

Three to die for killing N'ganj garment worker after gang rape

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

A Narayanganj court yesterday sentenced three people to death for killing a garment worker after gang rape 10 years ago.

The court also fined them Tk 1 lakh each and asked the authorities concerned to give the money to the victim's family.

The convicts -- Nasir Uddin Bitol, 40, Safin, 34, and Khokan Miah, 32 -- were present at the court when Judge Md Jewel Rana of Narayanganj Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal pronounced the verdict.

However, four other accused in the case were acquitted. They are Saleh Ahmed Salat, 38, Hasan Kabir, 54, Abdul Aziz, 39, and Mohammad Mizan, 35. Special Public Prosecutor Rakibuddin Ahmed Rakib said the convicts abducted garment worker Asma Akhter on March 12, 2008, from in front of Sarbat Bari in Kushiara Bhadrasan of Bandar upazila on her way home from work and raped her.

They later killed her and buried the body. The body was recovered from a bush two days later.

Asma's father filed a case with Bandar Police Station.

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Ensure equal

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services in medical centres due to a lack of disability orientation among doctors and health workers, said a press release.

Prof Diba Hossain of Dhaka University and Assistant Prof Rayhan Ara Zaman of University of Rajshahi presented their findings.

They recommended stronger implementation of Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act, 2013 and enhancing quota for them in both private and public-sector.

No clue in killing of Ctg banker

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police have yet to find out any clue behind the murder of bank official Sajal Nandi, whose slit-throat body was recovered from his residence in Chittagong city's Duppola area of Modhyla Halishahar on Sunday.

Victim's brother Swapan Nandi filed a case accusing unidentified miscreants with Bandar Police Station, but police could not arrest anyone yet.

Assistant Commissioner (port) Kamrul Hasan of Chittagong Metropolitan Police told The Daily Star, "Police have been trying to find out the motive behind the murder."

According to police, they have collected circumstantial evidence from the crime scene and quizzed Sajal's relatives, family members and neighbours.

On condition of anonymity, an official at the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) said, "Analysing the circumstantial evidence, it is found that more than two persons took part in the killing and they ransacked all the belongings in the house after the murder."

"After killing Sajal, the criminals searched for something in the house," said the PBI official.

Sajal Nandi was a cash officer at Rupali Bank. His wife Ruma Dey works at an NGO. They have a son who is in seventh grade.

Revived after 16 years

Community initiative reopens Manikganj public library

ZAHANGIR SHAH with ANDREW EAGLE

From when it was first inaugurated by Justice AKM Nurul Islam in 1984, the Harirampur Upazila Public Library in Manikganj was popular. Built on 14 decimals of land donated by Montaz Uddin Khan at Khalpar Boyra near the upazila headquarters, the library featured around 2,000 books, and also attracted readers for its periodicals.

But in 2002, the library was closed down due to mismanagement, presumably leaving those who frequented it disappointed.

Now, happily, a recent initiative of Joint District Judge Toyebul Azhar Uzzal, prominent locals and a number of university students, has seen the library restored and reopened.

"When the library closed due to mismanagement, it hurt teachers, young people and lovers of literature in this area," says Toyebul. "I wanted it to reopen, and the community was supportive."

"We met several times at Dhaka University last year to discuss our goal," says cultural personality Himel Khan, also involved. "On November 3, a public meeting



PHOTO: STAR

Eminent columnist Syed Abul Maksud inaugurates the reopened library.

attended by the upazila nirbahi officer was held at the library premises."

At the meeting, Tk 3 lakh in funding was raised, including Tk 1 lakh donated by the district administration, courtesy of the deputy commissioner in Manikganj, Md Najmus Sadat Selim.

There was much to be done. When the library had closed in 2002, the premises were used as land registries for three river-eroded unions nearby. Many of the books, shelves, chairs and tables that had

once belonged to the library were taken to the upazila social service office. Of the books that remained, a good number were torn and damaged.

Alongside repair work of the building, twenty chairs, five tables and five new bookshelves were purchased. The renovated library currently houses 900 books. Bangla and English newspapers are also available.

"We want to look after the library," says Toyebul, speaking for the group behind the initiative.

"Many of us live in the capital, but we try to go home each Friday for this purpose. Soon, we will start our own study circle."

