

## 4 sentenced to death, 4 get life-term in Nikunja Bihari murder case



Wife of Nikunja Bihari Debnath with a photo of her slain husband at their Azimpur residence in the city after hearing the verdict yesterday.

**I'm happy, says Nikunja's wife**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The wife of Nikunja Bihari Debnath, who was waiting for the judgement at their Azimpur residence, said, "I am happy with the verdict. I was expecting something like this."

Holding a photograph of her slain husband, she told The Daily Star, "I am also happy that the government took initiative to ensure justice sooner than I expected."

Four persons were sentenced to death and four others jailed for life for killing Debnath, a joint secretary of the LGRD Ministry, about one and a half years ago.

Moments after the pronouncement of the verdict, seven of the eight convicts in the murder case

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COURT CORRESPONDENT

Four persons have been sentenced to death and four others to rigorous imprisonment for life in the sensational Nikunja Bihari Debnath murder case.

Fourth Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka pronounced the verdict at a crowded court room yesterday, one year and four months after the case was filed.

Gous Mian alias Rana, 22, Deen Islam, 21, Shahinoor, 32, and Ramzan, 24, were awarded the capital punishment; while Shukur Ali, 20, Mojibur, 22, Mahinoor, 21, and Morshed alias Hossain, 24, were handed down the prison term.

Ramzan, one of the eight accused in the case, is absconding since the incident while the rest is in the Dhaka Central Jail.

The convicts can appeal in the High Court within seven days from pronouncement of the judgement.

A large crowd thronged the court, its premises and roads close by to hear the judgement.

Judge AFM Aminul Islam in his verdict said that were handed down the sentence as the allegations against them were proved beyond any doubt.

All the accused except Ramzan were in the dock and broke down in tears and some of them shouted at the judge and the investigation officer when they were being taken out of the court.

The judge further said that the punishment of the Ramzan will begin when he surrenders or is arrested.

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**Anniversary of Zia's death today**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 20th anniversary of death of President Ziaur Rahman will be observed today.

On this day (May 30) in 1981, Ziaur Rahman was assassinated at Chittagong Circuit House by a group of disgruntled army personnel.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed, in a message yesterday paid tribute to the memory of the valiant free-

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## SQ Chy detained, arms seized from residence

All followed murder of JCD leader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,

Chittagong

Expelled BNP leader Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury and six of his supporters were detained at Kotwali thana yesterday evening, police said.

Talking to this correspondent at 7-30 pm, a senior police official of CMP said, "We have not yet decided about his arrest. We have brought him for interrogation."

Salahuddin and the six others were picked up from his hilltop residence near Chandanpura in the city after Shahidul Islam Nitol, 30, a JCD activist belonging to the Noman group of BNP, was gunned down by unidentified assailants at 4-30 pm yesterday, police said.

Nitol was killed on the road near Salahuddin's residence, police said.

Police suspected that the assailants fired on Nitol from the hilltop residence.

Nitol suffered fatal bullet injuries in his abdomen and died while being taken to hospital, police and witness said.



Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury

nesses said.

After the incident, a large contingent of police cordoned off Salahuddin's residence and raided it.

Police suspected that the assailants fired on Nitol from the hilltop residence.

Nitol suffered fatal bullet injuries in his abdomen and died while being taken to hospital, police and witness said.

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## All set for Rupsha Bridge construction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The construction of Rupsha Bridge begins today.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the construction work by laying foundation of the bridge over the river Rupsha on Khulna-Mongla Highway at 10-30 am.

Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Jiro Kobayashi and Minister for Communication Anwar Hossain will be present at the inaugural ceremony.

The stage is now set for the ground breaking and foundation laying ceremony of 1360 metre long and 16-metre wide bridge.

Under the project, the southern section of Khulna bypass road will be approximately 8.56 km in length including two canal bridges. The construction work is expected to be completed by December, 2004 as learnt from sources in RHD.

Japanese government has financed the project through JBIC. An agreement to this effect was signed on March 29 this year in Tokyo. JBIC governor Hiroshi Yasuda and Jamil Majid, Ambassador of Bangladesh to Japan signed the agreement for the project.

The general contractor for the

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The site of the proposed Rupsha bridge in Khulna. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate construction of the bridge this morning.

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## 6 ex-army officers divulged state secrets?

JS body suggests punitive action for giving interviews to press

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Defence has recommended action against six former army officers for 'divulging state secrets to the public'.

Of the former army officers in question, four had served as chiefs of the Defence Forces Intelligence, one as the director general of National Security Intelligence (NSI) and the other as a director of the DGFI.

The committee at a meeting held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday viewed that the six former officials violated the Official Secrets Act, 1923 and the oath they had taken by disclosing state secrets to the press. Therefore, they committed punishable offences, the meeting concluded, according to sources.

Four former director generals (DG) of the Defence Forces Intelligence (DGDFI), namely Maj. Gen. Mohabbatian Chowdhury, Maj. Gen. (retd.) MA Matin, Bir Protik, Maj. Gen. Abdul Halim, and former director general of NSI

Brigadier Aminul Haque, and a director of the DGFI Maj. Gen. ZAK Khan had disclosed classified information that went against the state's interest, the meeting observed.

Following the publication of a series of interviews in the Daily Inquilab in October last year, the committee received an application from a citizen and took it up for discussion at a meeting, asking the relevant authorities to submit a detailed report.

Accordingly, the Directorate General of Defence Forces Intelligence (DGDFI) submitted a detailed report at yesterday's meeting stating that the

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