

A new foundation set up

A group of prominent citizens with long-standing record of public service have joined hands and have set up the Bangladesh Freedom Foundation (BFF), it was announced yesterday.

"It is an independent and non-partisan national philanthropic organisation that will provide financial support to initiatives aimed at promoting fundamental freedoms of the citizens of Bangladesh in accordance with the ideals of our freedom struggle and provisions of the Constitution, and various relevant international Conventions, Charters and other instruments," a statement said.

Members of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation are Prof Rehman Sobhan, Dr Muhammad Yunus, Kazi Fazlur Rahman, Syed Manzur Elahi, Prof Wahiduddin Mahmood, Sultan Kamal, Dr Meghna Guhathakurta, Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, Dr Nafis Khan and Mahfuz Anam, who is the founding Chair.

The Foundation is committed to promoting three fundamental freedoms — freedom from poverty, freedom from ignorance, freedom from oppression — in Bangladesh. Its programmatic focus will emanate from these core concerns. Other areas of interest will include freedom of expression, freedom of the press and media, human rights and equality before law," the BFF statement said.

"It will aim at promoting professional excellence in various fields with a particular focus on the enormous reservoir of Bangladeshi talents, especially the new generation, for catalyzing positive and forward-looking response to challenges facing Bangladesh in the

NCWD report

Repression on women on rise

Repression on women and child and woman trafficking are on the rise despite government's preventive measures, says a report of the National Council for Women Development (NCWD), reports UNB.

The Council presented the report at its second meeting presided over by its Chairperson Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at ICC here on Tuesday, sources said.

NCWD in its report said 5,434 cases in 1997 and 6,210 cases in 1998 had been filed against woman repression while 2,583 cases in last five months across the country.

It pointed out that there had been no substantial progress in preventing the repression on woman and trafficking of children and women in spite of various initiatives taken by government and non-government organisations.

The report said the scope for

involving women in the mainstream of development process is shrinking due to continued repression on women and the people along with their families are suffering from a sense of insecurity.

Expressing concern over the mounting rate of incidence of women and child repression, NCWD said the registered information is insignificant in comparison with the fact.

It also condemned the role of police: There are a lot of allegations that in many cases, police refuse to record cases in time of woman repression.

Referring to the repression on women in police custody in recent time, the report said people's confidence in law enforcement agencies is being lost.

NCWD identified some causes of increase in woman and child repression and put forward recommendations to address the problem.



First Secretary of the Indian High Commission in Dhaka Riva Ganguly Das and Information Officer Ranjan Mondal met the executives of the Bangladesh Photojournalists' Association at its office in the city yesterday and donated some books for the association library.

Photography Exhibition of Mir Shimul opens

By Staff Correspondent

The maiden photography exhibition by young photographer Mir Shimul Islam began on Tuesday at Bangladesh Photographic Society's (BPS) National Photography Gallery, says a press release.

The exhibition titled 'Nepal through Nikkormat' was inaugurated by Walida Beg, widow of noted photographer M A Beg and Rajaram Bartaula, Second Secretary of Nepal Embassy in Dhaka.

The exhibition was dedicated in memory of photographer M A Beg.

The exhibition will remain open for all from 12 noon to 8:00 pm daily till August 5.



Death anniversary

The 41st Death Anniversary of Late Nurul Huq Chaudhury, former central, works, minority and home minister will be observed today, says a press release.

To mark this occasion, a *Milad* *Mahfil* and a discussion meeting will be held at Kattali Nurul Huq Chaudhury High School, Chittagong, where Prof M Khaled, editor of the Daily *Asadi*, Chittagong will be present as chief guest.

