

# Shazneen case

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The defence lawyer crossed-examined Latifur Rahman for about ten minutes. During the cross-examination the lawyer asked Latifur the date of death of his grandfather. Latifur told the court that his grandfather died before his birth. The court did not take this point into cognisance as it was 'not relevant'.

At this, the defence lawyer pressed for recording his question to Latifur and did 'indecent behaviour' with the judge. He also refused to continue the cross-examination if his question to Latifur Rahman is not recorded.

At this stage, the judge declared 'closed' the cross-examination by the defence lawyer of Shahid 'for the sake of quick disposal of the case and ensuring justice'.

The judge then asked lawyers of other accused in the case to cross-examine the witness.  
Earlier on the day, the defence lawyer had submitted a petition to the court to allow him to ask any question to the witness without explaining any cause and prayed for recording the statement of the witness. The court said such a petition was not 'maintainable'.

The court rejected the petition declaring it 'irrational, illogical and illegal' and directed the defence lawyer to ask relevant questions to the witness as per the Evidence Act. But the lawyer did not follow the directive.

The defence lawyer in another petition earlier on the day prayed for adjournment of the hearing, saying he was sick. As the defence lawyer was present in the court and the hearing was adjourned on several occasions earlier, the court rejected the petition saying it was 'harassing and aimed at delaying the proceedings'.

Yesterday, the defence lawyer of Shahid was half an hour late in appearing in the court although the court on August 3 asked him to appear at 12-o'clock. The court after completing proceedings of other listed cases yesterday waited for 20 minutes for Shahid's defence lawyer to appear.

Latifur Rahman appeared in the court at 11:30am to face cross-examine by the defence lawyer.  
The court adjourned hearing of the case till 11:00 am today. It also asked Shahid's defence lawyer to appear in court in proper dress.

Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, 15, the youngest daughter of Latifur Rahman, Chairman of Transcom, was raped and murdered at their Gulshan residence on April 23, 1998.

Latifur Rahman filed a murder case with Gulshan police station on

April 24, 1998 accusing Shahidul Islam alias Shahid, who worked as a domestic help at his residence.

After six months' investigation into the Shazneen murder case, Mojibur Rahman, ASP of CID, Dhaka, filed a rape case with the same police station, accusing seven people including Shahid.

Accused Shahid, Hasan, Badal, Shani Ram, Minu and Parvin were present in the court yesterday.

Special public prosecutors Arfan Uddin Khan, ABM Sharfuddin Khan Mukul and Mahbub Ahmed and advocates Saima Khanam, Mohammad Ali Hossain and Anisur Rahman appeared on behalf of the complainant.

The Shazneen murder case, pending with the First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka, was earlier stayed by the High Court (HC). The HC order will remain valid till disposal of the rape case.

Trial of the rape case began at the special court on July 9, 2000.

## Prisoner dies at Bagerhat

UNB, Bagerhat

An prisoner died at district jail here yesterday. Jail sources said Ruhul Amin, 22, fell sick in the morning and was taken to Sadar Hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

Ruhul Amin hailed from Atraki village in Fakirhat upazila was detained in a case under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

Jail authorities filed a UD case.

## Jailer

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Haji Selim, which is unlawful.

Selim was sent to Rajshahi jail on the night of Tuesday, the sources added.

Seventeen jail guards were also suspended on Tuesday for giving jail inmates facilities not allowed under law.

Jailer of Dhaka Central Jail Anwarul Haque has been transferred to Feni jail and Deputy Jailer Abu Taleb to Chuadanga jail. Sergeant Moshleuddin Ahmed has been transferred to Jessore Central Jail.

Two security men have also been transferred, the sources said.

# AL meet today

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rules apparently to thwart the opposition's bid to observe August 15, the death anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, as the national mourning day.

The government announcement came 15 days after the cabinet had cancelled all official programmes on August 15.

The July 22 cabinet decision scrapping the national mourning day, introduced by the previous AL government in 1996, was never confirmed officially. Though an official announcement on this was made on Sunday, it was withdrawn within two hours of its release.

"Cancellation of the national mourning day and amendment of the flag rules are simply vindictive acts on the part of the government," AL presidium member Amir Hossain Amu said yesterday.

He, however, said his party would go ahead with the mourning day programmes in the manner it used to observe before its return to power in 1996.

Amu said the AL never hoisted the national flag half-mast on August 15 until the day was officially

declared as the national mourning day.

