Delhi Gang-rape Case

Suspects formally charged in India

Police formally charged five men yesterday with the gang-rape and murder of a 23-year-old medical student from north India, a crime which appalled India and led to national soul-searching about the treatment of women.

Police filed a string of charges including murder, rape and kidnapping against the suspects, listing evidence in a confidential 1,000-page document submitted to a district court in the south of the capital New Delhi, reports AFP.

The father of the student has demanded that those responsible be hanged and he called for new legislation on sex crimes to be named in honor of his daughter, reports Reuters.

The five aged between 35 and 19, who would face the death penalty if convicted, had been expected in court but were not present when the media were allowed in to listen to part of the proceedings.

"We have filed the charge sheet against the five accused," an investigating police officer told a woman district magistrate. She is expected to transfer the case to a fast-track trial court when the next hearing is held on Saturday.

Lawyers at the district court in New Delhi have refused to defend the suspects, meaning the government will have to appoint advocates for them.

A sixth suspect who is believed to be a minor aged 17 was not charged in the court at Saket on Thursday. Detectives are awaiting the results of a bone test to verify his age and determine whether he can be tried in an adult court.

Protesters have massed in Indian cities daily since the assault to demand the government and police take sex crimes more seriously, with tougher penalties for offenders and even chemical castration among measures being considered.

BSF regrets

FROM PAGE 20 Bibhison border in the district's Gomostapur, reports o u r Chapainawabganj correspondent.

Major Sharif Mahmud Hasan, deputy commanding officer of 43 BGB Battalion, and T Singh Negi, commandant of 31 BSF Battalion in Malda of West Bengal, led respective sides.

On Wednesday, Mohammad Masud, 23, and Shahidul Islam, 28, of Shibganj upazila went to Malda district of West Bengal in India to buy cattle.

A BSF team opened fire on them near Bibhison while they along with others were returning with a herd around 3:00am.

women's protection and to

do so, they said, it had to

address the issues involved

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disqualification of the applicant.

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conviction rates in the

world, she said, which was

activist Irene Khan.

Masud and Shahidul died on the spot. BSF claimed the guards had

opened fire in self-defence.

The Indian force on Wednesday night returned the bodies of two other Bangladeshis killed in a shooting on Thakurgaon frontier the day before.

At a flag meeting there, BSF said their jawans were compelled to fire back after the two had attacked them, reports our Thakurgaon correspondent. The border killings by

BSF rose to 38 last year from 31 in 2011, Odhikar Secretary Adilur Rahman Khan told the BBC.

All the victims were unarmed Bangladeshis, he

added.

Our Kushtia correspondent adds that BSF was yet to return Liton Hossain, 28, a Bangladeshi whom they picked up on Benipur border at Jibannagar in Chuadanga on Wednesday.

"We held a meeting with BSF this afternoon [yesterday]. They will return the Bangladeshi on completion of the legal procedures," Commander of BGB-35 Battalion Lieutenant Colonel Qazi Asaduzzaman told The Daily Star.

The BSF said a court had sent Liton to Krishanagar jail in Nadia district of West Bengal for crossing the border without valid docu

Quader Mollah fined for obstruction

FROM PAGE 20

The three-member tribunal led by Justice Obaidul Hassan also ordered Mollah to send the amount to Anjuman Mofidul Islam, a voluntary organisation providing humanitarian services to the poor and report compliance by January 7.

The tribunal handed down the punishment while disposing a review petition of Mollah regarding allowing six more defence witnesses in his case.

Meanwhile, Mollah yesterday filed a retrial petition to reinitiate his crimes against humanity case and the tribunal fixed Sunday for hearing.

Tajul Islam, one of Mollah's counsels, told The Daily Star they have filed the petition as per another retrial petition filed for Jamaat leader Muhammad Kamaruzzaman.

rejected the retrial petition of Kamaruzzaman yesterday as it did not find any merit in it.

The defence filed a petition on Wednesday seeking review of the tribunal's earlier order of December 26 last year that rejected Mollah's petition for allowing six more defence witnesses.

The review petition was fourth application of similar nature for allowing more defence witnesses to defend the Jamaat assistant secretary general from the charges of crimes against humanity.

In the order, Justice Hassan said, "Admittedly, the defence have come up with the present application for the fourth time,

though in a different from, seeking same relief."

"The defence rather seem to obstruct expeditious disposal of the case and it gives rise to a reasonable inference that it is aimed to cause hindrance to the normal course of justice, which we are obliged to dispense with in accordance with law," he added.

