



Hard to get justice

Conviction rate of rape cases less than 2pc in last 5 years

SHARIFUL ISLAM and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Less than 2 percent of all rape cases filed in the last five years ended in conviction. This is mainly because many perpetrators force the victims to settle the matter outside courts and the legal process is so humiliating that the victims back out.

Data for Dhaka metropolitan areas paint an even grimmer picture. Just 1.06 percent cases saw convictions in the last 15 years, according court and prosecution sources.

In every phase of getting justice -- from investigation to

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WHY IS CONVICTION RATE SO LOW

- Outside court settlements
- To get justice, victims have to prove rape allegation, which is often quite difficult
- Victims undergo humiliating process during investigation, medical tests and trial
- Police ignorance and negligence in duties
- Victim's lack of awareness about immediate steps after rape

28 Christians killed in Egypt bus attack

Masked gunmen in three pick-up trucks target Copts on road to monastery; 25 wounded

REUTERS, Cairo

Gunmen attacked a group of Coptic Christians travelling to a monastery in southern Egypt yesterday, killing 28 people and wounding 25 others, and many children were among the victims, Health Ministry officials said.

Eyewitnesses said masked men opened fire after stopping the Christians, who were travelling in a bus and other vehicles. Local television channels showed a bus apparently raked by gunfire and smeared with blood. Clothes and shoes could be seen lying in and around the bus.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, which came on the eve of the holy month of Ramadan. It followed a series of church bombings claimed by Islamic State.

President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi called a meeting of security officials, the state news agency said, and the cabinet said the attackers would not succeed in dividing the nation.

Muslim leaders condemned the killings. The grand imam of al-Azhar, Egypt's 1,000-year-old centre of Islamic learning, said the attack was intended to destabilise the country.

"I call on Egyptians to unite in the face of this brutal terrorism," Ahmed al-Tayeb said from Germany, where he was on a visit. The Grand Mufti of Egypt, Shawki Allam, condemned the perpetrators as traitors.

The Coptic church said it had received news of the killing of its "martyrs" with pain and sorrow.

The attack took place on a road leading to the monastery

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Police use water cannon to break up a demonstration by some student organisations near the Shikkha Bhaban in the capital yesterday. The demonstration was organised protesting the removal of Lady Justice's statue from the Supreme Court premises earlier in the day.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

LADY JUSTICE AT SC COMPOUND

Cops silence protest over statue removal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hours after the removal of the statue of Lady Justice from the Supreme Court premises in the dead of night, police in the capital yesterday swung into action against demonstrators protesting the removal, which they see as "surrender to radical Islamists".

At least 20 people were injured as police fired tear gas canisters and water cannons to disperse several hundred protesters near the High Court Mazar around noon.

The statue's removal sparked protests

also outside the capital, while people turned to social media to express their anger and frustration over it. Several socio-political and cultural organisations termed the incident an ominous sign for the country.

The statue was removed from in front of the SC building around 4:00am yesterday amid demands by some radical Islamist groups, including Hefajat-e Islam, and Awami Olama League. It is not clear whether the statue would be reinstalled in another place at SC or elsewhere or not at all.

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Why, how it was removed

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

For the statue of Lady Justice, it was a brief stay on the Supreme Court premises. It was there for only five months.

Soon after the statue was installed as a symbol of justice in December last year, several Islamist organisations, including Hefajat-e Islam, termed it "un-Islamic" and demanded its removal.

A few days later, Hefajat submitted a memorandum to the SC to press home the demand.

Later in early February this year, the Awami Olama League, which claims to be affiliated with the ruling Awami League, called for the statue's immediate removal, claiming it to be of a Greek idol.

Then, Khelafat Andolan and Jamaat Ulama-E-Islam, components of the BNP-led 20-party alliance, and Islami

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SULTANA KAMAL Lawyer and rights activist

The removal of the statue from in front of the Supreme Court is not unexpected. I'm not surprised at it. It was to happen because that's the atmosphere the prime minister, her cabinet colleagues and lawmakers have created

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MUHAMMAD ZAFAR IQBAL Educationist and writer

I am very upset and aggrieved. Today's reality goes totally against our dream about the country. Did we want a country where there will be no sculpture, people will not read poems or women will wear veil?