Another presidium member of the party, Tofail Ahmed told The Daily Star that today's meeting would decide the details of the mourning day programmes.

The opposition party used to observe unofficially August 15 as the national mourning day until its returned to power in 1996 when it made the day official.

The AL has meantime called a half-day hartal on August 15 in protest against cancellation of the national mourning day and all state programmes of the day.

## 2 kids

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was later shifted to DMCH where doctor declared him dead.

In another incident, four-year-old Sakila, daughter of one Mostafa Haider, fell into water while playing with some other children on the bank of a lake at Tejgaon and drowned.

She was declared dead when taken to DMCH.

# Political donations

**FROM PAGE 12**  
while making donations to a political party, they try to get more returns from it that can ultimately go against the interest of the society, he added.

"I can see businessmen giving money to the political parties and trying to get returns several times the amount, for which the society is paying dearly. In order to stop such practices, donations to the political parties should be made transparent," he noted.

The political parties should be professionally run and follow a system so that people have good perception about them. Giving donations to political parties is nothing wrong and it is accepted everywhere. But the way it is given in the developed countries is different, the BGMEA president mentioned.

He suggested that the political parties throw fund-raising dinners where prospective businessmen would be invited and they would pay a fixed amount for participation.

However, Mahbub Jamil, former president of the Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Chairman and Managing Director of Singer Bangladesh Ltd., said as far as multinational companies are concerned, it is not possible for them to give such donations.

(Scoreboard on page 13)

## Sayeded Khokan released

UNB, Dhaka

Young Awami League leader Sayeed Khokan was released from jail yesterday.

Earlier on Tuesday, the High Court held illegal the detention of Khokan, son of former DCC mayor Mohammad Hanif. The court ordered his release if not involved in any other criminal cases.

Khokan, who contested the last parliamentary election on Awami League ticket from a constituency in the old part of Dhaka City and suffered defeat, was arrested on June 29 under Section 54 of CrPC and later detained under the Special Powers Act on July 1.

After the release, Khokan, along with his father and a large number of party workers went to the Bangabandhu Bhaban and placed wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

## 'Torture' on Nasim HC asks jail authorities to submit medical register

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday directed Dhaka Central Jail authorities to submit by August 19 its medical register on the entry of Bahauddin Nasim, APS to the former prime minister.

The court also asked the government to produce police diary in connection with two criminal cases lodged against Bahauddin.

The orders came from the division bench comprising Justice Mohammad Hamidul Huq and Justice Salma Masud Chowdhury on a petition filed on behalf of Bahauddin.

Moving the petition, Amirul Islam submitted that Bahauddin was meted out inhuman physical torture in police custody before he was sent to jail.

Additional Attorney General Abdur Rezzaq Khan strongly opposed the contention of the petitioner.

Bahauddin was arrested on February 28 from Zia International Airport while he was leaving for USA and detained under the Special Powers Act.

Police filed two criminal cases against him on charge of dollar smuggling and attack on the motorcade of BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia on its way to Madaripur early last year.

## 14 killed

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Rafiqul, 38, Aroz Ali, 40, Ataur, 32, Runa, 18, Enamul, 35, Moslem, 35, Haradhan, 50, Hafez Mohammad Hossain, 35, Supriyo, 36, Fazar Ali, 50, Labu, 50, Mojibar, 30, Firoj, 35, and Bhim Chakrabarti, 40.

The Deputy Commissioner and Police Super visited the spot.

Traffic on the road came to a halt for about 4 hours following the accident.

Our Natore correspondent reports: Four people were killed and 10 others injured in a road accident at Bonpara on Natore-Pabna road yesterday morning.

Police said the accident took place at about 10 am when a Kushtia bound bus from Natore collided with a truck coming from opposite direction.

The dead were identified as freedom fighter Dinendra Kishore Bhattacharya, 48, Yunus Ali, 32, Toakkal Ali, 35, and Ayer Uddin, 35. Dinendra, Yunus and Toakkal died on the spot while Ayer Uddin at a local hospital.

Of the injured, Fazlur Rahman, 55, and Hasanur Rahman, 32, were rushed to Sadar Hospital.

## Saifur

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Pointing at the target for poverty reduction mentioned in the IPRSP, Dr Rushidun I Rahman said, "Without an IPRSP the rate of poverty reduction has been 1.1 percentage point per year during the 1990s. Therefore, the IPRSP's target of 1.6 percentage point poverty reduction per year is not as high as expected."

