

## Three to die for killing woman

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A speedy tribunal in Dhaka yesterday sentenced three persons to death in a murder case.

Judge Shahed Noor Uddin of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1, gave death sentence to three persons for killing a 25-year-old woman after raping her in Narayanganj in April, 1999.

The convicts are Mohammad Babul Miah, Mohammad Abdus Selam alias Salam and Mohammad Mojibur Rahman.

All the convicts were tried in absence. The court also fined them TK 5000 each.

The punishment of the fugitives will be effective from the date of their surrender or arrest and the convicts can appeal to the High Court against the verdict in 30 days after their surrender, the judgement said.

Earlier, the prosecution and the state defence lawyers completed their arguments and the court recorded statements of 10 prosecution witnesses.

The prosecution story in brief is that Mosammat Taslima Begum of Rupganj

## 'Keep newspaper offices closed on holidays'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sangbadik Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SSKOP), in a statement yesterday, called upon the newspaper owners not to keep offices open on government holidays.

The statement was issued after a meeting where the journalists and press workers decided that they would enjoy all government holidays and hawkers would not distribute any newspapers on the following day.

The meeting was held at the National Press Club with President of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalist (BFUJ) Gias Kamal Chowdhury in the chair.

According to the decision of SSKOP, the newspaper offices would remain close on March 2 on the occasion of holy Ashura and the hawkers would not distribute newspapers on the following day.

SSKOP leaders signed a joint statement after the meeting.

in Narayanganj district was gangraped by Babul and two others at her home on April 2 in 1999. Later, the gang strangled her.

Victim's mother Abia Khatun filed a rape case with murder with Rupganj Police Station on April 19 the same year.

Police pressed charges against the three on May 13 the same year and the court framed charges against them on July 17 last year.

Special Public Prosecutor Abdul Latif Talukder appeared for the state while Advocate Mojibur Rahman for the accused.

## Remove controversial members from censor board

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Film Producers Distributors Association (BFPDA) has launched a non-cooperation movement to press its demand for the removal of controversial members from the film censor board.

The association has also decided not to submit films to the board for its approval until their demands are met.

In a statement, the association also demanded immediate dissolution of the present Bangladesh Film Censor Board to stop corruption and immoral activities of the controversial members.

The BFPDA, at a recent meeting, declared Anwar Al Din, a staff reporter of the Ittefaq and a member of the board, 'unwarranted' as his activities are not appropriate for the post which deals with moral issues and for receiving illegal financial benefits.

The statement said Al Din, being a member of the board, regularly visits the offices of different producers, distributors and shooting spots to meet his 'immoral desire' with the threat of an influential political quarter.

Besides, he took huge amount of money illegally from the producers and distributors by raising various objections against their films, it added.

The association also demanded inclusion of its president in the film censor board as ex-officio member.

When contacted, Al Din termed the allegations as completely false.



On the occasion of the second round of 12th National Immunisation Day, a child was administered two drops of polio vaccine at Mugdapara Urban Primary Health Care Project in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## JS body refuses to probe alleged procurement graft in BB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The parliamentary standing committee on finance ministry yesterday turned down a member's proposal to probe some alleged irregularities in procuring 20 money-sorting machines by the Bangladesh Bank (BB).

The proposal from Jatiya Party lawmaker Moshirur Rahman Ranga, made at the committee meeting at Jatiya Sangsad (JS) Bhaban, was for forming a body to investigate the allegations. Ranga also suggested for the proposed probe team to look into some incidents of fake note recovery at

the BB.

But Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman rejected the proposal right away while Finance Secretary Zakir Hossain Khan argued that forming such a probe body would only worsen the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund's bad impressions about corrupt practices in Bangladesh, meeting sources said.

In course of the meeting, a member alleged it was due to incompetence of National Board of Revenue (NBR) that

the government could not achieve its revenue collection target of Tk 11,703 crore for the July-December half of the current fiscal year.

Presided over by committee chairman Mushfiqur Rahman, the meeting recommended for preparing a list of such NBR officials who were working at the same place for more than three years.

The committee also decided to visit Chittagong Customs House sometime soon to inspect its operations.

## Reinstatement of 70 ADAB staff demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Employees of the Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB), a coordinating body of non-governmental organisations of Bangladesh, yesterday staged a sit-in in front of its head office demanding reinstatement of their retrenched colleagues.

They also submitted a memorandum to the chairperson of ADAB on February 26 demanding payment of their arrears.

The ADAB authorities terminated 70 employees illegally and they were not paid dues according to the service rules, the employees said.

The staff also said the ADAB activities came to a standstill as the government stopped releasing fund to it bringing allegation of political biasness against the organisation.