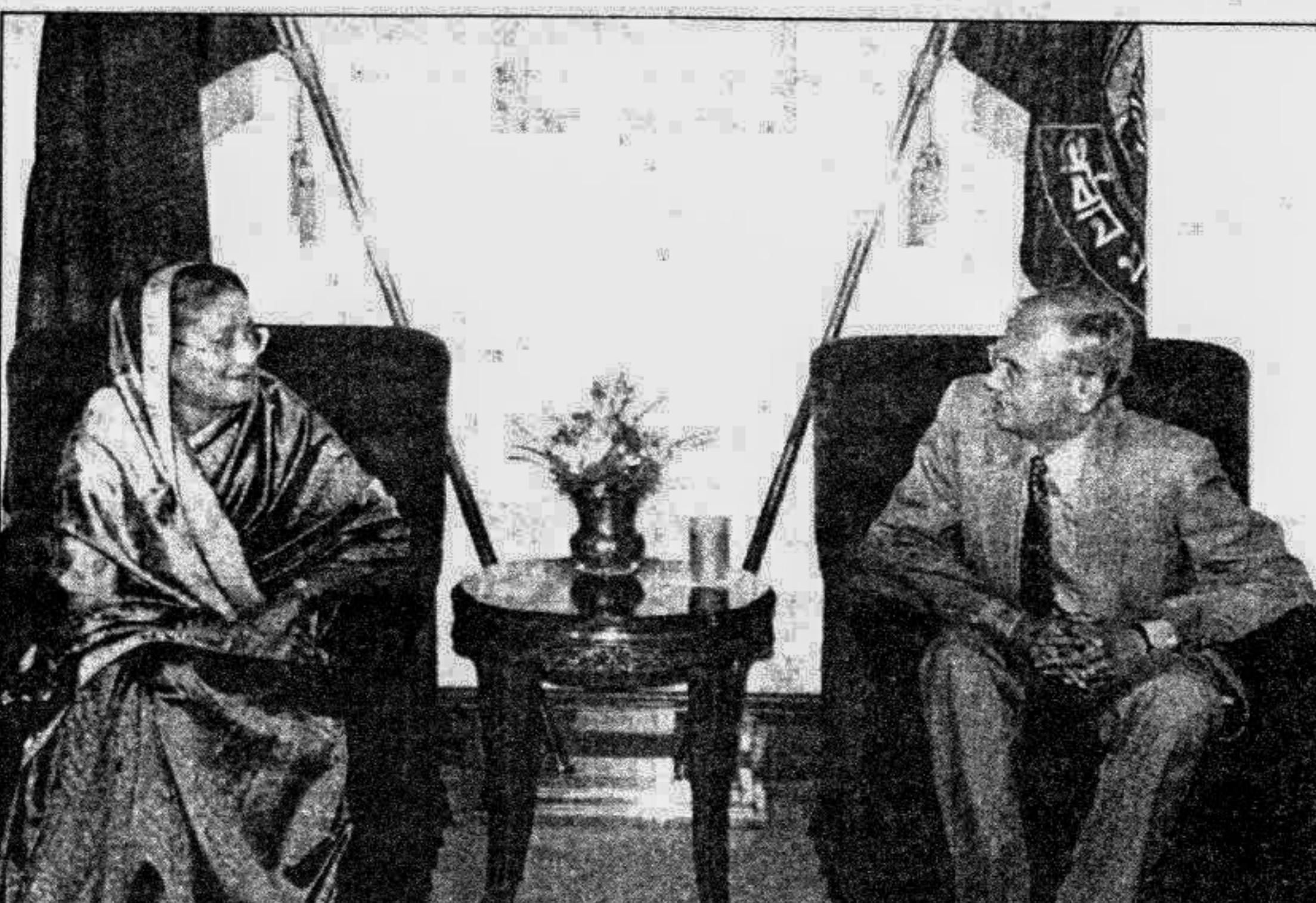
Nurul Huq Chaudhury was elected as the member of undivided Bengal's Legislative Council in 1924 and on his initiative, Chittagong Port achieved the status of a 'Major Port'.

new millennium. Programs that will bring the people closer to the state-of-the-art knowledge, information and technology in promoting the objectives of the Foundation will be of special interest. Priority areas in the Foundation's funding activities will include: good governance, accountability and transparency; women, children and minority groups in poverty and disadvantage; and habitable and sustainable ecology and environment."

"In selecting activities to support, the BFF will give preference to gender equality and non-discriminatory participation of all social, religious, cultural and ethnic groups. It will also prefer smaller, newer and sustainable initiatives with innovative approach."

The Bangladesh Freedom Foundation will explore and welcome collaborative funding and programming jointly with similar institutions for initiatives that have shared objectives. Work of the Foundation will be supported by voluntary contributions and grants from interested funding organisations, bilateral and multilateral donors, regional and international institutions, private sector and individual donations from within and outside Bangladesh."

Dr Iftekharuzzaman, who until recently served as Executive Director of the Colombo-based Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, has taken over as the first Executive Director of the Foundation. He will be supported by a small team of qualified professionals. He can be contacted for further information (Telephones: 814532, 816193; Fax: 816200; email: edbfff@bdonline.com).



Sri Lankan Minister for Justice, Constitutional and Ethnic Affairs Prof G L Peiris called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office in the city yesterday. — PID photo

DIIT convocation, IT seminars held

Daffodil Institute of Information Technology (DIIT), a sister concern of Daffodil Computers, organised an open IT conference at the Central Public Library Auditorium yesterday, says a press release.

This was the largest IT seminar in the history of the country to date. The first convocation ceremony of the institute was also held after the conference.

Speakers at the seminar discussed about the 'Impact of IT in Bangladesh' and 'IT education in Bangladesh'.