Dr Omar Haider Chowdhury said the IPRSP envisaged a very sharp increase in revenue earnings in relation to the trend.

Analysing the revenue growth trend during FY91 and FY02, he said the highest margin by which revenue earnings exceeded trend was 7.6 per cent and it happened in FY 1994-95 after the introduction of VAT.

But, he said, the IPRSP envisages revenue earnings to exceed the ones over the last decade by 16.5 per cent in the first year, 29.6 per cent in the second year and 40.3 per cent in the third year.

"Nothing short of a Herculean effort will be required to achieve the sustained growth in revenue earnings envisaged over the medium term period," Dr Chowdhury observed.

# Probe finds insects

FROM PAGE 1

central supply depot (CSD) at Muladuli Tuesday night, some wheat traders and locals set on some food officials for their deliberate attempt to misguide the minister. The officials scuffled with the agitators, police said.

The agitating people said the officials did not let the minister visit the warehouses that stockpiled low-quality imported wheat.

"We doubt the probe committee's report, as the minister declared beforehand that the wheat in the silos was not poultry feed. Such a statement came at a time when the committee is yet to complete its investigation," said a wheat trader.

"Didn't he try to influence the committee?" asked Shukkur Mridha, a trader.

"We have seen many cadres of the ruling alliance carry low-quality wheat to warehouses," alleged another trader seeking anonymity. "Many local traders like us did not get any chance to sell wheat to government warehouses because of the mad competition among the ruling BNP's armed cadres," said a trader who cultivated wheat on about 100 acres.

During his visit, Noman urged everyone to show him the silos which people suspect of storing Indian wheat, but none did so in fear. Another trader said, "The minister was accompanied by many notorious cadres of Pabna and Ishwardi and influential suppliers of low-quality wheat."

Probe committee members, top officials of the Pabna district administration, Selim Reza MP (Pabna-2), the district BNP President Major (ret'd) KS Mahmud and BNP leader Akram Ali Khan Manju accompanied the minister on Tuesday.

The procured wheat is stockpiled in 37 out of 41 warehouses at the Muladuli CSD. The food minister visited only one warehouse (No. 29). He also visited a BADC warehouse near the silo.

Between his replies to the questions by journalists at the warehouse No. 29, Noman asked locals if any low-quality wheat was purchased at the CSD. "Can anyone here show me any warehouse?" Many BNP cadres shouted before anybody could reply, "No, there is no low-quality wheat."

Noman said, "Following newspapers reports, I came here to see for myself and not to mount any pressure on the probe committee." "I don't like to comment on the allegations published in newspapers, as a high-powered committee is investigating the matter...but I must say I didn't find any poultry feed," Noman continued.

Later, a committee member was seen asking some local people in street to tell Noman to visit the warehouse No. 27 and some others, when he was heading for the BADC warehouse. (Two correspondents of The Daily Star heard the member advising) The same night, the minister left Pabna for Dhaka.

Surprisingly enough, the food minister told The Daily Star in Dhaka yesterday that he had visited ten warehouses in Pabna and did not find any substandard wheat.

"That does not necessarily negate the press reports, of course, as questions about the origin of the procured wheat (homegrown or imported) were not answered yet. Besides, the probe committee has to investigate if wheat was procured beyond the July 31 deadline."

Asked about the abrupt return of the probe committee to Dhaka, Noman said the team returned as "the prime minister is on a visit to Bogra today (yesterday)". The team will visit other districts soon, he assured.

The Tk 2 crore business of

On an AL lawmaker's demand for a judicial probe committee, Noman said, "The food ministry will show its utmost sincerity in it and punish the people responsible."

On the last-minute target for an increase in wheat procurement, Noman said, "The ministry did not take the decision unilaterally. Rather, a cabinet committee on food decided on procuring one lakh MT more wheat (in addition to three lakh MT) to avert the risk of spending the hard-earned foreign exchange on wheat import."

Meanwhile, The Daily Star roving correspondents interviewed several loading and unloading workers at the Muladuli CSD yesterday.

"The wheat purchase was continuing until the midnight of August 2 (two days after the July 31 deadline), and there were about 300 wheat-laden trucks waiting in front of the Muladuli CSD for offloading," said a worker.

