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## Hearing of 3 share scam cases resumes

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Almost a year after the Appellate Division passed its judgement, the three share scam cases involving Beximco Pharmaceuticals, Shinepukur Holdings and Doha Securities finally came up for hearing in the Second Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court yesterday.

Judge Hossain Shahid Ahmed after hearing both sides fixed May 27 for delivering order on charge framing.

The accused in the cases are Sohel F Rahman, Salman F Rahman, and A B M Siddiquar Rahman of Shinepukur, Sohel F Rahman, Salman F Rahman and D H Khan of Beximco Pharmaceuticals, and A K M Shamsuddoha of Doha Securities.

The prosecution lawyers led by Barrister M Zahir opened the arguments stating the findings of a probe committee report, which was formed to identify the manipulators in the 1996 share scam.

In his arguments, Zahir said that Shinepukur Holdings had inflated its share prices by giving false disclosures on November 11, 1996 that it would open a new cement company which pushed its share prices from Tk 250 to Tk

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## Falu who spent 22 yrs in jail without trial breaths his last

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Falu Miah, who had spent about 22 years in the Dhaka Central Jail without trial, died at Uttara in the city in the early hours yesterday at the age of 64.

Falu, who spent the prime time of his life in prison, left behind his second wife, childless Monira Begum. She had been looking after him ever since he contacted tuberculosis a few years back. His first wife was pregnant when she left Falu, thinking that he would never come out of jail.

Saval police had implicated Falu in a false case. He was sent to Dhaka Central Jail in 1972. It was later learnt that due to negligence of the police officer concerned, documents of the case were "missing", not to be found in 22 years.

After confinement for 21 years and eight months since 1972, Falu was released in 1993 when he was found innocent as the Bangladesh Society for Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR) took up his case.

The BSEHR later filed a suit with the District and Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka against the government, claiming Tk 10 lakh as compensation for human rights violation.

Falu made deposition twice through an advocate commission as he was sick but the government prayed for time delaying the process. Falu died in extreme hardship.

## Indian sarees, cigarette papers worth Tk 2 cr seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs intelligence teams yesterday seized Indian sarees and cigarette papers worth about Tk 2 crore in two separate incidents.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of customs intelligence seized a truck on North South Road in the city and recovered 12,630 pieces of Indian sarees from 68 sacks.

The value of the goods would be more than Tk one crore, according to customs officials.

The driver and helper of the truck (bearing number Bogra-Ta-3129) fled away when customs officials tried to intercept it near Fulbaria in the early hours of yesterday.

In a separate drive, another team of customs intelligence seized cigarette papers loaded in five trucks near Kunchupur Bridge in early hours of yesterday.

The officials seized those trucks on the basis of secret information that those goods were being carried to Chittagong on forged documents. The trucks were carrying cigarette papers worth about Tk one crore.

Two separate departmental cases were filed in this regard.



Ambassadors and high commissioners of eight EU countries to Bangladesh (from left) Michel Lummaux of France, MF Finni of Italy, JL Ijermans of the Netherlands, Dr David Carter of the United Kingdom, Antonio de Souza Menezes of European Commission, Finn Thilsted of Denmark, Anders Johnson of Sweden and Uwe Schramm of Germany with M Anwarul Haq (3rd R) and Motahar Hossain (2nd R), president and general secretary respectively of the Dhaka Reporters Unity after the Meet the Reporters programme yesterday.

PHOTO STAR

## 'Bangladeshi migrants' to get work permit in Assam?

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

As the campaign for assembly elections in five Indian states, including Assam and West Bengal, reaches its crescendo, some issues raised by political parties have generated more heat than others.

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpeyi's remark at an election meeting in Assam early this week that his government was considering a proposal to issue work permits to Bangladeshi migrants in the north-eastern state has come under fire from the Congress and BJP's ally Shiv Sena, albeit for different reasons.

Congress spokesman S Jaipal Reddy told reporters Monday evening that while his party was ready to consider work permits for

Bangladeshi migrants, the prime minister's remark at a meeting just three days before the assembly elections on May 10 was "violative" of the electoral code of conduct.

Vajpeyi's remark was an "electoral carrot," Reddy said adding the party would lodge a complaint with the Election Commission in this regard. Vajpeyi's remark also came as a surprise to the majority in BJP rank and file, since the party's known stand has been for deportation of "Bangladeshi migrants" from India.