On November 5, the tribunal allowed six defence witnesses from a list of 965 witnesses and Mollah filed a petition for recalling the order. But the tribunal rejected the petition on November 12.

The defence filed an application seeking review of the order of November 5 almost on the similar grounds that had appeared in its earlier recall petition and the

They filed a fresh peti-The tribunal however tion for allowing six more defence witnesses in the case in last December and the tribunal rejected the petition on December 26. Afterwards, they filed the review petition on January 2.

Farid Uddin Khan another counsel of Mollah, yesterday said they needed at least six additional witnesses to prove their plea of alibi, which is that Mollah was not in Dhaka rather in his Faridpur village during the Liberation War.

Twelve prosecution witnesses including two investigation officers of the case testified, while six defence witnesses gave their testi monies and the case is waiting for the defence closing their arguments.

Mohammad Ali, con-

Doctors said the victim had been showing signs of mental imbalance but her

The seven-member team includes medicine, gynaecology and psychology experts, said Bilkis Begum, coordinator of One-Stop Crisis Centre at the DMCH.

Bilkis, a gynaecology sion on Monday night.

went to visit her.

Reports of several tests conducted on her were normal, said Bilkis.

Meanwhile, family members of the accused protested the latters' innocence and claimed the entire incident was a "conspiracy," reports our Tangail correspondent. They demanded proper

Mozibor Rahman, officer-in-charge of Madhupur Police Station, said the accused had already confessed the crime during

According to police investigation, Bithi took the girl to Madhupur for a role in a drama. After the shooting at Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation in Madhupur on December 6, they took the girl at the house of Nuruzzaman at

"The four men raped the

ducting prosecutor of the case, said the tribunal has rejected the defence's similar petition filed on the basis of similar grounds earlier. So, the application should be rejected.

Justice Hassan said, "We do not find any new ground to permit the defence to adduce and examine additional witness. We consider it would be appropriate to dispose of the application with a nominal fine." The tribunal indicted

charges of crimes against humanity committed during the war in 1971. Meanwhile, the tribunal

Quader Mollah with six

completed recording crossexamination of Faijuddin Ahmed, 11th prosecution witnesses against Jamaat leader Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, before adjourning the case proceedings until January 15.

ICT-1

The defence of war crimes accused Salauddin Quader Chowdhury yesterday filed an application with the International Crimes Tribunal-1 to withdraw [not pressed] their two petitions including a supplementary one.

The petitions are initiating a contempt of court proceeding against Law Minister Shafique Ahmed and a supplementary petition in this regard, and seeking an order from the tribunal whether either member of the tribunal or its chairman has been privy

to the alleged Skype conversations.

The tribunal accepted prayer for the first petition along with the supplementary petition but fixed January 10 for passing

order on the second one. Meanwhile, a group of lawyers, who claimed themselves as Salauddin's counsels, created commotion in the tribunal pre-

mises chanting slogans. During lunch break, around 25-30 lawyers tried to enter the tribunal building, but the tribunal authorities did not allow them as they had decided earlier to allow 10 lawyers for an accused at a time.

They also allegedly misbehaved with security personnel of the tribunal.

review petition as well. Ziauddin asked

The three-member tribunal, led by Justice Obaidul Hassan with members Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Judge M Shahinur Islam, asked Ziauddin to submit his explanation through the Bangladesh Mission in Belgium within 30 days from the date of receiving a copy of the order.

issued the show-cause notice yesterday after rejecting a retrial petition of Jamaat-e-Islami leader Muhammad Kamaruzzaman which was filed based on the alleged Tribunal-1 chairman Justice MdNizamulHuq.

A Bangla daily published the alleged conversation.

Tribunal-2 yesterday also asked Ziauddin why proceeding under section 11 (4) of International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973, would not be initiated for his "fallacious,

ICT-2 made during their alleged conversations."

remarkinvolvingthejudgesof

Section 11 (4) of the act says, "A Tribunal may punish any person, who obstructs or abuses its process or disobeys any of its orders or directions or does anything which tends to prejudice the case of a party before it or tends to bring it or any of its members into hatredorcontempt..."

The Daily Star cannot print the alleged Skype conversation as the Tribunal-2 itself had ordered not to publish or air the content of the alleged conversation. The tribunal yesterday in

its order said it took the alleged conversation into cognisance "without determining its reliability" as it appears prima facie that in the alleged conversation "Ahmed Ziauddin exceeded the norms of civility". "Predominantly, as it

appears, he [Ziauddin] has illegally attempted to touch the independence of this tribunal [ICT-2] and also by maligning judges of the Tribunal-2," added Justice Hassan.