The renovated library was officially opened on April 13 this year, by author and researcher Syed Abul Maksud. "Remote areas need libraries," he said at the ceremony. "Libraries create opportunities that would otherwise not exist for people to read books. National development isn't only about infrastructure. Minds must be developed too. Libraries help to achieve this outcome."

The library is administered by a 49-member committee headed by Harirampur's current Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Ilias Mehedi. "From 4:00pm to 8:00pm, the library is open seven days a week," he notes. "We have appointed a librarian. The library is already attracting more than a hundred readers per day on an average, most of them students."

"The initiative to reopen the library is admirable," says the district's deputy commissioner. "I applaud the efforts of all involved."

SC stays rule to close Destiny group

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday stayed for four weeks a High Court (HC) rule that asked authorities concerned to explain why they should not be directed to close down Destiny 2000.

The apex court passed the order following a petition filed by Lt Gen (retd) Harun-Ar-Rashid, one of the seven directors of the company, seeking a stay on the HC rule.

A three-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain also directed Harun-Ar-Rashid to submit a leave to appeal petition before the SC within four weeks challenging the HC rule.

On May 15, HC issued the rule asking Destiny 2000 to show causes as to why the company should not be directed to wind it up, as there is no director available to run its operations.

The group's irregularities surfaced in early 2012 after the central bank found that it had been involved in illegal banking.

The Anti-Corruption Commission in 2012 filed two cases against 22 officials of Destiny Group for laundering Tk 4,200 crore.

On August 24, a Dhaka court framed charges against 51 including Lt Gen (retd) Rashid in the two cases.

Anti-tobacco campaigners demand higher taxes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-tobacco campaigners yesterday called upon the government to take steps in lowering consumption of tobacco by imposing higher taxes so that all tobacco products including cigarette, bidi and jorda are sold at higher prices.

Recommending inclusion of medium grade cigarettes under premium grade category, they said the minimum price for a 10-pack of such cigarettes should be set at Tk 100 while a 10-pack of the lowest grade should be raised to Tk 50.

Bangladesh Tamak Birodh Jote, WBB Trust, Bureau of Economic Research of Dhaka University, Bangladesh Cancer Society and Bangladesh Lung Foundation made the call at a joint press conference organised in the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

The organisers also urged the government to impose same rate of tax for low-grade cigarettes made by local and multinational companies and raise the tax for the grade to 60 percent.

Both the mid and premium-grade cigarettes should be taxed at 65 percent, they said.

The tax on bidi, a type of local cigarettes, should be increased to 45 percent and the minimum price of a 25-pack of such tobacco should be set at Tk 30, they added.

Tax on smokeless tobacco such as jorda, gul and sada pata should also be 45 percent and their minimum price per 20 grams should be set at Tk 50.

Prof Rumana Huque of Dhaka University said the consumption of tobacco products will not come down unless the prices of the low-grade tobacco products are increased through a higher rate of tax.

Abu Naser, chairman of Poribesh Bachao Andolon Bangladesh, alleged that the tobacco companies are carrying out various activities to influence policy makers to favour them.

Dr Golam Mohiuddin Faruq, a project director of Bangladesh Cancer Society, also spoke among others.

NEWS IN brief

Two sentenced to death in Ctg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A court in Chittagong yesterday sentenced two persons to death for killing a man in Hathazari upazila in 2012.

Judge Ferdous Ara of Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court 7 yesterday passed the order after scrutinising all facts and evidences.

The convicts are Ali Azam, 25, and Mohammad Alam, 24, said Additional Public Prosecutor Delwar Hossain.

According to the case records, the duo snatched Tk 2,90,000 from Akhter, a CNG-run autorickshaw driver, killed him and dumped his body in the bush.

His body was recovered from the hilly area of Chittagong University on October 3, 2012.

Headless body found in Dhamrai

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Police found a headless body of an unidentified youth in a suitcase in Garail area at Dhamrai yesterday.

Rezaul Haque, officer-in-charge of Dhamrai Police Station, said locals found the suitcase in a bush beside Garail Kali temple and informed them.

Criminals might have beheaded the body to conceal the victim's identity, said the OC adding that they were trying to identify the victim. The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

Former whip Wahidul Alam dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Adviser to BNP Chairperson and a former whip of Jatiya Sangsad Syed Wahidul Alam passed away at a city hospital on Sunday, aged 72.

He left his wife and two daughters to mourn his death.