Within BIP, however, leaders are not able to explain how work permit system would be implemented. Senior BIP leader from Delhi Madan Lal Khurana himself admitted that he did not understand what the prime minister had meant by work permit and said he would express his views only after consulting the party top brass.

BIP leaders privately admit that deportation has not met with success. A couple of ears back, when BJP-Shiv Sena coalition government was in power in the western state of Maharashtra, police tried to deport some Bangladeshi migrants. But it triggered fierce contention.

However, BJP spokesman Vijay Kumar Malhotra told reporters that the prime minister's remark was one practical option to detect Bangladeshi "migrants" as throwing them out is difficult". He said

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Work is underway on the southern plaza of the Sangsad Bhaban to replace old water pipes running at five different places on the entire length from east to west of the open space.

## Upcoming polls crucial for Bangladesh, says US envoy

UNB, Dhaka

US Ambassador Mary Ann Peters yesterday offered a set of measures for the Bangladesh government, Election Commission and political parties to ensure fair and credible parliamentary polls and unimpeachable democratic process.

In her proposals she suggests that no party should impose pre-conditions on its joining the electoral process, a pre-election pledge be made by each party to take seat in parliament, win or lose, and they should avoid violence and allow voters to vote without intimidation.

Delivering a keynote speech at a roundtable discussion at CIRDAP on Parliamentary Election: A Critical Challenge for Bangladesh's Developing Democracy, the US envoy said voting procedure should be clear, voter list accessible and polling officials unbiased to ensure a free and fair election.

She also proposed equal media coverage of campaigners and nomination to more women candidates for general seats.

"This year Bangladesh is facing a particularly crucial parliamentary election. This election will be a true test for Bangladesh's democratic institutions. It will have far-reaching effects that go far beyond this year," she told her audience.

Finance Minister S A M S Kibria chaired the discussion organised by Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs (BILIA). Politicians, diplomats, donors, members of civil society and NGO took part in discussions on the most vital question the nation is now faced with.

Peters said the United States would do all to support the election process in Bangladesh and had pledged \$ 1.5 million for this purpose.

Appreciating Bangladeshi people's commitment to democracy

and franchise, she observed that after an intense political struggle ten years ago people forced the military to cede power, step down and allow democratic elections.

"Today, your military remains consciously neutral in the nation's political affairs; its role is to protect the country and the country's democracy," said the US envoy.

She said she thought Bangladesh has some real advantages in the upcoming general election when people cherish their right to vote, with excellent record of voter turnout and equal numbers of men and women voters.

The US Ambassador discouraged violence and hartal as part of democratic culture saying that enforcing hartal is not democratic, it hurts local economy and Bangladesh's image.

"The eyes of the whole world will be on Bangladesh as you enter this campaign, and the whole

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## Credit card for rural poor

M SHAMSUR RAHMAN

Credit cards have so far been regarded as the rich urban consumer's tool, but the Grameen Bank is set to break away from the trend by introducing 'smart cards' for its rural microcredit recipients.

Last week, the Grameen Software Limited, a sister concern of Grameen Bank, signed an MOU with a local IT firm, Information Technology Consultants Limited, to introduce smart cards for the most destitute of the society in different parts of the country.

"We will initially introduce point of sale (POS) terminals in different villages where Grameen family members are located. These terminals will enable transactions similar to credit cards used in the cities," said ITCL chief executive officer Kazi Saifuddin.

He said the card would have a computer chip similar to the ones

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## BCL leader shot dead in Rauzan

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Unidentified assailants gunned down a BCL leader at Munshighata in Rauzan yesterday evening.

The victim, identified as Md Didarul Alam, was the president of BCL Rauzan thana unit.

Police and witnesses said, some armed miscreants came to the local BCL office in two auto-rickshaws and shot Alam point blank while he was talking with some other local Awami League (AL) and BCL leaders including AL Rauzan unit president Shafiqul Islam Chowdhury Babu at around 6 pm.

Alam was rushed to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to bullet injuries at around 7:30 pm.

Alam reportedly belonged to BCL Tinku group. He might have been killed by the armed cadres of his rival BCL Junu group, local people said.

## Rafiq died of heart attack or was murdered?

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police are yet to ascertain whether businessman Rafiqul Islam was murdered or he died of heart attack at his Motijheel office in the city.

