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## Six to die for rape, murder of young girl

From Our Correspondent  
**GAIBANDHA, July 27:** A special court today handed down death sentence to six young men for the rape and murder of a 16-year-old girl more than two years ago.  
 District and Sessions Judge Sirajuddin Ahmed awarded the death penalty to Saiful, Joyal, Inzar Ali, Mandal, Nuruzzaman and Ishaque under the Women and Child Repression Prevention Act. Four other accused in the case were acquitted of the charges.  
 The case in brief is that the victim, daughter of Abul Hossain of Laksam, had travelled to Chittagong to see her father who was working there. On her way she met Saiful, 25, of Sunderganj. He asked her to come with him, promising to marry her.  
 They later came to Sunderganj thana of Gaibandha district and got married on April 20, 1996.  
 On the same day the accused youngsters in connivance with Saiful gangraped the hapless girl and later strangled her.  
 The verdict of the court came after examining 19 witnesses in the case.

## Hasina leaves for Colombo today

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina leaves Dhaka today for Sri Lanka to attend the 10th SAARC summit in Colombo, reports UNB.  
 The three-day summit will begin in Sri Lankan capital on July 29.  
 Hasina will lead a 17-member delegation in the summit.  
 The delegation members include Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad and Foreign Secretary Mustafizur Rahman.  
 The Prime Minister will deliver her speech along with other heads of state and government at the opening session of the summit to be held at Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall.  
 The closing session on July 31 is expected to adopt a declaration of the summit.  
 On the sideline of the summit Prime Minister Hasina will have bilateral talks with the heads of government of the SAARC countries.  
 She will call on Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga today.  
 On July 29, she will meet Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.  
 Leading television networks like MTV, state-owned Rupavahini and Telsan network will interview the Bangladesh Prime Minister.

**Seniority of 60 BCS officials upheld**  
 By Staff Correspondent  
 The administrative appeal tribunal has upheld the seniority of 60 officials of the BCS-1982 batch over 650 officials of the special batch appointed in 1983, according to a press release.  
 An unanimous verdict yesterday, the appeal tribunal cancelled the administrative tribunal's verdict in the case and ordered that the government-granted seniority of the 60 officials of former Secretariat service cadre be maintained, the press release added.

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## Select honest, competent persons: BRC Vested quarters active to push their men in NCB boards

By Inam Ahmed

The Bank Reform Committee (BRC) has stressed that honest, competent and experienced persons should be put in the boards and in the positions of chief executives of Nationalised Commercial Banks (NCBs).  
 "It is very important to select appropriate persons for the posts of chairmen and directors of the boards of the banks," a letter of BRC signed by Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud and sent to the Finance Minister read. "Honest and competent officials should be identified and appointed to the posts of managing director and other important posts."  
 The letter was sent just

ahead of the expiry of the tenure of the present boards of directors of the NCBs. The government has already collected names of probable new directors from both the Bangladesh Bank and BRC. But sources said strong lobbying is going on by vested quarters to push their candidates in the new boards.  
 Banking sources also said that the loan defaulters have organised to influence the boards through their selected candidates and are also out to put men of their choice in the highest posts of the Bangladesh Bank.  
 These moves have created ripples in the banking circle,

which may have caused BRC to raise the issue of selecting honest people in the boards of NCBs.  
 Explaining the urgency of appointing competent people in the crucial bank posts, the BRC letter sent yesterday also said, "The process to establish rules and discipline in the banking sector has reached a crucial juncture and it is still not possible to say which direction the situation will take."  
 In this regard, the BRC letter said, "Persons of high moral standard and experience should be appointed in these posts (chairman and directors) who can carry out their duties free

from the influence of small vested interest groups or personal interest."  
 The letter further said banking activities should be kept free from the influence of vested interest groups.  
 "Even a small lapse in this regard can give wrong signal about the government's commitment to banking reform," it said. "The government should take steps to inspire and protect the honest officials to establish discipline in the banking sector."  
 The last batch of chairmen and directors in the NCBs was appointed in August 1996. Their  
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## Dhaka refuses to sign SOFA

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh has refused to sign the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) with the United States, according to official sources.  
 A diplomatic note was sent by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sunday afternoon, rejecting the proposal given by Washington several months back.  
 State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Abul Hasan Chowdhury, talking to The Daily Star yesterday, said that the government had decided to turn down the proposal.  
 "It is no big deal that we have not signed the SOFA," he said.  
 When contacted, a spokesman of the US Embassy in Dhaka confirmed that the Bangladesh Government has turned down the offer of signing the SOFA. "A diplomatic note

from the foreign ministry was received by the embassy on Sunday. It did not explain the rationale for rejecting the agreement," the spokesman said.  
 Sources said that the US proposal for signing of SOFA has been given nearly nine months ago. It was at the 'negotiation level' for a long time.  
 The government in the last two months considerably hardened its position from its initial state of willingness.  
 There had been press reports that there was external pressure in rejecting the agreement. However, the contention has been denied by officials.  
 However, both Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad and State Minister Abul Hasan  
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## Rubel's death 7-party calls hartal on July 30

