

## Four to die for raping Mahima in Rajshahi



Mahima

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

A special court yesterday sentenced to death all the four accused in the Mahima kidnap and rape case, setting another example of quick dispensation of justice.

The special court in Rajshahi for prevention of repression on women and children ordered that the rapists be hanged by the neck till death.

The four rapists are Farid and Quamrul Hasan Faruk, both workers of the Jatiyatabadi Chattra Dal (JCD), Selim Hossain, a Shibir activist, and Illias Hossain Ujjal, president of the

Puthia Degree Collage unit of the JCD.

On February 15 afternoon this year, the four kidnapped Mahima at dagger point, gagged her with a 'gamchha' (towel) and took her to a sugarcane field near her house. They then raped her by turn and also took photographs.

On February 19 morning, Mahima drank poison to escape the humiliation and disgrace. She was taken to the Puthia Health Complex where she died at around 1:00pm.

When the court passed the verdict yesterday, only Ujjal was in the dock.

The rest are still absconding. The court also fined the convicted Tk 1 lakh each and asked the deputy commissioner to collect the money from them as soon as possible and give it to Mahima's father Abdul Hannan as compensation.

The convicted can appeal before the higher court within seven days. But in case of the absconding three, the verdict will be executed as soon as they are arrested or they surrender before the court.

Abu Hanif, judge of the special court, passed the verdict before a

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## Govt committed to communal harmony, foreign missions told

UNB, Dhaka

The government yesterday apprised foreign missions in Dhaka about security measures taken to ensure peaceful and joyous celebration of Durga Puja, the greatest traditional festival of the Hindu community.

On the eve of the Durga Puja, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Reaz Rahman briefed the members of diplomatic missions and international organisations in Dhaka about the preparations for the festival.

"The government is deeply committed to communal harmony and non-discriminatory protection of religious activities of all citizens of the country," he told the diplomats.

Haris Chowdhury, Political Secretary-1 to the Prime Minister

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## Coalition completes one year in power

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party-led four-party alliance government enters its second year in office today.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will address the nation at 7:15 this evening on radio and TV to speak of her government's performance in the last one year.

She is expected to focus mainly on achievements of her government and explain its efforts as regards such crucial issues as law and order, sources said.

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina, on her part, will hold a news conference at 3:00pm.

Hasina is expected to highlight the government's failure in arresting

crimes, especially the ones related to politics, political persecution, human rights violation, corruption and politicisation of administration among other issues.

Meanwhile, the ruling alliance has chalked out a three-day programme to mark its one year in power.

The programme includes public meetings, rallies and processions across the country.

There will be rallies at the district headquarters on October 10 and upazila headquarters on October 11 before a grand rally at the Paltan Maidan on October 12.

Khaleda and secretary-generals of the parties in the ruling alliance will address the Paltan Maidan rally, to be presided over by Dhaka Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka.

Khoka, also convenor of the city unit of the four-party alliance, held a meeting of the unit at the Nagar Bhaban yesterday and urged all to make the rally a grand success.

While the opposition is out to project the government's failure in curbing crimes and checking spiralling prices of essential commodities, the government is vocal about substantial successes in fighting air pollution, transport hazards and steps in some other areas.

Still, an upward crime trend concerns the country's business community and donors and dominated local politics throughout the first year of the coalition rule.

The government however

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PHOTO: STAR

Curious people flock to the premises of a special court in Rajshahi for prevention of repression on women and children, which sentenced to death all the four accused in the Mahima kidnap and rape case yesterday.

## Govt undecided on separation of judiciary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is yet not sure when the judiciary would be separated from the executive.

"It is a very complex task. We will do it as soon as possible," Law Minister Moudud Ahmed said while briefing newsmen at his office yesterday. He was talking about the activities of his ministry in the last one year.

Moudud said the government would once again seek extension of time for implementation of the 12-point guideline given by the Supreme Court for the separation of judiciary. After extending the deadline for 13 times since 1999, the Supreme Court fixed October 26 to implement it.

