

## Chronology of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Murder Trial

November 18, 2009

Following is the chronology of the protracted legal process of Bangabandhu Murder Trial since the August 15, 1975 assassination of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman along with most of his family members. August 15, 1975 - Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is killed along with most of his family members in a predawn putsch, which also topples the post independence Awami League government. September 26, 1975 - Infamous Indemnity Ordinance is promulgated by self- proclaimed president Khondker Mushtaque Ahmed to protect the killers from justice. (Subsequent BNP government later ratified it as Indemnity Act in 1979).

June 23, 1996 - Awami League under Sheikh Hasina returns to power after 21 years of political wilderness.

August 14, 1996 -- Three major accused of Bangabandhu murder - Sacked lieutenant colonels Syed Farook Rahman, Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan and former state minister Taheruddin Thakur are arrested.

October 2, 1996 -- First Information Report (FIR) on the August 15, 1975 carnage is lodged with police by the then resident PA to the president Bangabandhu, AFM Mohitul Islam.

October 3, 1996 -- CID police takes up the case and launches investigation into the Bangabandhu murder.

November 14, 1996 - Parliament scraps the Indemnity Act paving ways to bring the killers to justice.

January 15, 1997-- CID submits charge sheet against 20 accused to Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court.

March 1, 1997-- Chief Metropolitan Magistrate of Dhaka sends the case to Dhaka District and Sessions' Judge's court for trial on completion of legal formalities.

March 12, 1997-- Trial starts as six arrested accused appeared in court.

March 20, 1997-- Government appoints 14 lawyers to defend 14 absconding accused who went into hiding in abroad after the election of Awami League government.

April 6, 1997-Trial court hears charges against the accused.

April 7, 1997- Trial court indicts the accused.

April 21, 1997-- Trial abruptly adjourned on the first day of hearing as a defense counsel (of fugitive colonel Rashid's wife

Zobaida Rashid) moves "no- confidence" motion in the High Court against the trial judge.

April 29, 1997 -- Trial resumes after High Court rejects the defence counsel's plea.

April 29, 1997 - Trial is adjourned immediately after the resumption as another defence counsel challenged the constitution of the trial court at its makeshift site (near Dhaka Central Jail) at the High Court and sought High Court's interpretation on "substantial questions of law" in trying the accused.

April 30, 1997-- High Court rejects the petition for changing venue of the trial court.

May 4, 1997 -- High Court suspends trial for one month on a plea from lawyer of an accused saying he needs for more time to settle an appeal to overturn his client's (Zobaida Rashid's) indictment.

June 19, 1997 - Trial resumes but postponed again immediately for the third time as Zobaida's lawyer moves petition against her indictment in the High Court.

July 6, 1997-- Trial starts with 19 accused as High Court relieved Zobaida of charges of plotting the Bangabandhu murder. July 6, 1997 -- Prime witness Mohitul Islam testifies before the court.

March 2, 1998 - Apex Appellate Division of the Supreme Court rejects appeal against the scrapping of the Indemnity Act, after a 15-day hearing, removing the last barrier in trying the killers.

July 9, 1998-- Bangladesh and Thailand sign extradition treaty to bring home back fugitive sacked Major Bazlul Huda, one of the two men who allegedly shot Bangabandhu dead.

July 21, 1998-- Hearing of the last of the 61 prosecution witnesses (out of listed 74 PWs) ends with the cross-examination of the case's investigating officer, Abdul Kahhar Akhand.

August 5, 1998 -- The accused claim innocence as the testimony of witnesses' end.

August 12, 1998-- Argument between prosecution and defense lawyers starts with the statement of chief prosecutions counsel Serajul Huque.

October 13, 1998 -- The 17-month trial process ends on the 146th day of hearing with the end of arguments between the lawyers.

November 8, 1998 -- Judge Kazi Golam Rasul hands down death penalties to 15 ex-army officers (in the morning).  
November 8, 1998 - Sacked major Bazlul Huda is flown back in an air force jet from a Thai jail (in the afternoon).

August 24, 2000 - Concurrent death reference and appeal hearing begins in High Court. December 14, 2000 - High Court bench delivers split judgment after 28 days of hearing. Senior judge M Ruhul Amin upholds death penalties of 10 of the 15 and the other judge ABM Khairul Haque confirms the capital punishment for all the 15.

February 12, 2001 - The concurrent death reference and appeal hearing begins at another High Court bench as the split judgment required the case to be referred to a third judge in a second bench.

April 30, 2001 - Third judge Mohammad Fazlul Karim confirms death sentences of 12 of the accused after 25 days of hearing.

June 18, 2007 - The United States returns absconding convict ex- lieutenant colonel AKM Mohiuddin (lancer) to be exposed to justice.

September 23, 2007 - A three-member Appellate Division bench grants leave to appeal prayers of five of the convicts in jail asking them to file regular appeal after 27 days of hearing, condoning the delay in filing the petitions by one of them (Mohiuddin of lancer).

August 23, 2009 - Chief state lawyer of the case Anisul Haque submits "concise statement" to the apex court as required for the final appeal hearing.

August 24, 2009 - The Appellate Division fixes October 5 for the start of the appeal hearing.

October 4, 2009 - Chief Justice MM Ruhul Amin constitutes a five- member bench at the apex court for the appeal hearing comprising Justice M Tafazzal Islam, Justice M Abdul Aziz, Justice BK Das, Justice M Mozammel Hossain & Justice SK Sinha.

October 5, 2009 - Final appeal hearing of the case begins at the Appellate Division.

November 12, 2009 - Final appeal hearing ends after 29 days of hearing & the court fixes November 19 for pronouncing the verdict.