Wahidul, a four-time elected member of parliament from Hathazari constituency, was suffering from various illnesses, said Abu Sufian, vice president of Chittagong city unit BNP.

He will be buried at his family graveyard in Chittagong's Hathazari upazila after namaz-e-janaza today, he added.

Wahidul served as a whip in Jatiya Sangsad between 2001 and 2006. He was made an adviser to BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia in the last council of BNP.

Thai Princess

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Thai Princess visited Liberation War Museum in the capital. She also attended dinner hosted by the Thai Ambassador in Dhaka.

During her four-day visit to Bangladesh, the princess is scheduled to call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali, and exchange views with Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor, and other dignitaries.

The Thai princess is also scheduled to inaugurate a new environmental conservation project taken in collaboration with the environment and forest ministry at Tiger Pass in Chittagong.

M'singh transport owners threaten indefinite strike

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Transport owners and leaders will launch an indefinite strike in Mymensingh region from tomorrow, if those who vandalised their vehicles are not arrested by that time.

They announced the decision at a press conference in Mymensingh Press Club auditorium yesterday.

A group of students of Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University vandalised around 40 vehicles after a truck hit a university bus on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway on May 13, the leaders said.

Following the incident, two cases were filed with Kotwali and Trishal police stations accusing around 400 unnamed students on May 15 and no one was arrested till yesterday, they said.

Six districts -- Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Sherpur, Tangail, Netrakona and Kishoreganj -- will come under the purview of the strike, the leaders said.

Aminal Haque Shamim, convener of Uttarakhalio (northern) Sarak Paribahan Malik Sramik Oikya Parishad read out a statement at the press conference.

Mymensingh District Transport Owners' Association Secretary Mahbub Alam was present, among others.

No clue in killing of Ctg banker

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Aziza Begum started her life as a domestic aide, but in the course of time, has established herself as one of Rajshahi's most notorious drug peddlers, selling narcotics.

She was arrested nine times in the last four years, but managed to secure bail and continue her business, until she was apprehended on the night of May 23, and even from the special drive could not be contained without a fight. She first charged at policemen with a machete when approached, and after being caught and on the way to the police station, pushed off a policeman and attempted to flee, before she was shot in the leg.

During arrest, police found 60 yaba tablets in her possession.

Aziza began working at the house of policeman Monirul Islam, and now lives in the city's Tultulipara across the street from the house of Monirul, and his brother Mokhlesur Rahman -- who maintains her supply chain. The information was divulged by a police officer to this correspond-

Rajshahi's daredevil drug dealer

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

dent, following Aziza's arrest.

The officer, who requested anonymity, said Aziza revealed the names of Monirul and Mokhlesur during primary interrogation.

Monirul worked as a hawaldar in Rajshahi in early 2000s, and is now stationed in Dhaka according to sources in the police department. On the other hand, the family of his brother Mokhlesur could not say what Mokhlesur's profession is.

Meanwhile, Monirul denied any acquaintance with Aziza. "I don't know any woman by that name; she never worked at our home," he told The Daily Star.

This correspondent visited their four-story house in Tultulipara, one of the drug hotspots in Rajshahi city, a day after Aziza's arrest. Monirul and Mokhlesur live with their families in two flats of the house. But none of them were home on the day.

However, contradicting Monirul's claim, Mokhlesur's wife Mili acknowledged that Aziza did use to work at their house. She could

not say where his husband was at that moment and what his profession is. Mokhlesur's whereabouts are unknown, while his cell phone has also remained switched off since the drive.

The next day, Monirul called up this correspondent and even before he was asked any question, he angrily said neither he nor anyone in his family were engaged in drug peddling. He also said his house was not used for any drug trade.

Talking to The Daily Star, spokesperson of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police Assistant Commissioner Iftekhar Alam confirmed that Aziza gave the information and said they would work on it.

Aziza could not say the exact time when she worked at Monirul's house, but told police that she remained engaged in drug peddling for several years until she was arrested for the first time in October 2014. She was caught for a second time with heroin a month after her first arrest. She was arrested twice in April and September of 2015 and twice more in July and November in 2016. In 2017, Aziza was arrested

three times -- in May, October and November.

Aziza was accused under the Narcotics Control Act every time she was arrested with drugs. Her name is still on charge-sheets of nine cases.

Aziza's notoriety is widespread in the city. Talking to The Daily Star,