

Four get life for raping girl

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Four people have been sentenced to life imprisonment for gang-raping a girl at Shibalaya upazila in Manikganj district on April 28 last year.

The four—Aku Gazi, Shahadat Hossain alias Khadu, Abdul Mannan and Lutfor Pramanik—were convicted for raping Shilpi Chaterjee.

Of the convicts, Aku and Khadu were present in the court during the delivery of the judgement while Lutfor and Mannan were tried in absentia.

Judge Abu Hanif of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-3 yesterday pronounced the verdict at 1:30pm at a jam-packed courtroom.

The court acquitted Abdus Salam as the charge brought against him could not be proved.

The court also fined them Tk 20,000 each and asked the collector (District Magistrate) of Manikganj to realise the fine and pay it to the victim.

The punishment of the fugitives will be effective from the date of their arrest or surrender, the judge said.

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

In the case filed with Shibalaya Police Station, Shilpi Chaterjee alleged that a gang of assailants led by Abdus Salam entered their house at village Arua in Manikganj district breaking open the door at about 12:30am on April 28 last year and beat her parents.



PHOTO: STAR

Police intercept a procession of Chhatra League near Doel roundabout on Dhaka University campus yesterday when its leaders and activists were marching towards Shikha Bhaban to submit a memorandum protesting the recent attack on its rally by Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal.

AUGUST 21 GRENADE ATTACK Hasina blames Speaker for not allowing discussion

UNB, Dhaka

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday criticised Speaker Barrister Jamir Uddin Sircar for not allowing Awami League (AL) MPs to discuss the August 21 grenade attack.

She said that the Speaker did not pay heed to AL's demand for discussing the August 21 grenade attack on the instruction from the prime minister.

Hasina said the policy of the BNP-Jamaat alliance government is to "victimise the victim" and that was once again proved in the House on Wednesday.

Her comment came when Comilla District Bar Association leaders, led by its Vice-President Advocate Abul Kashem and General Secretary Hashem Khan met the AL president at her Dhanmondi residence in the afternoon.

She said when different countries were expressing their strong condemnation of the grenade attack, the Parliament did not accept the adjournment motion pleaded by the AL lawmakers.

"This proves that the government itself had patronised the August 21 grenade attack. This government victimises the victims," she said adding that the government destroyed all evidences of the attack to save the attackers.

Supreme Court Bar leader Abdul Baset Majumder, AL leader Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Prof Ali Ashraf, Tajul Islam, Comilla Bangabandhu Parishad Convenor Zahidul Islam, Awami Aijibhi Parishad President Dewan Abdul Jalil and General Secretary Advocate Yunus Mia were present.

Unite against corruption, says TIB chairman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chairman of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) Samson H Chowdhury yesterday called on all to be more vigilant and united against corruption and work together to make the country liveable for the next generation.

Underscoring the importance of education, he said the nation could not progress without education.

Chowdhury, also a noted industrialist, was addressing the installation ceremony of citizens' committees of Rangpur, Kurigram and Lalmonirhat at RDRS auditorium in Rangpur. These committees were formed at the initiative of TIB.

Executive Director of TIB Dr Iftekharuzzaman, Senior Programme Officer Ekram Hossain, committee convenors Sadru Alam, Advocate Mohammad Moynul Islam and Advocate Enamul Hug Chowdhury and TIB officials Samapika Halder and Rafikul Islam also spoke.

Number of poor to halve by 2015, hopes PM

National Social Service Academy inaugurated

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday said poverty is the biggest hurdle to the development and expressed her optimism about cutting the number of the poor to half by year 2015.

"Poverty is the biggest hurdle on our road to progress," Khaleda said this while she was inaugurating the National Social Service Academy at Agargaon yesterday.

Khaleda reiterated that poverty alleviation is the immediate goal of the government and determined it as the biggest social service.

She also said overall and balanced development is not possible without integrating the backward and downtrodden people in the mainstream of economic activities.

Presided over by Social Welfare Secretary Kazi Monwarul Huq, the function was also addressed by Minister for Social Welfare Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid, Advocate Khandakar Mahbubuddin Ahmed and Director General of Social Welfare Directorate Hafizul Islam Miah.

Ministers, MPs, diplomats, representatives of donor agencies and leaders of social welfare organisations were present at the function.

The prime minister in her speech said her government is implementing social welfare programmes and urged all to stand beside the less fortunate, helpless and rootless.

"We not only consider as our state responsibility to show respect to them, help them become self-reliant and provide strength and courage but also look at it as humanitarian responsibility towards fellowmen."

She said that lending programmes have been expanded to increase the earnings of the poorest of the poor, such as distressed women and children, orphans and handicapped.

She expressed her optimism that the number of poorer sections of people in the country would be reduced half by the year 2015.

Khaleda hoped that the social service academy would act as a national institution of raising trained field workers on different aspects of social services. She said the present trend of moral erosion and idleness misguided a section of youths and urged the trained social workers to provide proper guidance and counselling to those and bring back to the mainstream of society to raise them as creative citizens.

She said her government has further expanded the 'social safety net' under which

programmes of food for work, housing for the homeless, rehabilitation of acid-burned, physically handicapped and risk-facing due to natural disaster are being implemented.

Khaleda said that these steps reduced the number of poor, as reflected in the human development index.

She said under the social safety net, the government expanded the old-age allowance, raising the amount to Tk 165 from Tk 100 each. The government raised the number of beneficiaries

of old-age allowance to 13.15 lakh from 4.15 lakh, and enhanced the allowance for each insolvent freedom fighter to Tk 500 from Tk 300.

She went around the stalls set up on the premises to display handicrafts and other materials produced by various social-welfare organisations.

The prime minister unveiled the plaque of the six-storied building of the academy that will train up the poor in various technical trades. The project cost Tk 6.12 crore.



Heavy falls likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty/squally wind is likely at most places over Khulna, Barisal and Dhaka divisions and at many places over Rajshahi, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions till 6.00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy falls are also likely at places during the period, Met Office said.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country. Highest temperature 31.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 23.0 degree Celsius at Rangamati.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:00pm today and rises at 5:46am tomorrow.

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

City/Town	Temperature			Humidity in percentage
	Max	Min	Morning	
Dhaka	25.4	24.0	89	95
Chittagong	29.0	23.5	90	83
Rajshahi	25.2	24.0	98	96
Khulna	27.2	24.3	100	98
Barisal	25.8	24.0	100	100
Sylhet	31.2	25.6	88	85
Cox's Bazar	--	24.4	95	--



PHOTO: STAR
Sylhet Division Development Action Council forms a human chain at Muktangan in the city yesterday demanding steps to prevent waterlogging.