The seven-party alliance led by BNP has called for a dawn-to-dusk hartal on July 30 in Dhaka city to protest the death of Shamim Reza alias Rubel in police custody, reports UNB.  
 Rubel, a student of independent University, was tortured to death by detective police last Thursday.  
 The alliance will organise a meeting and bring out protest procession on July 29 on the same issue.  
 The hartal and demonstration programme was taken at a meeting at 29 Minto Road yesterday afternoon with Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder in the chair.  
 The meeting observed that a total insecurity is prevailing as  
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VITAL ROAD-LINK UNDER THREAT: The Dhaka-Chittagong highway at Baniakandi near Meghna Bridge went under flood water yesterday.

## Dhaka-Chittagong highway partially submerged

By Special Correspondent

Diarrhoea is spreading in the flood-hit areas, claiming eight lives so far in different parts of the country as the major rivers continued to swell, worsening the situation in the central districts, officials said yesterday.  
 With 17 more flood-related deaths yesterday, the toll from the current spate of floods rose to 111, mostly from drowning.  
 The floods have affected about one crore twelve lakh people in 36 districts, Shariatpur, being the latest addition yesterday.  
 Health official in the city said one person, who is yet to be identified, died of diarrhoea in Bogra yesterday. They said 7,650 cases of diarrhoea were reported from the affected districts in the last seven days.  
 "A total of 1,467 doctors and a large number of paramedics in 3,313 teams are working in the flood affected areas. Campaigns are being conducted to make the people aware of basic healthcare to check spread of diarrhoeal diseases", a health official said.  
 He said medicines have been taken to meet necessary

medicine including intravenous fluids ready in all the affected districts to face the aftermath of the flood.  
 The overall flood situation in the country deteriorated further in the central parts of the country including greater Dhaka district following rise of water level in the Ganges basin, officials said.  
 The situation remained unchanged in the north and northwestern districts.  
 Meanwhile, rising waters of the Meghna submerged portions of the Dhaka-Chittagong highway on both sides of the Meghna bridge.  
 Buses and other transports were plying cautiously, they said last night. In the affected portion of the road, one lane of the highway was being used while the other was being repaired, they said.  
 BSS adds: Prime Minister's press secretary Jawadul Karim, in a press briefing yesterday said despite recession of waters in most parts of greater Sylhet, Chittagong and Cox's Bazar districts, the situation in 18 districts continued to be critical with rise in water levels of major rivers in the Brahmaputra and Ganges basins.  
 He said, of the new deaths, nine were reported from Gaibandha, five from Myensingh, one from Dhaka, one from Jamalpur and one from Faridpur.  
 Karim said the disaster management and relief ministry yesterday allocated 300  
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## PM visits city's flood-hit areas

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday visited flood-affected areas in the city, reports UNB.  
 In the afternoon she visited the Katashoor flood protection embankment in Mohammadpur and distributed relief goods among the flood-hit people of the area.  
 From Katashoor the prime minister boarded a speed boat and went to Kamrangir Char in Lalbagh where most houses were inundated by the flood water.  
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## Shazneen murder

Bail prayer for Hasan rejected again

By Staff Correspondent  
 A bail prayer for contractor Hasan, one of the seven people allegedly involved in the Shazneen murder in Gulshan on April 23, was rejected by the High Court.  
 A division bench of the HC comprising Justice Md Mozammel Hoque and Justice ABM Khairul Hoque refused to grant bail or issue a rule when Advocate Khandaker Mahboob Hossain moved a bail petition on behalf of the accused contractor on Sunday, court sources said yesterday.  
 Assistant Attorney General, Abul Hossain Azadi, appearing for the state, and Barrister Rafiqul Haq, appearing on behalf of the complainant, opposed the bail petition.  
 The lawyer for the petitioner later withdrew the application for bail.  
 Meanwhile, District and Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka early this month rejected another bail petition for contractor Hasan.  
 Youngest daughter of industrialist Latifur Rahman, Chairman of Transcom Group, Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, 15,  
 See Page 12 Col 3

