

USE AS CAMEL JOCKEY

Five get life for bid to smuggle out child

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A tribunal in Dhaka yesterday sentenced five people to life for attempt to traffic a child to Dubai on February 9, 2002.

Judge Shamsul Arefin of the Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression-5 gave the verdict for trafficking the six-year-old baby Sohel alias Kamran.

The convicts are Mohammad Yunus Miah, Abul Kamal, Matur Rahman alias Motaleb, Mostafa Kamal and Mahima Begum.

Of the convicts, Mohammad Yunus Miah and Abul Kamal were present in the court while Motaleb, Mostafa and Mahima were tried in absentia.

The sentence on the fugitives will come into effect on the date of their arrest or surrender, the judgments said.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence wrapped up their arguments and the court recorded statements of 18 prosecution witnesses.

In the case filed with Mirpur Police Station, it was alleged that Mohammad Yunus Miah kidnapped the child from the trade fair venue at Sher-e-Bangla

Nagar on February 9, 2002. He later sold the boy for Tk 3,000 to Abul Kamal and other accused, who confined the baby boy in a rented house of East Monipur in the city's Mirpur area. They were waiting to traffic him to Dubai to be employed as a camel jockey.

But acting on a tip off, Masud Parvez, a Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association official, with the help of Mirpur police rescued Sohel from the house the next day.

He said indigenous peoples' lands have

for long been usurped, their culture denigrated or directly attacked, languages and customs suppressed, wisdom and traditional knowledge overlooked or exploited, and sustainable ways of developing natural resources dismissed. Moreover, some have even faced the threat of extinction, he added.

Indigenous people have been seeking for UN support for many years, Annan said, adding a dialogue and partnership with the UN has been launched in the context of the International Decade.

He called upon the governments, inter-governmental organisations and civil society to work to empower indigenous people and ensure their participation in decisions that affect their lives.

"On this day, let us remember the most fundamental principles of the UN Charter -- peace, development and human rights -- and reaffirm our determination to broaden the circle of solidarity for indigenous people," Annan said.

He said the dialogue held at CIRDPA auditorium and presided over by CPD Chairman Rehman Sobhan.

The commerce minister emphasised product diversification in agriculture and setting up more agro-based industries to increase the export volume and diversify the export basket. He said an increased export of agricultural products would have a direct impact on poverty alleviation.

Choudhury said a high-powered committee would be formed with representation of all stakeholders to identify areas and ways to increase exports to Europe and Japan.

Ambassador of Japan Motsuhoro Horiguchi said the Japanese consumers are very sensitive to product quality. For example, he said, "They are ready to pay much higher prices for safe food."

In his keynote paper, Professor Mostafizur Rahman pointed out that Bangladesh fails to make proper utilisation of the EU offer for duty- and quota-free access of goods under its Everything But Arms programme.

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Pointing to shortage of arms and ammunition and modern transport, Iqbal said the force would be equipped with the arms from the biggest arms haul in Chittagong by August 20, adding Rab went four months back in transport purchase, as a cabinet committee cancelled a tender for vehicles.

"We don't have enough arms -- we carry out drives with arms borrowed from the army or police," he told the journalists.

Rab arrested at least 646 people, including two who figured on the police list of top criminals and underground operatives.

"Rab will carry out its duty during the upcoming Saarc summit to ensure safety and security of dignitaries," Iqbal said.

Rab officials such as Lieutenant Colonel Chowdhury Fazlul Bari, Lt Col Hafizur Rahman, additional DIG Hasan Mahmood Khandker, Lt Col Aminul Islam, Lt Col Mirza Ejazul Rahman, Commander Saber Sharif, Major Rafiqul Islam and Captain Nasim were also present.

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