About the Bangabandhu Murder Case, the minister said the government has nothing to do in this regard

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## Morshed meets Prince Al-Faisal, seeks more investment

BSS, Riyadh

Bangladesh believes in conflict resolution through dialogue and discussion rather than war and confrontation, Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan said here yesterday.

Khan met his Saudi counterpart Prince Saud Al-Faisal at the latter's office and expressed concern over the catastrophic situation in the West Bank and Gaza.

He lauded the role of Saudi Arabia in providing moral and material support to the Palestinian people.

Discussing a wide range of issues covering the entire gamut of relations between the brotherly countries, the two foreign ministers agreed to hold consultation for revitalisation of the Joint Economic

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## ONE YEAR OF COALITION RULE

# Economy looks up, real sector doesn't

STAR REPORT

A year ago, it looked like a Herculean task to bring the economy back to track from an unbridled expenditure spree, ballooning fiscal deficit and an ever-dwindling foreign exchange reserve.

The balance of payment looked at its most fragile because of export debacles and aid cut. The future looked like a black hole.

A year later, the macro-economy has really been moving north. The leash has been put on the spending machine, reserves steadily rising, remittance shooting up, revenue recovering and exports once again showing resilience.

On the downside, the real econ-

omy has stagnated and investment has become the worst victim. The pervasive question of deteriorating law and order has overshadowed the gains in macroeconomy, the work of a steadfast finance minister.

The situation can be well understood from a review of the country's leading business chamber, the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI).

"Notwithstanding improving economic fundamentals, there is little improvement in business morale. A survey covering 23 leading entrepreneurs show that they are concerned over the law and order situation and uncertainty in the political front," the review says.

"They (entrepreneurs) feel that

the trade and industry will continue to be major casualty of the law and order problems and political turmoil. There is also a deep-rooted dissatisfaction amongst them over the level of governance, particularly in the economic front, which is marked by increasing pressure on the very limited export basket and unpreparedness to face the situation, which is due to arise from further liberalisation of imports under the WTO rules."

The government has successfully arrested the fiscal deficit from 6.9 per cent of the GDP in FY01 to 4.4 per

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## Minibus kills 2 schoolboys in city

UNB, Dhaka

Two minor schoolboys were crushed under the wheels of a minibus near Mirpur Bangla College in the city yesterday morning.

Medical sources said Sujan, 12, and Nazmul, 12, died on the spot when the minibus of Mirpur-Gulistan route ran them over while they were crossing the road at about 9:30am.

Angry people damaged the bus and torched it.

The bodies were sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

## Pre-Puja police raid in city, 1,421 picked

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police and detectives of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police and paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) carried out 'block raids' in last midnight and arrested 1,421 people on various charges.

Two sawn-off rifles and two revolvers were recovered during the nightlong drive.

According to police sources, the raid was conducted to let the Durga Puja in the capital be celebrated without any security trouble.

Meanwhile, the DMP and BDR

have been deployed in the Puja Mondop (venues). The DMP in a press release last night said it can be reached on phone numbers 8616551-3, 8616557, 2222, 2777, 2666, 2444, 2333 should there be any trouble in or near the Puja Mondop.

Ramna police arrested 205 people, including 29 people on criminal charges, 77 men and 94 women on charge of anti-social activities and five men for being drunk.

Dhanmondi police picked 85 people, six women and 79 men for

anti-social activities. Lalbagh police arrested eight women and 63 men on various charges.

Kotwali police arrested five women and 94 men for anti-social activities. Hazaribagh police arrested 19 people while Kamrangirchar police nabbed 13. Motijheel police arrested 102 people, of them three women and 11 men were arrested for anti-social activities.

Sabujbagh police arrested 34, Khilgaon police 30, Shyampur police 36 and Sutarpur police 62 people on various charges.

Gulshan police arrested 61 people, Badda 78, Uttara 74, Airport police 31, Cantonment police 19, Tejgaon police 58, Pallabi police 73, Moahammadpur police 65 and Kafrui police 54 people during the raid.

The detectives also arrested 38 people.

Besides, 59 check posts and fined 661 vehicles and seized 20 others for not having proper documents.