

AL must take responsibility for Noakhali rape

CPB demands from rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League (AL) has to take responsibility for the rape of a woman in Noakhali's Subarnachar upazila, leaders of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) women cell demanded yesterday.

"AL cannot deny its responsibility as a political party since its cadres raped the woman who voted for 'sheaf of paddy' [BNP's electoral symbol]," said Masuda Khan, leader of CPB women cell.

She was addressing a human chain formed in protest against the Noakhali rape in front of Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka.

Demanding timely justice for the gang-rape of a mother of four, speakers at the protest rally urged the government to ensure security and safety for women and minorities across the country.

They also blamed the absence of democracy in the country for increase of such violence against marginalised people and minorities.

Speaking at the rally, Lakshmi Chakrabartee, presidium member of CPB, said, "As a freedom fighter, I feel ashamed seeing the wounded body of a raped women like [I saw during] the Liberation War."

Citing their visit to Subarnachar upazila on behalf of the party, she said a sense of insecurity was looming over the residents of Subarnachar.

She also raised questions about the role of the newly-elected lawmaker of that constituency.

"Some of the accused have been arrested. But we demand timely justice and that justice does not become a mockery. Otherwise, the sense of insecurity will continue," she added.

She also urged the government to implement the "National Women Development Policy 2011".

Speakers also criticised the "farclike election" of December 30, and urged people to take to the streets to restore democracy in the country.

Luna Noor, a member of Communist Party of Bangladesh, said, "This incident is not an isolated one. When there is no democracy, marginalised people become victims... This election [of December 30] was a betrayal to the martyrs of our Liberation War."

Conducted by Lucky Akhter, a number of women rights activists and leaders of Communist Party of Bangladesh's women cell, addressed the programme.



An elephant roaming the city streets with a mahout (rider) on it often makes for an amusing sight. But what lies behind is a practice of extortion by terrorising people. On Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmad Avenue, a boy looks away and shuts his ears in fear as an elephant comes "dangerously" close to the car yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Syed Ashraf's body reaches Dhaka

Janazas to be held today in Dhaka, Kishoreganj and M'singh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With people of all walks of life waiting to pay tribute to veteran Awami League leader Syed Ashraf Islam, his body was brought back home from Bangkok yesterday evening.

A Biman Bangladesh flight carrying the body of Syed Ashraf, public administration minister and also an AL Presidium member, reached Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport around 6:00pm.

An AL delegation led by party General Secretary Obaidul Quader, received the body of his predecessor at the airport. Syed Ashraf's family members, including his younger brother Maj Gen (ret'd) Syed Shafayetul Islam, were present there.

Senior party leaders including Tofail Ahmed, Matia Chowdhury, Mohammed Nasim and Dr Abdur Razzak paid tribute to their colleague.

From the airport, the body was briefly taken to his government residence on Bailey Road around 7:00pm. Several hundred people -- including party leaders, activists and well-wishers -- gathered at the house, where a somber atmosphere loomed as from top party leaders to activists could not help their tears, seeing their beloved leader for the last time.

A "mourning book" was opened in memory of the AL leader.

The body was then taken to the Combined Military Hospital mortuary, according to an AL press release.

Ashraf's first namaz-e-janaza will be held today at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban's south plaza at 10:30am. He will be given a guard of honour there, the release said. President Abdul Hamid will attend the namaz-e-janaza.

Later, Ashraf's body will be taken to his Kishoreganj home by helicopter, where his second janaza will be held at noon. Then his body will be taken to Mymensingh where another janaza will be held at Anjuman Eidgah at 2:00pm, the release said.

The body will be flown back to the capital from Mymensingh, and the Awami League leader will be laid to eternal rest at Banani graveyard after Asr prayers, it added.

The veteran leader, who stood by his party -- the Awami League -- in good times and bad, breathed his last at Bumrungrad International Hospital in Bangkok at the age of 68.

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Rokeya, Rabeya reach Budapest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Conjoined twins Rokeya and Rabeya reached Hungarian capital Budapest yesterday to receive preparatory treatments before the final surgery for separation.

Their parents, an elder sister, and a doctor are accompanying them.

Dr Samanta Lal Sen, chief coordinator of the burn units across the country, said the family landed in Hungary to heavy snowfall, which caused a delay in their getting out of the airport. The family, which will stay in Budapest for three months, have rented a flat in the city. They will admit the two girls to the hospital in the next couple of days, he added, after communicating with the family.

Dr Sen said he has been observing the twins for last year and a half, and did not find any abnormality in the babies apart from their fused skulls. "The two babies are jolly. They can't see each other when

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Fakhrul's remarks 'delirium of a failed politician': Quader

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said BNP has nothing to do other than complaining to foreigners, after its failure in both the election and its movement.

He also described the remarks of BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir over the national election as "delirium of a failed politician".

Quader came up with the remarks while talking to reporters before a joint meeting of Awami League secretariat and the party's associate bodies at its Bangabandhu Avenue office.

"They (BNP) couldn't wage a movement over the last 10 years. We

thank them as they joined the national election. But they utterly failed in the election, too," he said.

Quader further said, "What can be their (BNP's) resort now they have failed in its movement and the election? Now they're complaining to foreigners and it's their old habit."

He said Awami League was more united during the 11th parliamentary election than in the past. "We achieved a massive victory as we could show a stronger unity through excellent coordination under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina."

The AL general secretary said party president Sheikh Hasina's

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The coffin carrying the body of Syed Ashraf Islam, adorned with the national flag and flowers, at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday evening.

PHOTO: STAR

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Policeman's wife found dead at home

Husband says she committed suicide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered the body of a police officer's wife from her residence in the capital's Bhatara area early yesterday.

The deceased is Mina Akhter, 25, wife of Sohail Rana, assistant sub-inspector (ASI) of Bhatara Police Station.

Mina used to live in a rented house in Soulmaid area with her husband and a child, said police.

"There is a black mark on Mina's neck; her husband told us that Mina committed suicide by hanging herself from a ceiling fan following a scuffle with her husband," said Al-Imam Rajon, sub-inspector of Bhatara Police Station, also the investigation officer of the case.

Quoting locals, police said Mina got into an argument with Sohail after he returned home early yesterday. Hearing suspicious sound, neighbours went to

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