He said, "We are not sure, at this stage, about the truth of the alleged conversation,

be true, it appears to have deliberately imprinted a misconceived impression or perception in the mind of public, which is likely to be derogatory to the normal course of justice.

"We, for obvious reason, need to be aware first about the truthfulness of conversations whether Dr Zia allegedly had it with the former chairman of Tribunal-1 and second, he cannot be relieved from responsibility of his acts." The tribunal directed

the authority concerned to communicate with the foreign secretary and the director general of Europe desk with direction to transmit the order copy to Ziauddin. It also directed the for-

eign ministry to submit a compliance report in this regard by February 14 and it would pass further orders on February 17.

After the resignation of Justice Nizamul Huq following the leak of the alleged conversation, the government reconstituted both the tribunals and Justice ATM Fazle Kabir of Tribunal-2 was made chairman of Tribunal-1 while Justice Obaidul Hassan was made

in a systematic and collective manner. Besides, a the rapists.

significant change is necessary in the patriarchal When they are traumamindsets at family and tised by what has happened community levels. Representatives from 20 rights organisations, cultural activists, students and many others partici-

Protests pour in

pated in the human chain and rally organised by Sangat Bangladesh and all this, speakers said. "We have to respond by A multi-dimensional ensuring justice [to the survivors of violence] and by sending out a very clear message that there is zero tolerance for rape," said

tion system.

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why such acts were committed again and again. Women's rights activist

Maleka Begum criticised the societal trend of blaming the victim rather than

to them, their families shun them, police refuse to file cases and courts fail to ensure justice. This is how the rape victims are harassed repeatedly. Structural failures and patriarchal attitudes should be blamed for

approach must be undertaken to address violence against women, said Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, emphasising the need for incorporating gender issues in the educa-

"Women's rights activ-

ists are coming to the realisation that in order to make the movement stronger we have to include everyone."

Theatre personality Sara Zaker echoed Shaheen's view, saying the movement needed to "go viral".

Spontaneous reactions such as demonstrations would be there but longterm strategies were also needed to combat the issue, said women's rights activist Shipra Bose.

Sultana Kamal, executive director of Ain o Salish Kendra; Shireen Haq, founder member of Naripokkho; Khushi Kabir, coordinator of Nijera Kori; Aly Zaker, theatre personality; Farah Khan, country director of ActionAid, and cultural organiser Nasiruddin Yousuf Bacchu also joined the demonstration.

Meanwhile, human

chains were formed in December last year. Tangail, Madhupur and Gala union, condemning the 15-year-old's gangrape

and demanding exemplary condition was improving. punishment to the culprits. The protesters also asked the authority to give protection to the victim

The gangrape of the girl took place between December 6 and 10 in Madhupur. The four violators and their abettor were arrested on December 31 and were taken on police remand on Wednesday.

and her family.

Ironically, the abettor is a young woman, Bithi Akter, who befriended the victim a month before handing her over to the culprits. The four are SM Nuruzzaman alias Gada, 42, Shajahan Ali, 40, Moniruzzaman Moni, 39, and Harunur Rashid Harun, 27.

On December 10, the rapists left the girl by the rail line in Tangail from where she was recovered by her brother.

Political and social organisations in the capital yesterday demanded expeditious trial of the violators.

Mujahidul Islam Selim, president of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, and its General Secretary Syed Abu Zafar Ahmed in a joint statement expressed concern over the rape.

The chairman and the general secretary of Bangladesh Tariqat Federation said the incident in Tangail proved that the interrogation. government had failed to provide security to the people.

The Jatiya Konyashishu and Advocacy Forum held a human chain in front of the Jatiya Press Club, demanding exemplary punishment to the violators.

Also yesterday, Dhaka Medical College Hospital authorities formed a medical board for treating the teenage schoolgirl who was gang-raped in the OC added.

Madhupur of Tangail early

consultant who is also on the board, said the girl was still on saline as she was not taking any food or drink. The class-IX girl also responded to doctors' queries for the first time yesterday since her admis-

Her problems are more of mental rather than physical in nature. The victim had been screaming at the sight of any unknown men. But yesterday she did not react that way when doctors and some other unknown men

investigation into the matter.

Bokarbaid village.

girl when Bithi was present in the house that night,"

The Tribunal-2, on its own,

Skype conversation between Ziauddin and former

the alleged conversation transcript in December and Justice Nizamul stepped down citing personal reasons on December 11. Five Jamaat leaders including Kamaruzzaman filed retrial petitions following leaks of

offensive and unfounded but initially, if it is taken to chairman of Tribunal-2.

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