

Two found guilty of Malcolm X murder 'to be exonerated'

An admission of a historic miscarriage of justice

NEW YORK: Two men found guilty of the 1965 assassination of civil rights leader Malcolm X are to have their convictions thrown out, one of them posthumously, in an admission by US authorities of a historic miscarriage of justice. Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance will hold a press conference to announce the exoneration of Muhammad A. Aziz and Khalil Islam, his office said Wednesday. Aziz, 83, was sentenced to life in prison in 1966 but was released in 1985. Also sentenced to life, Islam was released in 1987 and died in 2009. "These men did not get the justice that they deserved," Vance said in an interview with The New York Times. "What we can do is acknowledge the error, the severity of the error."

The newspaper said that a 22-month investigation conducted jointly by the Manhattan district attorney's office and lawyers for the two men found that prosecutors, the FBI and the

New York Police Department withheld evidence that would likely have led to the acquittal of the two men. A third man, Mujahid Abdul Halim, 80, confessed to Malcolm X's murder and was released from prison in 2010. Halim claimed during their 1966 trial that Aziz and Islam were innocent.

All three were members of the Black nationalist group Nation of Islam, which Malcolm X had recently renounced. Malcolm X was shot dead by three gunmen on February 21, 1965 as he prepared to deliver a speech in a Manhattan ballroom. Halim was taken into custody at the scene with a bullet wound to the leg. Aziz and Islam were arrested several days later. Both denied involvement in the assassination and provided alibis for where they were at the time of the shooting.

Aziz said in a statement Wednesday that "the

events that brought us here should never have occurred; those events were and are the result of a process that was corrupt to its core — one that is all too familiar - even in 2021." "While I do not need a court, prosecutors, or a piece of paper to tell me I am innocent, I am glad that my family, my friends, and the attorneys who have worked and supported me all these years are finally seeing the truth we have all known, officially recognized," he added.

Innocence Project

According to the Manhattan district attorney's office, the press conference will also be attended by civil rights attorney David Shanies and Barry Scheck, co-director of the Innocence Project. Shanies and the Innocence Project, a nonprofit which has secured the exoneration of hundreds of wrongfully convicted prisoners in

the United States, collaborated with Vance's office in re-investigating the case. The review of the case followed the release of a Netflix docuseries "Who Killed Malcolm X?" The Times said the re-investigation did not identify "who prosecutors now believe really killed Malcolm X, and those who were previously implicated but never arrested are dead."

"Nor did it uncover a police or government conspiracy to murder him," the newspaper said. "It also left unanswered questions about how and why the police and the federal government failed to prevent the assassination." Considered one of the most influential African Americans of the 20th century along with Martin Luther King Jr, Malcolm X was an outspoken advocate of Black rights. Born Malcolm Little in 1925, he fell into petty crime as a young man and became a devout follower of Islam while in prison. — AFP

Convicted murderer executed in Mississippi

MISSISSIPPI: A 50-year-old man convicted of murdering his estranged wife and sexually assaulting his step-daughter was executed on Wednesday in the southern US state of Mississippi, local media said. David Cox, a former truck driver, was put to death by lethal injection at the Mississippi State Penitentiary in Parchman. "I want my children to know that I love them very much and that I was a good man at one time," Cox said in his last words,

according to state department of corrections commissioner Burl Cain, the Clarion Ledger newspaper reported. "Don't ever read anything but the King James bible. I want to thank the commissioner for being so very kind to me. And that's all I got to say," Cox reportedly said.

In 2009, Cox's wife Kim Cox told police that Cox had sexually assaulted her daughter from a previous relationship. Cox spent nine months in prison before being released on bond. After his release, he bought a handgun and broke

into a home where Kim Cox was staying with their two young sons and her daughter. After shooting his estranged wife, Cox sexually assaulted his then 12-year-old step-daughter in front of her dying mother.

Cox was sentenced to death in 2012 after pleading guilty to murder, sexual assault and other charges. Three years ago, Cox began writing to the courts to ask that his lawyers, who were seeking to halt his execution, be fired and that his execution be allowed to go ahead. In one letter, he described himself as a "guilty man worthy of death." In another, he asked a judge to set a date to "execute my body for crimes of in which I did committ (sic) in premeditation, anger and joy." — AFP



David Cox



ABBOTSFORD, BC: A view of flooding in the Sumas Prairie area of Abbotsford British Columbia, Canada, on November 17, 2021. — AFP

Canada death toll set to rise; floods ravage Pacific coast

ABBOTSFORD: Canada is sending the military to help evacuate and support communities hit by "catastrophic" flooding, with the death toll expected to rise after record rainfall on the Pacific coast triggered a state of emergency Wednesday. Officials said downpours in British Columbia this week trapped motorists in mudslides that left at least one dead and four missing, forced thousands of people to flee their homes, and cut off Vancouver and its port. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, in Washington ahead of meeting with his US and Mexican counterparts, said the heavy rains caused "historical and terrible flooding that has disrupted the lives and taken lives of people across BC."

"I can confirm there are hundreds of Canadian Armed Forces members currently headed to British Columbia to help with every-

thing from supplies to evacuation to whatever is needed," he said. British Columbia Premier John Horgan declared a state of emergency and imposed a travel ban, telling reporters "catastrophic" rains, winds and flooding "have devastated entire communities of our province."

"We expect to confirm even more fatalities in the coming days," he added. This week's extreme weather comes after British Columbia suffered record-high summer temperatures that killed more than 500 people, as well as wildfires that destroyed a town. "These events are increasing in regularity because of the effects of human-caused climate change," Horgan commented, just days after world leaders met in Glasgow for the COP26 climate conference.

By Tuesday afternoon the torrential rains had let up. An estimated 300 motorists trapped on highways by mudslides have been airlifted to safety and a few evacuation orders have been rescinded. But Henry Braun, mayor of hard-hit Abbotsford east of Vancouver, told a briefing: "We're not out of this yet." "If we have another weather event like we just went through, we are in deep doo doo," he said. Meanwhile, searches continue for more possible victims, after a woman's body was recovered from a mudslide near Lillooet, 250 kilometers northeast of Vancouver. — AFP