They said the academic activities of their children are being hampered due to financial crisis.

They urged the ADAD authorities to free the organisation from politics to improve relationship with the government.

The terminated staff said they would continue sit-in until their demand is met.

## Japan urged to develop exclusive industrial zone

UNB, Dhaka

Speakers at a workshop yesterday sought Japanese assistance in developing an exclusive industrial zone in the country for attracting foreign direct investment (FDI).

Representatives from trade and industry-related government institutions at a workshop titled "Supporting Industrial Development in the LDCs: What Can We Learn from Assistance to ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) and Recent Donor Approaches?" also urged Japanese entrepreneurs to increase their investment in Bangladesh.

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) organised the workshop at Sonargaon Hotel.

Speaking at the meeting, a visiting four-member JICA consultant team sought some comprehensive approach for industrial development in Bangladesh.

Recently, the team has conducted a study on supporting industrial development in least developed countries (LDCs) and would submit its report before the government soon, sources said.

The study highly focuses on development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) for economic development in Bangladesh, sources added.

"Despite availability of cheap labour in the country, regulatory and transportation costs in Bangladesh are higher than any other ASEAN country," Teshima Naoyuki, leader of the consultant team, told the meeting.

Higher business costs, poor governance, downside in law and order and lack of infrastructure are impeding flow of FDI in Bangladesh, the consultants observed.

However, officials of the Board of Investment present there did not subscribe to the observation.

Speakers also demanded coordination among the government's programmes for a better investment climate and advocated for long-term financing programmes.

The Japanese government initiated the dialogue as part of its decision to change its strategy for providing assistance to private sector development in the LDCs, mainly in the SMEs, sources said.

The process started in January and would be completed by May, they added.

Teshima later told the news agency that positive sides of investment climate in the country far outweigh negative sides adding that world business community, however, felt

investment scenario in Bangladesh was not congenial.

Pointing out that business community always looks for best comparative advantages, Teshima said, "If your country lags behind other countries even a little bit, they would not come here."

Referring to a Japanese company, which came in Bangladesh for the incentives offered by the government, he said it was now frustrated due to excessive regulatory costs.

Among others, Mitsuyoshi Kawasaki, additional resident representative of the JICA, Hans Farnhammer, second secretary of European Commission in Dhaka, and representatives from Asian Development Bank, United Nations Development Programme, Bangladesh Export Promotion Zones Authority and various donor agencies attended the workshop.

## Death anniversary of Shaheed Tajul today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



The 20th death anniversary of Shaheed Tajul Islam, a central leader of Bangladesh Trade Union Kendra, will be observed today, says a press release.

Different political organisations took elaborate programmes to observe the day.

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) will place floral wreaths at the portrait of Shaheed Tajul Islam at its office at 11 am.

On the occasion, CPB will also hold a rally at Muktangan in the city.

The BTUK will also hold a discussion in the city to mark the Shaheed Tajul Day.

Tajul Islam, a worker of Adamjee Jute Mills was gunned down by criminals while he was leading a procession during a strike called by Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad in 1984 during the autocratic regime of Ershad.

Tajul Islam joined the Adamjee Jute Mills as a worker after completing his education from Dhaka University to organise labour movement.

## Amendment bill on Speedy Trial Act placed in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury yesterday placed the Speedy Trial Act Amendment Bill 2004 in the Jatiya Sangsad seeking a two-year extension.

The act was scheduled to expire on April 9 this year.

An emergency meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on home ministry held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban last night scrutinised the bill. The committee is likely to submit the report of the bill to the parliament today. The bill will be passed in the current session of the parliament.

The amendment bill rationalised that as many criminal cases including those of extortion and snatching were disposed quickly under the Speedy Trial Act, garnering faith of the commoners on justice, it is necessary to extend the duration of the applicability of the act to keep on succeeding in curbing crimes.

Sources, however, pointed out that the main rationale behind extending

the term of the bill is to use the law in quelling the agitation programmes taken by the opposition.

Opposition political parties including the main opposition Awami League has long been accusing the government of using the Speedy Trial Act to harass the political opponents.

Earlier, on February 23 a cabinet meeting with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the chair approved the extension proposal of the Speedy Trial Act 2002 for two more years through an amendment.

The law provides for a special court to try offenders in a period ranging from 30 to 60 days. It suggests rigorous imprisonment of two to five years for crimes disrupting social peace.

Offences under the law include hindrance to normal air, rail, road and river traffic movement, vandalism on transport and public and private property, mugging, illicit toll collection, violence in public places, obstruction to tender bidding and works of government officers and employees and their relatives.