



Rahid Hasan Sumon and Sajid Hasan Sujon, the two brothers convicted in Sutrapur double murder case, being taken to jail after their death sentence (left); and parents of Mohsin, one of the murder victims, pray for justice prior to pronouncement of the verdict yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

Sutrapur double murder

16 to walk the gallows

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER

Sixteen people have been sentenced to death, three to life term and one to seven years in prison in the Sutrapur double murder case.

The convicts include Rahid Hasan Sumon and Sajid Hasan Sujon, sons of Nasibun Ahmed, president of the city Mahila Awami League. They have been given the death penalty for murdering Mohammad Mohsin and Mohammad Saem, two local youths, on September 15, 2000.

Sumon's father Sultan Uddin Ahmed and 13 others have been

acquitted of charges.

Shahed Noor Uddin, judge of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1, Dhaka Division, gave the verdict yesterday in a crowded courtroom.

The seventeen accused, who were in custody, were brought to the dock at 1:00pm under tight security. Munna Kasai alias Seru Miah and Sultan Uddin Ahmed, who had been on bail, were also present in the dock.

The others sentenced to death are: Mohammad Sharif, Mohammad Nadim, Mohammad Ramzan, Chhoto Ramzan, 'Baro'

Ripon, Moktar, Bashirul Islam alias Biddiut, Nazrul, Sankar Raskhit, Mintu, Titu, Aziz alias 'Garage Aziz', Chacha Anwar alias Anu and Jahangir.

Of the convicts, Nazrul, Sankar, Mintu, Titu, Aziz, Anu and Jahangir were tried in their absence.

The court found them guilty of murdering the two young men.

The court also found Anisur Rahman alias Anis, Subal Das and Mokhtar guilty of committing the crime and gave them life term in prison.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Some solace, at least

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amin Miah, father of one of the two youths killed at the Gandaria Rifles Club about three years ago, yesterday expressed satisfaction with the judgement on his son's death.

"If a special tribunal had not dealt with the case, it would have taken more than 20 years," the father of Mohammad Mohsin told newsmen after the verdict on the Sutrapur double murder case.

Sixteen people, including Rahid Hasan Sumon and Sajid Hasan Sujon, have been sentenced to death, three to life imprisonment and one to seven years in jail.

The Speedy Trial Tribunal-1, Dhaka Division handed down the verdict, clearing Sumon's father Sultan Uddin Ahmed and 13 others of charges.

Amin Miah now wants immediate execution of the verdict.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



Fakruddin Ahmad

None would be forced to retire, says BB governor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Bank (BB) Governor Fakruddin Ahmad yesterday announced that that none of its officials and employees would be forced to retire under the Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme (VERS) taken up for a reform in the central bank.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

BB staff foil board meeting, vent anger on directors' cars

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Angry employees and officials of the Bangladesh Bank (BB) yesterday thwarted a board meeting on rationalisation of manpower of the central bank.

At least three directors of the bank were forced to leave office and cars of two directors came under attacks by demonstrators.

Resident Representative of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Marijn Verhoeven and two foreign associates were chased and teased by the angry central bank staffers when they entered the bank compound to go to the IMF office in the bank's main building.

The other visitors who entered the bank compound with cars and minibuses were also barred from entering the main building of the bank.

Meanwhile, the BB Collective Bargaining Agent backtracked on an ultimatum to the governor of the central bank after talks with Finance Minister and Planning M Saifur Rahman last night, says a press release.

The seven-day ultimatum was issued Tuesday as part of an ongoing demonstration against a possible job cut move.

Yesterday, about 200 employees and officials demonstrated in front

of the bank before the start of the meeting at 2:00pm.

All activities of the bank came to a halt because of the one and a half hours agitation beginning at 1:30pm. The demonstrators brought out processions and staged rallies with slogans against the proposed early voluntary retirement scheme.

Dr M Alauddin, director of the bank, left the premises, as the employees kicked his car. Chairman of the Board of Revenue Dr Shoeb Ahmed also left office in the face of resistance.

Economist Professor

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

Civil society watchdog on poverty schemes urged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a policy review session yesterday demanded creation of a civil society watchdog to monitor implementation of poverty alleviation strategies.

They said the government's mechanism to ensure transparency in implementing any programme has lost credibility to a great extent. So, the civil society must be involved in designing, monitoring as well as implementing anti-poverty programmes.

They were speaking at the regional consultation of National Policy Review Forum 2003 organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), the Prothom Alo and The Daily Star at Mymensingh yesterday.

Advocate Anisur Rahman Khan, president of the district Nagorik

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Land reform, fair farm prices key to spark rural economy

Regional consultation at Mymensingh told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, from Mymensingh

Speakers at a dialogue in Mymensingh yesterday called for increasing investment in the agriculture sector, ensuring fair prices of farmers' produce and reforming land to add a spark to rural economy.

