

Five to die for killing farmer

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Narayanganj

A court yesterday awarded five people, four in absentia, to death sentence for killing a peasant for a piece of land at Mahmudpur in Fatulla.

District and Sessions Judge Mohammad Abul Mansur handed down the death penalty in a crowded court with only arrested Kalu Mia alias Kaosar, 28, on the dock in the noon for slaughtering Abdul Awal.

Awal's son-in-law Quddus Ali, 30, and his associates Hajrat Ali, 32, Zulhash, 35, and Firoze Mia, 33, have been absconding since the murder on January 14 in 1999.

Quddus, mastermind of the murder to capture 18 decimal of land of his father-in-law, was the main accused in the case.

Police had arrested Kaosar, Quddus Ali and Firoz soon after the incident. They gave confessional statements to a first class magistrate. At the initial stage of trial, all the four fugitives remained present in the court, but they went hiding after securing bail from the High Court.

Abdul Awal was slaughtered when he left his home for Dhaka for a work relating to land on January 14, 1999. His body was recovered from near Rahim Market at Shanarpar in Shiddhirganj.

Indigenous people demand return of acquired farmland

Probe underway into unlawful eviction by Dinajpur forest officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Indigenous people of Dinajpur yesterday protested what they called unlawful acquisition of their farmland by forest officials in the name of the government's social forestry project.

Indigenous leaders of the Jatiya Adivasi Parishad (National Indigenous Council) held a protest rally on Nababganj upazila office premises as a high official from the Ministry of Environment and Forest went to the area to investigate land-grabbing allegations against forest department officials of Dinajpur.

The investigation was opened after two forest department officials were suspended following

newspaper reports last year on unlawful eviction activities by forest officials.

Ashraf Ali, joint secretary of the ministry, is investigating the case.

The leaders at the rally, which was also joined by Bangla-speaking farmers of the area, demanded immediate return of the acquired land and withdrawal of "false cases" filed against farmers by the local forest department.

They specifically brought allegations of harassment and forcible eviction against the local beat officer and district forest officer.

Shuvash Mardi, president of the Parishad, chaired the rally and Rabindranath Saren, general secretary, spoke as chief guest.



Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil speaks at the 'meet the reporters' programme at Dhaka Reporters Unity Auditorium yesterday while DRU President Alamgir Hossain, right, and General Secretary Saleh Sibby, left, look on.

No sign of an end to DU stalemate

DU CORRESPONDENT

There is no sign of an end to current stalemate at Dhaka University as the teachers continued their class boycott yesterday.

The Duta (Dhaka University Teachers Association) has been boycotting the classes since February 28 demanding immediate arrest and punishment of the culprits responsible for the deadly machete attack on Prof Humayun Azad, and sending him abroad for treatment.

Duta General Secretary Dr. Mohammad Akhtaruzzaman has told The Daily Star that normalcy would return to the campus as soon as the government meets their demands.

A general meeting of the Duta has been called on March 17 or 18 to discuss about their new programmes.

Meanwhile, 25 DU senate members in a statement urged Duta to resume classes and bring back normalcy on the campus.

Meanwhile, different student organisations continued their

demonstration on the campus yesterday to press home their demands.

Awami League backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) brought out a procession and held a

rally on the campus demanding immediate implementation of its 11-point demand.

Meanwhile, the BCL has withdrawn its indefinite strike call at DU.

One killed as BDR opens fire on mob

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

One was killed and six others were injured as Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) members opened fire on an unruly mob at Monirampur upazila in Jessore Saturday night.

Rickshaw-van puller Nazrul Islam, 35, son of late Sohrab Sardar of Govindapur village, was killed and Abul Hossain, 28, Hameed, 48, Abdur Razzak, 35, Shafiqul, 35, Kaoser, 55, and an unidentified rickshaw-van puller were injured. They are receiving treatment at Jessore

General Hospital.

Police said the BDR men shot at least 15-round bullets when they came under attack at Fakir Road after seizing smuggled Indian sugar. The mob set a barricade on Jessore-Saikhira road to protest the BDR firings, disrupting vehicular movement till 10:30pm.

