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## Joynal Hazari gets life in arms case



Joynal Hazari

**STAR REPORT**

A court in Feni yesterday handed down life imprisonment to former Awami League (AL) lawmaker and alleged godfather of the crime-prone Feni district Joynal Abedin Hazari and his accomplice Farooq Hossain Mridha in an arms case.

Joint forces during the caretaker government raided the 'Shaila Kutir' of Hazari at Masterpara in the town in his absence on August 17, 2001 and recovered huge arms and ammunition including a rifle, two loaded revolvers, a sub-machine gun magazine, 431 bullets, lethal weapons and contraband items including Viagra.

Hazari was said to have fled the country the same day.

Feni police filed a case against Joynal Hazari and Farooq in this connection. Hazari is absconding while Farooq is in jail.

Md Feroz Alam, judge of the District and Sessions Judge's Court, Feni, gave the verdict yesterday in a packed courtroom. Security was tightened in and around the court and none was allowed inside the court without being frisked.

The trial of the case started on May 18. Ten out of 14 listed prosecution witnesses deposed during the trial.

Forty criminal cases have been

filed against Hazari since 1970. Twenty-four of them floundered in the absence of the plaintiff or witnesses while 15 are in the process of trial or under investigation.

Hazari reportedly introduced a 'one man rule' in Feni town and persecuted his political opponents by using a private armed group styled 'Class Committee'. Hazari hogged the headlines after attacking Tipu Sultan, a local journalist and Feni correspondent of UNB news agency.

Hazari's henchmen abducted Tipu on January 25, 2000, beat him up mercilessly with iron rods before

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1



Two of the 26 launches declared unfit by the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority float moored in mid-Buriganga yesterday.

## Launch owners call off strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Launch owners called off their wildcat strike yesterday following a discussion with Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain.

During the talks, Akbar urged the owners to refrain from overloading and maintained that the authorities should be strict against the act.

He said a new policy for the water transport sector is being framed, according to the BSS.

The minister also directed the officials concerned to deploy magistrates at Kathpatti, Chandpur and Barisal terminals to check overloading of launches after they leave the Sadarghat terminal.

A magistrate accompanied by a police sub-inspector will check overloading.

Several hundred homebound passengers who got stranded because of the strike on Saturday could sail off to their destinations after the withdrawal of the strike.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

## UK court slaps \$20m fines on Beximco

Co also to repay \$30m in defaulted loans to Shamil Bank

**M SHAMSUR RAHMAN**

A British court has slapped US\$ 20million in fine on Beximco and asked the group to pay up another US\$ 30million in loans and interest.

Sources said Beximco obtained US\$ 30 million in loans from the Bahrain-based Shamil Bank in 1996 and then defaulted on payments in 1999.

The loans were sanctioned by the bank's head office in Bahrain under

two Morabaha financing agreements in which both parties agreed that the loans would be governed by the English law but they would follow the principles of Sharia law.

The agreements were revised between 1999 and 2002 after Beximco defaulted, sources said.

They said the loans were fully secured by property and equipment through Islamic lease agreements.

Failing to realise the loans,

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

## Main accused Shahid confesses to offence

**SHAZNEEN CASE**

**COURT CORRESPONDENT**

Shahidul Islam alias Shahid, the principal accused in the Shazneen case, yesterday confessed to his offence and prayed to court for capital punishment to himself.

The Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression, Dhaka took the self-defence of all the six accused in the Shazneen rape case.

The rest five pleaded not guilty in

the self-defence that took about two hours to complete. Judge Kazi Rahamat Ullah fixed August 14 for arguments of the case.

Soon after the confession, Shahid's lawyer, MA Kamrul Hasan Khan Aslam, submitted a written petition stating that Shahid was forced by another accused in the case to confess.

Hasan, one of the accused, told the court that he was not involved in the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

## Thieves bore gas lines to pilfer Tk 1 lakh condensate a day

**STAR REPORT**

Aided by some policemen and gas pipeline operators, thieves are pilfering liquid gas condensate worth Tk 1 lakh a day by boring holes in gas pipelines.

The Gas Transmission Company Ltd. (GTCL) has found out that up to 10,000 litres of condensate a day are being pilfered by boring holes and installing valves in the pipelines in Ashuganj in Brahmanbaria.

The GTCL sealed one such leakage last week and found a half-sunken boat with 36 drums full of condensate in Brahmanbaria four

days ago. "Thieves use this condensate to adulterate petroleum products, especially kerosene," said a GTCL official. "A litre of condensate is officially sold at Tk 10."

"Such theft needs technical knowledge common thieves do not know of," said the official, "and we believe the Brahmanbaria Sadar police are abetting these thieves in the act because they refused to take a case against the thieves for four days till we exerted influence on them."

Bangladesh produces about 4,000 barrels of condensate a day and 3,000 barrels are produced by

three gas fields in Sylhet and the remainder by other gas fields of the country. The gas from Sylhet is flowed through Ashuganj station.

A government plant in Kailashtila manufactures liquid petroleum gas (LPG) from condensate for use as cooking fuel. A private firm, Super Refinery, in Chittagong purchases 600 barrels a day for the same purpose. However, there are allegations that a large part is leaked out from the refinery and used as kerosene adulterant.

A Petrobangla official said racketeers dominate the Sylhet Gas Field

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

## High alert at ZIA to receive ailing Biman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Zia International Airport (ZIA) was bracing for the 'unusual landing' of a Bangladesh Biman flight from Brussels last night with about 250 passengers on board as the pump of one of its front wheels leaked out soon after takeoff.

The DC-10 aircraft on New York-Brussels-Dhaka route is scheduled to land at ZIA at 3:20am.

After the aircraft, BG012, took

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

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