udoytara Burirchar, PW Abdul, now 75, said he had attended the meeting at Tushkhali High School ground to hear the speech of Jabbar, then a Pakistan Muslim League MNA. The meeting had been convened to form Tushkhali Peace Committee (collaborator), he added.

During his speech, Jabbar had branded the leaders of Awami League, freedom fighters and members of Hindu community as enemy of Pakistan and called upon the local people to exterminate them to save Pakistan, the PW said.

He further said that accused Jabbar also had asked his party men to prepare a list of the freedom fighters and declared an option for Hindus to live in the country subject to being converted into Muslim.

In his deposition, PW Abdul narrated how Razakars at the behest of accused Jabbar had carried out atrocities at Kulupara and Nampara -- both Hindu dominated areas -- and burned down their houses after plundering.

Similar grisly operation had also taken place at Fuljhuri village on May 17, 1971 by the Pakistan occupation army in association with Jabbar and his Razakar militia burning down over 360 houses after looting and killing Sarada Kanta Paik, as he tried to flee, recalled the PW.

Ten days after the incidents, he said, Razakars had carried out another operation in Hindu dominated village Paikbari herding 150-200 people to forcibly convert them into Muslim.

PW Abdul said that after a gap of about six months, Razakars had killed 22 out of 37 Hindus on a river bank in village Suryamoni after capturing them from village Angulkata and Mathbaria of Pirojpur.

On September 7, the trial of Engineer A Jabbar began in absentia with recording of evidence of the prosecution witnesses following opening statement by designated prosecutor Zahid Imam. The prosecution pressed five counts of war crimes charges against the former Jatiya Party MP, believed living in the USA.

After working for over 11 months, the investigation officer (IO) of the case ASP M Helal Uddin submitted the investigation report to the prosecution.

The prosecution submitted a list of 44 witnesses (PWs) to prove the charges as proposed against Jabbar.

The investigator 'found' Jabbar's involvement in crimes like killing, genocide, arson, looting and forcefully converting many Hindus to Muslim in then Mathbaria thana of Pirojpur during the war. Jabbar was made chairman of local thana Peace Committee (collaborator) and he organised Razakar outfit in Mathbaria, according to an investigation report.

Octogenarian Jabbar of Khetachhira under Mathbaria was the vice-chairman of Jatiya Party. He had joined the then Muslim League through his father-in-law, Arshed Ali, who was an influential Muslim League leader.

Jabbar later joined the Jatiya Party of Gen (ret'd) HM Ershad and was twice elected Member of Parliament with the party tickets in 1986 and 1988.