The BDR seized 12 bags of sugar and arrested the smugglers Razzak and Shafiqul.

A tense situation is prevailing at Monirampur following the incident.



PHOTO: STAR

Citycell Chief Executive Officer Chris Maloy yesterday distributed food and other goods among 2500 families who lost their belongings following a devastating fire on March 4 at Bau Bazar in the city.



Ajmeri Rownaq Ara Begum, wife of Wing Cmdr. (ret'd) MA Baaque, passed away at the CMH from old age complications at the age of 75, says a

press release.

She left behind her husband, two sons, one daughter, six grandchildren and a host of relatives and friends.

Her Namaz-e-Janaza will be held at the Old DOHS Jame Masjid after Asr prayers today.

DHAKA TODAY

Francois Ozon retrospective

Zahir Raihan Film Society will screen two films in a retrospective to young French filmmaker Francois Ozon. The films are 'Sous le sable' (Under the Sand) (2000) and 'Les Amants Criminels' (Criminal Lovers) (1999) Venue: Alliance Francaise auditorium, Mirpur Road. Time: 5.00pm and 7.00pm.

Movie show

Dhaka University Film Society will screen two films titled 'Schindler's List' by Steven Spielberg and 'Breathless' by Jean Luc Godard. Venue: German Cultural Centre, Dhanmondi. Time: 3.00pm and 5.30pm.

Film show

Academy Film Society will screen a German film titled 'Run Lola Run' (1999). Venue: Society auditorium, 21/C Jigatola. Time: 6.30pm.

Recitation

Bangladesh Abriti Samannay Parishad organises a session of recitation. Venue: Liberation War Museum, Segun Bagicha. Time: 6.30pm.

Drama

Swapna, a cultural organisation, will stage a drama titled 'Ekti Swarnaghatito Durghatana' directed by Nirhar Adhikan. Venue: Mohila Samity auditorium, New Bailey Road. Time: 7.00pm.

Workshop

Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) organises a training workshop on

'Gender sensitive reporting.' Venue: DRU auditorium, Tophkhana Road. Time: 10.45am.

Seminar

Bangladesh Sangjukta Sramik Federation will hold a seminar on 'Quality work: Role of the trade union'. Venue: Mohanagar Natyamancha, Gulistan. Time: 10.00am.

Inauguration

The inauguration of a mobile clinic to provide healthcare services to mother and child will be held with State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Mizanur Rahman Sinha as chief guest. Venue: Mohammadpur Fertility Service and Training Centre. Time: 10.00am.

Blood donation

Orca blood for life organises a voluntary blood donation camp. Venue: Independent University, Baridhara. Time: 10.00am.

Conference

A conference of Jubo Mohila League will be held with Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina as chief guest. Venue: Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh. Time: 10.00am.

CAB discussion

Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) will hold a discussion to mark the International Consumers Day. Venue: CIRDP auditorium, Tophkhana Road. Time: 3.00pm.

Dhaka-Delhi disputes

Regular dialogues can resolve all: Sikri

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri yesterday observed that all disputes between Dhaka and Delhi could be resolved through regular dialogues and discussions.

The issues of disputes between the two neighbours, as she pointed out, are: river-linking projects, sharing of Ganges water, mounting trade deficit, investment-hurdles and tariff and non-tariff barriers to export from Bangladesh.

Speaking on Bangladesh-India economic relations at a meeting organised by Economic Reporters' Forum (ERF) at National Press Club, she said the people, particularly the industry representatives, of India were very keen to further develop relations with Bangladesh,

which she said was India's largest economic partner among the Saarc member-countries.

In reference to Dhaka's concern over India's river linking projects, the envoy said, "We've assured one and all that the concerns of neighbouring countries including Bangladesh will be taken into consideration and no country's interest would be ignored."

But she found Bangladesh's media to be very critical of India, which she believed was caused by misperceptions. "An information gap has created the perception gap between India and Bangladesh's media," she maintained.

Alluding to the \$100-million Indian grant for poverty alleviation in other Saarc countries, Sikri said it reflected that India was committed to improve conditions of all the peoples in the region. "Then, why do Bangladesh's media try to portray India as if it wants to take steps harmful to Bangladesh people's interests?" she wondered.