Mohammad Sabur Khan, Managing Director of Daffodil Computers, in his welcome speech said that as Bangladeshi citizens we can undoubtedly say that the dream of making a new and better Bangladesh into a reality can be made successful with the help of Information Technology. For this, we need proper assistance and guidance of News Media. IT professionals and businessmen in order to increase the enthusiasm in everyone. This would one day help us to stand proudly in front of the world.

Mr Jamilur Reza Chowdhury chaired the discussion on 'Impact of IT in Bangladesh,' Mahfuz Anam, Editor of The Daily Star, in his speech assured his all-out support for IT. Among others who participated in the seminar were Benajir Ahmed, Editor of The Daily Bhoror Kagoj, Habibullah N Karim, the General Secretary of BASIS, Shamim Akhter Tushar, the Executive Director of Computer Jagat and the Managing Director of Leeds Corporation. Sheikh Abdul Aziz. All of them emphasised that the IT should have much more implication in our daily lives. Dr Jamilur Reza Chowdhury concluded the seminar by implying that the intellectual copyright law can help to develop the software business in Bangladesh.

In the transport sector, the University authority spends Tk 22 lakh to clear the bills of the Bangladesh Railway (BR) for the shuttle trains that run between the town and campus to carry the students. But the government

CU facing severe financial crisis

By CU Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, July 28: With Tk 10.35 crore deficit in its current budget, Chittagong University has been facing severe financial crisis exerting an all-pervading setback on academic and development activities.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) granted Tk 29.25 crore for expenditures of the University in 1999-2000 fiscal. The amount is inadequate to run the university for a year, officials said.

The university will have to spend Tk 28.51 crore this year to pay the salaries and other allowances of 510 teachers and 1803 employees. During the current fiscal the government allocated Tk 24.42 crore for salaries and allowances leaving a deficit of Tk 4.09 crore for it.

The University needs at least Tk 39.60 crore a year for the smooth running of the institution.

Due to shortage of allocation, the university will face a deficit of Tk 10.35 crore during the current financial year, said officials.

In the transport sector, the University authority spends Tk 22 lakh to clear the bills of the Bangladesh Railway (BR) for the shuttle trains that run between the town and campus to carry the students. But the government

has granted only Tk 18 lakh for this purpose.

The University also spends every day Tk 1500 as fare of public buses to facilitate the movement of students and officials. The authority also spends Tk 62 lakh as fuel expenditure per year for the vehicles. The total need for the maintenance of vehicles is at least Tk 30 lakh per year but the University gets a sanction of only Tk 24 lakh in this regard.

In the past the University had its own earning sources. But the sources have been lost as colleges are no longer under the control of the University.

Talking to this correspondent Dr Siddiqui Rahaman Bhuiyan, Comptroller of Accounts (CA) of the University said, "The university authority has no alternative but to seek urgent grant from the government.

He claimed that the 16000 students of the University will be affected if adequate grant is not available to run the university properly.

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Finally, at the request of the government, AES agreed to provide a cushion" to PDB till September.

As CWHEC again failed to make any significant progress in developing the site, PDB told AES earlier this month that site would not be available to it before November.

AES responded saying that the delay had already affected it financially and it now may have to increase the levelised power tariff.

Finally, at the request of the government, AES agreed to take the project site on November 15.

The gas fired combined cycle power plant would be built at a cost of 28 crore US dollars.

After the final agreement, the company would have to arrange the project funds within six months and within the next 30 months, it must start supplying power to PDB on a commercial basis.

AES would also provide 139.5 crore unit of power free of cost before the plant starts commercial production.

According to a recent estimate, the total number of people detained under the SPA from 1974 to June this year was 78,520 while the number of those released through Writ of Habeas Corpus till 1996 was 13,641.

50 hurt, vehicles damaged

SPA

From Page 1

out that the existing SPA does not include any of the offences laid down in the penal code of 1860.

Earlier on July 25, the Bangabhaban in a rejoinder termed as "baseless, false and motivated" a report published in the *Banglabazar Patrika* saying that President Shahabuddin introduced Special Powers Act on August 1, said a press release.

The Bangabhaban said President General Ershad on December 6, 1990, just an hour before handing over power, had, in fact, basically signed the "Government Employees Retirement Act (Act 12 of 1974) instead of the 'Special Powers Act Repeal Notification.'

The decision (Act 12) was neither approved by the cabinet nor published as a gazette notification," the rejoinder said. "So the very act (Special Powers) still remains in force."