## News Analysis

## Death in custody: A few questions

By Nurul Kabir and Masud Arif  
 The recent death of Shamim Reza Rubel in police custody has once again raised a few vital questions about the behaviour of police: Are they really aware of their legal jurisdictions? Do they consider themselves to be a 'force' immune to any serious punitive measure? Or, is it an 'inherent criminality' that frequently drives them to torture the accused to death?  
 Rubel, a final year BBA student of a private university, was picked up by the Detective Branch of Police on 'suspicion' Thursday afternoon. The DB plainclothesmen beat him in public on their way to office and conducted a 'tough interrogation' in the evening, resulting in his death by 9:30 at night. According to the autopsy report, Rubel's body contained marks of severe injury that give clear hints of merciless beating and other kinds of torture by the interrogators.  
 Meanwhile, police has claimed that Rubel was accused in a case lodged with Gulshan thana, and he was picked up on suspicion of possessing illegal arms. The DB also claimed that Rubel had confessed, before his death in custody, that he had some illegal arms at his disposal.  
 The police have so far neither been able to come up with any specific case he was allegedly accused in, nor been successful in recovering any weapon — legal or illegal — from Rubel's possession.  
 But the police officials concerned, in a bid to justify torture in custody, claimed that 'tough interrogation' was necessary to make the accused come out with secret information, especially relating to possession of illegal weapons. The means of the so-called tough interrogation usually include beating at joints, spreading powdered chilli on the eyes, electric shock, inserting boiled egg into the anal passage, kicking on the chest and the back, hitting with rifle butt, pouring hot or cold water on the face, uprooting nails, forcing to drink urine  
 See Page 12 Col 3

## Maharashtra puts off deportation Lok Sabha plunges into turmoil: Opposition stages walkout

From Pallab Bhattacharya  
 NEW DELHI, July 27: Maharashtra government's deportation of alleged Bangladeshi illegal immigrants rocked the Lok Sabha today with members belonging to Left parties, Janata Dal and Muslim League staging a walkout expressing dissatisfaction over the government's response to the issue.  
 Leader of the Opposition Sharad Pawar of Congress Party raised the matter during zero hour and said the Shiv Sena-BJP government in Maharashtra state was deporting Bengali families from Bombay saying they were Bangladeshis.  
 Pawar demanded dismissal of the Shiv Sena-BJP government in Maharashtra for what he termed "an attack" on India's unity. He said a similar situation had cropped up three years ago when the state government had tried to shift Muslim families of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal from Bombay.  
 The government assured the opposition members that no Indian citizen would be thrown out of the country but asserted that those staying in the country without any valid documents were "infiltrators".  
 CPI (M) leader Somnath Chatterjee said attempts should not be made to divide the country along religious lines and said out of the 40 people evicted from Bombay, 27 had legal documents to prove they were Indians.  
 Certain remarks by a Shiv Sena member of Lok Sabha made Congress, Janata Dal, Left parties and Bahujan Samaj Party members angry who rushed to the well of the house. In the midst of hour-long noisy scenes, treasury and opposition members were involved in  
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**Tuition fees: Fresh programmes by student bodies**  
 By DU Correspondent  
 The 'general students' of Dhaka University under the banner of a resistance committee and the Ganatantrik Chhatra Oikya (GCO) have announced fresh action programmes to press their demand for withdrawal of the university authorities' decision to raise tuition fees and other charges of the students.  
 Academic and administrative work of the university remained suspended for the second consecutive day yesterday due to the strike, called by the resistance committee and the GCO. No examination scheduled for yesterday was held.  
 The programme of the resistance committee includes wearing of black badges on July 30, forming a 'human chain' on Au-  
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## Group Chairman tells The Daily Star Grindlays Bank plans massive investment

Star Business Report  
 Going high on what Group chiefs call "foreign organisation-friendly" environment, ANZ Grindlays Bank plans "massive investment" to expand its network and bring in modern banking services to Bangladesh.  
 The Australia-based multinational is also taking the lead in syndicated loans responding to the government's desire to develop a long-term debt market in Bangladesh.  
 In an interview with The Daily Star, the ANZ Banking Group Chairman Charles Goode disclosed his bank's plans for "massive investment" to set up a Central Depository System  
 (CDS), expand the number of ATMs and credit cards.  
 "In terms of direct investment," he said, the bank "would like to open some more branches".  
 Goode, on a two-day visit to Bangladesh accompanied by Group Chief Executive Officer John McFarlane, is impressed by his bank's performance here. McFarlane called the ANZ operation, the largest among the foreign banks in Bangladesh, "one of the best businesses that we have anywhere in the world".  
 He attributed the successes to two factors. "Bangladesh is  
 See Page 12 Col 7

## Alleged snatching Bail prayers of 4 policemen rejected

From Our Correspondent  
**RAJSHAHI, July 27:** The district and sessions judges court today rejected bail prayers of three police officers and one constable and sent them to Rajshahi Central Jail in connection with a case against them for allegedly snatching Tk 12 lakh 20 thousand from a money changer in Puthia thana recently.  
 Court sources said that Sub-Inspectors Shaiful Huda and Abul Kasem, ASI Saiful Islam and constable Monwar Hossain of Puthia thana was accused of snatching the money from Rustom Ali on March 7. Rustom Ali had filed a case with Rajshahi judge court on May 9.  
 The accused policemen appeared before the court today and prayed for bail.  
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