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SHAHDEEN MALIK Jurist

This is a total surrender by the government to the so-called Islamists' votes and also a clear government step to demonstrate its superiority over the Supreme Court. Hence, it is completely undemocratic and contrary to

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KAMAL LOHANI Journalist and cultural activist

The removal of the statue has cast a dark shadow on our face. It is so saddening that the party that led the Liberation War has given in to the demands that go against the very spirit of non-communalism, a core

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KAMAL PASHA CHOWDHURY Artist

Our strong objection is that the statue has been removed as per the demand of Hefajat-e Islam. Does it mean that the government will remove all other sculptures in the country if they raise the same demand? Surely, the

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MRINAL HAQUE Sculptor of Lady Justice

I think this is just the beginning. Eventually, there will be more demands from them (Islamist groups). If the demand is raised and eventually met, it will be very saddening. Can you accept if the Aparajeyo Bangla is

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It's surrender to Islamist evil forces

Say 10 eminent persons in a joint statement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ten eminent personalities of the country in a statement yesterday said the government "virtually surrendered to religious fundamentalist forces" through removing the Lady Justice's statue from the Supreme Court premises.

They demanded the government and the Supreme Court authorities immediately reinstall the statue.

"We are aggrieved at the removal of the statue, the symbol of justice, from the premises of Bangladesh's highest court and we are expressing our anger and revulsion at this anti-progressive act," said the statement signed by cultural personality Nasiruddin Yusuf Bachchu.

The other signatories to the statement are journalist Abdul Gaffer Chowdhury, Prof Anisuzzaman, essayist Hasan Azizul Haque, Tagore

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Hefajat claims primary victory

Wants removal of all statues

In some news reports we have seen that the Greek Goddess Themis would be placed in front of the Annex Building of the Supreme Court. We would like to clearly inform that this Greek idol, which is like a piece of trash in our country, has to be ditched for good.

JUNAID BABUNAGARI HEFAJAT SECRETARY GENERAL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the Lady Justice's statue removed from the Supreme Court premises, Hefajat-e Islam and some other Islamist outfits yesterday demanded the authorities take down all other statues across the country.

They thanked Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for meeting their demand and warned the authorities not to set up any more statues.

The Hefajat also claimed that the removal of the statue was the "primary victory of the just movement by the people".

Meanwhile, the ruling Awami League and the BNP

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Ramadan begins tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The holy month of Ramadan will begin in the country tomorrow as the new moon was not sighted anywhere in Bangladesh's sky yesterday.

The National Moon Sighting Committee took the decision in a meeting at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque in the capital with Religious Affairs Minister Principal Matior Rahman in the chair, reports UNB.

Religious Affairs Secretary M Abdul Jalil, among others, was present in the meeting, says the UNB report.

On May 8, the government set office timing for all government, semi-government, autonomous and semi-autonomous bodies from 9:00am to 3:30pm during Ramadan.

The decision was made in a cabinet meeting presided over by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

There would be a 15-minute prayer break at 1:15pm.



Traders sit idle at a wholesale mango shop as there is no sign of buyers at Puraton Bazar of Chapainawabganj yesterday. Gopalbhog, a popular variety of mango, hit local markets after the ban on harvesting mango expired on Thursday. Traders were hoping that buyers would pour into markets in the next few days.

PHOTO: STAR

Mango hub looks dull

Harvest begins, markets yet to see adequate number of customers

RABIUL HASAN, Chapainawabganj

Markets in the district famous for high quality tasty varieties of mangoes now see abundance of the popular summer fruit, especially gopalbhog and a few varieties of guti, as harvest started yesterday.

The major mango markets in district provide direct employment to hundreds of workers every season. However, the mango market was virtually wearing a deserted look as of yesterday due to a poor number of customers.

On May 4, the district administration of Chapainawabganj at a meeting with the officials of the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) and Regional Horticulture Research Station (RHRS), chairmen of different upazila parishads, Chapainawabganj Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Bholahat Mango Foundation, Kansat Mango Depots Association and mango traders imposed a ban on harvest of mangoes until May 25.

The decision was made to prevent artificial ripening of the fruits before their full maturity.

During a visit to a mango market at Puraton Bazar in the town yesterday, this correspondent saw abundant supply of mangoes, but there was no crowd of buyers that can be seen at normal times.

Many prospective customers did not learn about the start of harvesting in absence of necessary publicity, say traders, many of whom went to the market in the early morning to

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