They also called for soft loan facility, greater non-farm activities for the landless and introduction of the latest technology in agriculture at the discussion organised jointly by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), The Daily Star and The



Prothom Alo.

Dr Rehman Sobhan, chairman of the CPD, delivered the welcome address at the function chaired by S M Altaf, dean of Bangladesh Agriculture University (AUB).

Md Mustafizur Rahman, vice-

chancellor of the school, spoke as the chief guest and Professor M M Akash read out the keynote paper at the event on 'Rural Economy: Agriculture and Non-farm'.

Local experts mostly from AUB, political leaders, NGO activists, government officials and farmers' representatives spoke on the occasion.

Dr Rehman said all past governments neglected local experts in policy formulation which was dominated by foreign consultants.

The CPD has taken an initiative

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Another suicide attack claims 34 in Chechnya

AFP, Moscow

Up to 30 people were reported killed Wednesday when a female suicide bomber blew herself up at a crowded religious event in Russia's breakaway republic of Chechnya, the second major rebel attack there within 48 hours.

Chechen emergencies minister Ruslan Avtayev said that 30 people died in the suicide attack in the eastern village of Iliskhan-Yurt.

Another 150 people were wounded in the blast, of which 50 were in a critical condition, he told the ITAR-TASS news agency.

These figures followed conflicting accounts of the death toll, with Chechen Prosecutor General Vladimir Kravchenko giving the number of dead at eight, while other officials said more than 20 people had been killed.

The attack took place during a religious procession attended by 15,000 people on the outskirts of

Iliskhan-Yurt, a village some 45 kilometres (28 miles) east of the capital Grozny.

Law enforcement officials quoted by Interfax said the target of Wednesday's attack could have been Chechnya's chief administrator, Akhmad Kadyrov, who was present but escaped unhurt.

ITAR-TASS reported that four of Kadyrov's bodyguards were killed when the bomber set off a belt of explosives strapped to her body as she tried to break through to a platform where the republic's pro-Moscow leadership was standing.

The suicide bomber blew herself up at around 3:00 pm Moscow time (1100 GMT), not far from a mosque during prayer, Musa Magomadov, a police investigator who was at the scene, told AFP by telephone.

Deputy Prime Minister Movsar Khamidov told Interfax that "the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Buriganga grabbers go at it again



PHOTO: STAR

Scores of dredgers have been scouring sands from the bottom of the Buriganga to fill up parts of the river in a fresh attempt to encroach on it.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The battering on Buriganga goes unabated with at least half a dozen sites being filled up into the river at Kamrangir Char area.

Local people claimed that the entire stretch of Buriganga, from Kamrangir Char to the city protection embankment, near the Steel Bridge, has been sold out to some influential individuals, who "have shown apparently proper documents when the local people challenged".

But which government body sold the land and who bought it could not be ascertained, as there is confusion as to who owns the land. Influential people appear to be taking full advantage of this confusion.

An official of the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Holiday

The offices of The Daily Star will remain closed today (Thursday) on the occasion of Eid-e-Miladunnabi.

Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper tomorrow (Friday).

Raw duty deal on cards

Import duty structure revision plan may hit industry

NAZMUL AHSAN

The government plans to increase import duty on 3,500 raw materials by 2.50 per cent, which may hit the real sector hard.

As a double-edged sword comes another plan to slash duty on 2,000 finished goods by 2.50 per cent in the next budget, official sources said.

The government has also decided to reduce the slabs of import duty from four to three tiers. The new slabs would be 10 per cent, 20 per cent and 30 per cent, instead of 7.50 per cent, 15 per cent, 22.50 per cent and 32.50 per cent.

The revised duty structure will fetch the government an extra Tk 2,900 crore in revenue.

Textiles, light engineering, leather, electronics and plastic industries are likely to feel the pinch if the new tax plan goes ahead.

Under pressure from donors to reduce import duty to two tiers, the government recently informed the International Monetary Fund (IMF)

of its decision to reduce the tax tiers, sources said.

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) has also been negotiating with its member countries including Bangladesh for introduction of one-slab import duty.

The national budget for fiscal 2003-2004 will be tabled in parliament on June 12.

Collection of import duty may rise 23 to 25 per cent next fiscal from this fiscal's Tk 11,815 crore because of the restructuring.

National Board of Revenue (NBR) officials said earning from the import duty during July-April period of the current fiscal has crossed the target by around Tk 200 crore.

Under the planned restructuring, import duty on some 4,500 intermediary and semi-finished items would be 20 per cent in the next budget, according to sources. At present, these items have 15 and 22.50 per cent duty.