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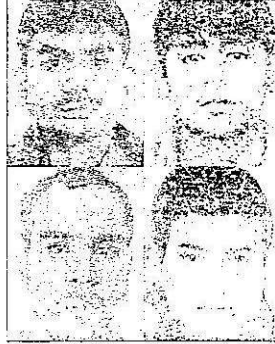
No last wish: Nirbhaya rapists hanged in Tihar

Four convicts
executed after apex
court bids
last-minute plea

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

They did not express any last wish, nor did they leave a will.

The four men convicted in the 2012 Nirbhaya gang-rape and murder case were clutching at straws as the Supreme Court held an unprecedented sitting at 2.30 am on Friday to



(Clockwise from top left) Akshay Kumar Singh, Pawan Gupta, Vinay Sharma and Mukesh Singh.

take up a last-minute plea to delay their execution scheduled three hours later.

But as jail officials and West Delhi District Magistrate Neha Bansal entered their cells, the four knew it was all over.

Mukesh Singh (32), Pawan Gupta (25), Vinay Sharma (26) and Akshay Kumar Singh (31) were hanged in Tihar Jail at 5.30 am on Friday, seven years after the gang-rape of a 23-year-old woman in a moving bus in Delhi. The victim, who later came to be known as Nirbhaya, succumbed to injuries later.

The convicts refused breakfast and did not take bath. The four also did not change their clothes before being sent to the gallows simultaneously, a first in Tihar Jail's history.

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No last wish or will: Nirbhaya rapists hanged

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As time ticked away, Mukesh told jail officials that he wanted to donate his organs, while Akshay said his painting should be handed over to the jail superintendent and a copy of 'Hanuman Chalisa' that he had kept with himself, to his family. Vinay and Mukesh had

their dinner (roti, dal, rice and vegetables), while Akshay had tea in the evening but no dinner. Earlier, one of the convicts had expressed his wish to meet another death row convict, but was not allowed.

For Tihar Jail officials, it was a busy night. The administration was glued to court proceedings — first in the Delhi

High Court and then the apex court. The momentum gathered soon after the apex court turned down the plea to stay the execution. When officials asked the convicts whether they wanted to pray or read any religious scriptures, they said no. Vinay broke down as news reached him.

After a medical check-up,

the men were taken to the execution chamber where their faces were covered and hands tied from behind. At 5.30 am, hangman Pawan Jallad pulled the lever. They were left hanging for 30 minutes. After doctors confirmed their death, the bodies were moved to Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital for post-mortem.