Moudud Ahmed, who was vice president in Ershad regime, told this correspondent that he had made a draft for repeal of the Special Powers Act. "I took it to President Ershad on Dec 6. Ershad, he said, signed three ordinances that day. One was relating to Dhaka University, curtailing its autonomy to enable government authorities to enter the campus anytime, the second extending the tenure of Union Parishad from three years to five years and the third scrapping the SPA. Moudud said that Ershad under his signature had also mentioned the time as forenoon. Ershad quit in the afternoon and the three signed drafts were sent to officials under the new President (Shahabuddin). Moudud however added that later an announcement was made concerning two ordinances (signed by Ershad) through gazette notification and there was no mention of scrapping of the SPA.

The SPA enacted in 1974 has been subjected to severe criticism. Since its enactment, every government has used the SPA to detain people, often sparking criticism that it was being abused to victimise political opponents. Incidentally, both the major political parties -- the ruling Awami League and the opposition BNP -- made election pledges to scrap the Act but never proceeded to do so after November.

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Tk 7m Dutch assistance for waste management in Ctg

By Staff Correspondent

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the project "Waste Management on Chittagong" will be signed between the Ambassador of the Netherlands DCB den Hass and Secretary for Environment Murge Murshed in a simple ceremony on August 1, said a press release.

The Netherlands government will provide the financial assistance for this project estimated at about Taka 7 million through four Dutch companies: Vermeer Infrastructure Development BV, Van der Wiel Stortgas BV, Nethwaste BV and Advin BV all of which are renowned in the field of waste management.

The project in Chittagong will be implemented in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention of Climate Change signed in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

The aim of the project is at mitigation of climate change through reduction of greenhouse gases. Bangladesh and the Netherlands have committed themselves to the joint implementation of this convention.

An extensive feasibility study will be performed in order to identify the appropriate management and finance plan to devise an environmental monitoring scheme and to obtain the necessary legal, institutional and financial commitments for investing parties, the press release said.

It is estimated that the operation of the landfill in Chittagong will result in a reduction of 180,000 tonnes of carbon-dioxide equivalents per year. The duration of the project will be 30 months.

Nasim condemns killing of 3 persons during road march

Home, Post and Telecommunications Minister Md Nasim yesterday condemned the incident in which three persons were crushed under the wheels of vehicles used in the road march of Jamaat-e-Islami in Pabna on July 26, reported BSS.

Nasim, who is on an official visit to France, directed the concerned authorities to take legal action against those responsible for the incident, an official handout said in the city.



Prof Shahadat Ali, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University, delivered a speech at a seminar on "The Political Philosophy of the Manifesto of Communist Party: A Review." Dev Centre for Philosophical Research (DCPR) organised the seminar on the DU Campus yesterday.

Transshipment: FBCCI, DCCI hail decision

Businessmen greeted the government decision as the cabinet yesterday approved in principle the proposal for examining transit facility in India, reports UNB.

"It's a very good decision. The sooner the two countries will reach consensus on the matter and implement the decision of providing transit facility, the better it'll be for our economy," said FBCCI President Abdul Awal Mintoo.

In an instant reaction to the cabinet decision, he said: "Giving transit facility will help our economy in various ways. Transit will not only bring huge foreign exchange for Bangladesh, it will also develop our transport sector."

He referred to Sri Lanka whose various sectors are awash with Indian investments.

In this respect, he categorically mentioned the manufacturing sector where the Indian investors with their well-equipped technology, skills and capital could come forward and invest.

Like the FBCCI President, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry President MH Rahman is also encouraged by the government decision and found nothing to be worried that country's security would be threatened with providing transit facility to India.

"I see nothing wrong with the decision if our safety, security and economics are not dishonoured. There is no logic to oppose it if we're benefited and the deficit between our exports and imports decrease," he said. "I don't understand the debate over the issue."

The DCCI President said under normal circumstances transit should not be a big issue. "In Europe, carrying goods of one country over another is very common."

Barrister Syed Ishaq Ahmed said Mintoo had paid back his dues (Tk 6 lakh, Tk 10 lakh, Tk 8.17 lakh and Tk 10 lakh respectively against the four accounts) before the Bangladesh Bank notice gave him September 9, 1995.

Barrister Ahmed was assisted by Barrister Rafique-ul-Haq. Barrister Amirul Islam appeared for Bangladesh Bank.

Shazneen

In charge sheets of both the cases, police accused seven persons — domestic help Shahid, contractor Hasan, supervisor Badal, carpenter Shani Ram, guard Humayun Kabir and maid Parveen and Minu. Of the accused, guard Humayun Kabir died of a cardiac arrest on January 11.

The accused six were produced before the court yesterday as the date was fixed for deposition of the informant of the case. Following a verbal submission of the defence lawyers, the judge, Tapan Kumar Rudra, adjourned