"There are at least eight to ten warehouses at the CSD where the low-quality wheat is stockpiled," he said.

"I have unloaded wheat sacks from several trucks and smelt toxic odour from many," said another labourer, unwilling to be named.

"Later, the drivers steered the trucks away, when they heard of the inquiry team coming from Pabna on Friday. Instead of unloading wheat, we were suddenly asked to unload rice," said another worker.

"Many local people saw the BNP cadres from Pabna and Ishwardi towns press CSD Manager (now suspended) Abdul Baset to purchase their wheat...but following the press reports, Baset could not satisfy all," said a top BNP leader in Pabna preferring anonymity.

The BNP-leaning wheat traders, who could not avail themselves of any chance to sell their wheat off, were trying to show the visiting minister the warehouses where the substandard wheat was stored, said sources.

A wheat importer in Pabna said a group of BNP cadres forcibly bought several hundred tons of wheat from him on the night of July 31 and those were supplied to the Muladuli CSD.

The wheat was imported last year as poultry feed and sold to the BNP workers at a much lower rate, he added requesting anonymity.

Abdul Baset denied all allegations against him, saying he was the victim of a deep-rooted conspiracy.

"It was a sabotage...to tarnish my image and the government's, some Awami league-leaning food officials and traders brought the allegations, which are totally false," said Baset, accompanied by Muladuli Union BNP President Sirajul Islam on Tuesday. Asked about the pressure by BNP leaders and cadres for wheat procurement, he declined to comment.

"If I'm to be blamed, why only me? Some others (meaning senior officials) should also be axed," Baset said.

Sirajul Islam, who had also supplied wheat to the CSD, told The Daily Star that he was accompanying the manager for 'humanitarian reasons'. He denied involvement of BNP workers in the wheat scam.

Meanwhile, the food ministry probe committee had gathered information and official documents from the district administration and food officials during its two-day stay in Pabna and Muladuli. They collected over six sacks of wheat for chemical tests.

WHEAT SCAM ALLEGATION IN NATORE

Like other districts in the country's northern region, the tea stalls in Natore are abuzz with talks of wheat scam.

The Tk 2 crore business of

supplying 7,000 metric tons wheat to the government warehouses in the district is now an open secret. The wheat imported on L/C was sold to the food department, it was alleged.

This year, the target for wheat procurement was set at 6,950 metric tons and about 7,067.365 metric tons were procured until June 30. No new allocation was made in Natore in the extension period.

The difference of about Tk 3,000 a ton between the price of Indian wheat and the government procurement rate encouraged both wheat dealers and food officials to quickly complete the procurement process.

Last mid-June, locals in Shingra Upazila demonstrated against the distribution of unpalatable wheat in the food-for-work and food-for-education programmes, and VGD cards.

Professor Quazi Golam Morshed MP, a ruling party stalwart, also expressed his solidarity with the demonstrators who forced some food officials out of their office.

The DC (food) of Natore said most wheat was sent to silos in Shantahar, Savar and Tejgaon, and it was not 'possible for us to detect if the wheat was imported or not'. He said the substandard wheat in Shingra was allocated from the Muladuli CSD.

## Wheat

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Sources alleged that chairmen of the seven union parishads (UPs) are involved in this mischief. The UP chairmen lifted quality wheat from the government godown in Sathkira from July 21 to July 29 and sold it to traders at Tk 9,000 per ton. Later, they purchased low quality imported wheat (poultry feed) at TK 6000 per ton and distributed it among the VGD card holders, the sources said.

District administration sources said they have taken up the issue seriously in the wake of widespread allegations of scandal in the government's wheat procurement drive that ended recently.

When contacted, the deputy commissioner of Sathkira said the matter would be properly investigated and legal action would be taken against the UP chairmen if they are found involved in any foul play.

## DCC

**FROM PAGE 1**  
serious epidemic of dengue in the city unless it is put under control right now," said Touhid Uddin Ahmed, a leading entomologist and also a consultant entomologist at the DCC.

Meanwhile, a DCC survey last month revealed that in eight of its 10 zones there is an alarming concentration of Aedes mosquito.

The normal level is 20 larvae per container, known as bruceax index (BI), while the DCC survey in most of the city areas found the BI as high as 215.

According to DCC sources, random samples of adulticide were sent to different laboratories at the Institute of Epidemiological Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), the plant protection wing of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) and the DCC for approval for spraying.