The high commissioner categorically denied any imposition of special trade barriers by India against Bangladesh products. "All apparent tariff and non-tariff trade barriers come from technical reasons, which can be solved through mutual discussions," she noted.

On the huge trade deficit, heavily in favour of India, Sikri said 80 percent of Indian goods imported by Bangladesh were industrial raw materials, such as chemicals, yarns and fabrics. Here, these items get value-added and these generate employment and increase competitiveness of Bangladesh's products, she added.

The newly appointed Indian envoy said the gap was gradually reducing as Bangladesh's export to India posted a 67 percent growth last year.

She also pointed out that India allowed duty free access to 79 items from Bangladesh and preferential treatment to 2,000 items. Besides, Indian industries are actively eyeing Bangladesh as a major destination for their foreign direct investment, Sikri added.

Referring to the investment data of Board of Investments, the high commissioner said India was the ninth largest investor in Bangladesh with a total investment of \$405 million in 114 projects.

She envisages creation of a South Asian economic union, free movement of goods and people and a common regional currency in the near future.

ERF President Monwar Hossain also spoke in the meeting.



Aleem-Al-Razee's death anniversary today

UNB, Dhaka

The 19th death anniversary of Dr Aleem-Al-Razee, a political leader, jurist and educationist, will be observed today with due solemnity.

Different voluntary and socio-cultural organisations and educational institutions have drawn up programmes to pay tributes to the late leader.

Shandhani National Eye Donation Society, Tangail Zila Samity, City Law College, Nagarpur Government College and Dr Aleem-Al-Razee High School at Lawhati, Tangail will organise discussion meetings on life and works of Dr Razee.

Tangail Zila Samity and Dr Aleem-Al-Razee Memorial Council members will place wreaths and offer feteah at Razee's grave at Banani in the city. The Memorial Council will feed destitute children and hold milad mehfal.

President Iajuddin Ahmed paid glowing tributes to Dr Razee on his death anniversary.

"Dr Razee's role in establishing and fostering democracy and the rule of law in the country was uncompromising and praiseworthy," he said in a message yesterday.



Appeal for help

Dibbo, a playful boy of five, is now weak, restless and coiled owing to stomach pain followed by the enlargement of liver and weak spleen, says a press release.

He is a student of kindergarten level at Methodist English Medium School.

Dibbo is a patient of Thalassemia which was first detected when he was three months old.

Since then, a bag of O-positive group blood was required every 21 days to sustain healthy blood level in his body, and his well-wishers had donated that blood to keep him alive for last five years.

Thalassemia patients are more susceptible to various diseases because of weak immune system, and their biggest problem is the accumulation of iron in the body due to transfusion of blood from outside. This leads to enlargement of liver and weakens the spleen

reducing the life-expectancy of the patient

The only known medical solution for this problem is bone-marrow transplant that costs from Tk 60 lakh to Tk 1 crore depending on the countries concerned.

A forum has been established by artist Mahmuduzzaman Babu and writer Anisul Haq to send Dibbo abroad for treatment.

Interested persons willing to help Dibbo can contact Mahmuduzzaman Babu on his cellphone 0175 010 708 or Dibbo's father Mainul Hossain Mukul on e-mail mh mukul @ yahoo.com, or Dibbo's mother Salima Sharmin on 0172 697 512.



Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) organised a seminar on 'prevention of misuse of Red Cross and Red Crescent emblem' at its national headquarters yesterday.

WEATHER TODAY

No change in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry over the country till 6pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period, Met Officesaid.

Highest temperature 36.4 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and the lowest 15.7 degree Celsius at Sirimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 6.08 pm today and rises at 6:07 am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min Morning	Evening	
Dhaka	34.0	23.5	69	40
Chittagong	35.5	20.5	56	61
Rajshahi	34.0	19.6	78	60
Khulna	35.0	21.8	92	58
Barisal	35.1	20.8	90	42
Sylhet	34.6	21.6	54	42
Cox's Bazar	35.2	20.0	61	58