Rafiq attended his office on the fourth floor at Alhaj Mansion on Sunday. In the afternoon, he told his staff to give him tea in a thermos flask and leave. He told them he would do some work. On Monday morning, police recovered the body, which was half-lying on a computer table. Islam was 50.

Islam's relatives told this correspondent that they first thought he might have died of heart attack as he was a chain smoker. But later, when DB police found bruises on his chest, his brother-in-law Feroza Mahbubul Alam filed a

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## HC orders release of Tania Mostafa

BSS, Dhaka

High Court yesterday ordered the government to immediately release Tania Mostafa, who was detained in safe custody for the last two and a half years at the Association for Correction and Social Reclamation, popularly known as Nirmul Ashroy Kendra.

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## Tipu off to Bangkok for treatment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Journalist Tipu Sultan left Dhaka for Bangkok yesterday for treatment at the Bumrungrad Hospital.

A good number of well-wishers, including Editor of Prothom Alo, Matur Rahman and Managing Editor of The Daily Star Syed Fahim Munaim were at the airport to see him off. A relative, who would be present throughout the treatment period, accompanied Tipu on the Thai Airways flight to Bangkok. A group of people from Tipu's home town Feni also came to the airport to wish him well.

A team of specialised doctors from the Bumrungrad Hospital will receive the injured journalist at Bangkok airport. The hospital authorities have offered Tipu a three-night stay and initial medical assessment free of cost.

The cost of Tipu's treatment at Bangkok would come from The Daily Star-Prothom Alo fund, which was launched on April 8. People from all walks of life, both home and abroad, donated to the fund for saving Tipu from becoming handicapped.

Ruling party MP Zainal Haider and his henchmen abducted Tipu

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Tipu Sultan spends a few moments with his mother prior to boarding a Bangkok-bound flight yesterday.

PHOTO STAR

## Second phase of Meghnaghata plant

## Marubeni proposal goes to Cabinet body next week

SHARIER KHAN

The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources will send the Marubeni proposal for setting up of the second phase 450 megawatt Meghnaghata Power Plant to the Cabinet Purchase Committee next week.

The proposal, which grossly violates the government's power policy, breaches an earlier understanding that the second phase would be set up as per the terms and conditions of the first phase AES plant. The Japanese company's proposal is a drastically modified version of the AES one.

Sources say the proposal virtually deprives the country of free electricity worth more than 30 million dollars and burdens the government with huge liability.

However, the Power Development Board (PDB), which is dealing with the project, feels that Marubeni proposal is "better than Meghnaghata phase I AES project".

According to sources, the PDB is pursuing a Build, Operate, Own and Transfer (BOOT) policy to implement the power project, whereas the government wants it done on Build, Own and Operate (BOO) basis.

Since losing out on the first

phase Meghnaghata project in 1997 to AES, Marubeni has been strongly lobbying to get the second phase of the project.

In 1998, it proposed to the government that if awarded the contract, it would develop the second phase as per AES terms and conditions, and tariff pricing.

It added that it would not take any money as AES did for compensation of the project site. However, it asked the government to be the guarantor of the site.

After the end of the 22-year contract period, it would give to PDB the plant as a gift. The power plant after 22 years of service should be worth 31.4 million dollars. The PDB would have to undertake a rehabilitation programme in the 28th year at a cost of 25 million dollars and the plant would function for 37 years.

However, the energy ministry raised objections late last year about these deviations and repeatedly asked the PDB to clarify its position on the project. Lastly on April 15, the ministry asked the PDB to scrutinise the Marubeni proposal in the light of reality and see whether the proposal fell under BOO instead of BOOT.

The ministry questioned Marubeni's claim that the plant will have a 37-year life span.

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## Hearing on Yasmeen murder case begins

## State attorney for upholding death penalty of 3 cops

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

A Death Reference Bench of High Court yesterday began hearing on the sensational Yasmeen rape and murder case with the state attorney pleading for upholding the capital punishment to three policemen found guilty by the trial court.

Seventeen-year-old Yasmeen was raped and murdered by police in Dinajpur in 1975. She was going to her village home in Dinajpur from Dhaka late at night. Patrol

police in Dinajpur town took her in their vehicle by offering a lift, raped and killed her and left the body in a rice field at Doshmille near the town. Yasmeen worked as a domestic help at a house in Dhaka.