Excepting the IEDCR, all other laboratories approved the samples. The tender committee on August 5 requested a second testing and the same scientific officer of the IEDCR passed the samples this time.

# Enough food in stocks

**FROM PAGE 12**  
"We will do everything possible with our limited resources so that affected people can start life anew," she said and also warned against any corruption or irregularities in relief and rehabilitation programme of the government.

Her observations came during a meeting with district officials after observing this northern district's flood situation and government's relief and rehabilitation operation.

Deputy Commissioner of Gaibandha M Abdus Sabur and Colonel Humayun Khaled of Infantry Battalion briefed the prime minister about the present situation and the relief operation being carried out in the district, worst hit by the current floods.

The prime minister said the intensity of floods increased due to silting of rivers and streams and lack of canal digging, initiated by Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman.

She said the government would restart the canal-digging programme to reduce the intensity of floods and maintain navigability in rivers and canals.

On her way to Gaibandha, the prime minister's helicopter flew low over the flood-affected areas of Bogra as she took a bird's eye view of the situation in that district.

She made a stopover at Shariakandi where the district officials briefed her of the situation.

The Deputy Commissioner of Bogra, Shafizuddin Ahmed,

of flood-affected people at Al Falah Madrassah ground where she reassured them of post-flood rehabilitation through distribution of housing materials and agricultural loans apart from other sorts of assistance.

Attributing much of the present adversities to "misrule" in the past, Khaleda Zia accused the previous Awami League government of looting public money. "We started our journey shouldering burdens caused by the corruption of Awami League," she said but assured that the present people's government will always be beside them.

She advised the people to face the calamity with patience and fortitude.

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The Deputy Commissioner of Bogra, Shafizuddin Ahmed,

# Judicial probe

FROM PAGE 1

The assistant house tutors said that they had left the room at about 12.45am and heard students shouting slogans.

At around 2.30am, the provost told agitating students to go back to their rooms; otherwise, police might resort to batons to disperse them, they said.

Fifteen minutes later police broke open the gate and swooped on the students, they said.

"We were standing in front of house tutors' office room then and saw both male and female police charge batons on the students and pick up two students including Selina, a BBA student.

"As police entered the hall, we asked the assistant proctors how they (police) got in and who had given them permission. One of the assistant proctors replied that the police had broken open the main

gate and the instruction came from high officials. They did not say who the high officials were."

Meanwhile, Inspector General of Police Modabbir Hossain Chowdhury said that if the judicial commission report found any policeman guilty, proper action would be taken against him.

The police chief, whose testimony to the judicial commission lasted for nearly an hour, however, made no comment on police activities on July 24.

It would be unfair to say anything before the probe commission report was published, he said.

Two more high officials of police, Deputy Commissioner (South) Akbar Ali and Additional Deputy Commissioner Zahurul Haq, also testified yesterday. Both refused to talk to reporters.

Statements of four hall employees were also recorded.

A total of 48 people have testified to the commission till yesterday.

## Voting

**FROM PAGE 1**  
tenure would expire. Election to 46 union parishads cannot be held due to pending cases and to another 100 as their tenure would expire later.

The meeting resolved that officials of the EC and the local government ministry would jointly look into legal barriers for which election to some municipalities could not be held earlier.

Election to the newly established city corporations of Sylhet and Barisal also came up for discussion.

Chaired by the CEC, the meeting was attended by, among others, election commissioners Shafur Rahman, M Munsef Ali and AK Mohammad Ali and EC Secretary SM Zakaria.

# Shikdar's men trade fire with police at Skid ghat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khushtia

Accomplices of Ershad Shikder exchanged fire with police for an hour at Skidghat yesterday.

The clash began following arrest of Momen Ghazi, 38, an alleged criminal and accomplice of Shikder.

Police fired shots, teargas shells to disperse the accomplices of Shikder who assembled there for capturing handling workers' union from the ruling party.

Momin Ghazi was arrested from railway colony area at noon. Immediately after his arrest, Shikdar's accomplices opened fire, hurled crackers at policemen and tried to snatch Momen Gazi. They also attacked police outpost at Skid ghat.

Police later arrested 32 persons including wife, mother-in-law and sister of the alleged criminal railway till 7 pm.

## Road repair

**FROM PAGE 12**  
roads, adding to sufferings of the city dwellers. The worst affected include residents of Babubazar, Azimpur, Mohammadpur,