

## Shazneen case

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evidence from the place of occurrence," the IO said.

"I took Shahid, who was brought to Dhaka by Chittagong kotwali police, to custody on April 27, 1998 and interrogated him. I also took him to the place of occurrence where he gave a detailed description of the incident. Moreover, he narrated how he fled the scene climbing the wall of the Australian Club and his foot-print was left there. The foot-print was examined by the experts and they found it to be Shahid's."

"On May 2, 1998, I found Hasan near the CID office and came to learn that he wanted to know about the arrestees in the Shazneen murder case. Later, I took him to my office and asked him to appear at the CID office the next day. I was sure of Hasan's involvement in the murder and tried to arrest him from his house at Jiratola, Dhanmondi, in the city but failed."

"Later, I arrested him from his house on May 4, 1998. I recorded the statements of the witnesses and remanded the accused upon a court order and interrogated them. The accused Shahid and some others gave confessional statements."

"Then I scrutinised the statements of the accused, witnesses, other documents of the case and deemed it necessary to file a rape case against the accused and filed it with the Gulshan Police Station on September 4, 1998 against Shahid

and six others under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, 1995," the IO said.

"Then I took over the charge of investigation into the rape case as per a directive of the higher authorities and prayed for showing the accused arrested in the rape case. I took Shahid to custody for interrogation."

"Shahid gave a confessional statement on September 28, 1998 and I recorded the statements of 52 witnesses and prayed for attaching the documents of the Shazneen murder case to the rape case. Later, the charges brought against the accused Shahid, Hasan, Shaniram, Badal, Minu and Parvin were primarily proved and I submitted a charge sheet against them on December 12, 1998," Mojibur Rahman said.

Replying to a question, Mojibur Rahman said he took over the charge of the investigation as per a directive of the additional inspector general (AIG) of police, CID. Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, 15, the youngest daughter of Latifur Rahman, chairman of Transcom Ltd, was raped and murdered at their Gulshan residence on April, 23, 1998.

Special public prosecutors A B M Sharfuddin Khan Mukul and Arfan Uddin Khan appeared for the state. Advocate M A Kamrul Hasan Khan Aslam defended the accused.

## Chargesheet against 4 for Sultana murder

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The Detective Branch (DB) of police pressed charges against four persons involved in Sultana Khan Panni murder yesterday.

Inspector Abdul Quddus Khan submitted the charge sheet before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court, Dhaka, yesterday afternoon. In the charge sheet, the four accused are the cook of the house, Alauddin Munshi, caretaker Mehedi Mamun Rana, their friends Nasir Uddin and Emdadul Haq.

In the charge sheet, 26 people were shown as prosecution witnesses.

The accused earlier made confessional statements before the metropolitan magistrate on different dates.

Sultana Khan Panni, 70, wife of former deputy speaker Humayun Khan Panni, was strangled at her Dhanmondi residence in May 19, this year.

The police arrested four domestic helps from the house for their alleged involvement in the killing the next day.

On May 31, Mamun confessed his guilt before the magistrate. The detectives arrested Nasir and Emdad on June 3 and recovered jewellery, a mobile phone set and cash money looted from victim's house.

## Business leaders

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cal, the MCCI president said the FTA between the two countries is the prime need now, which would be jeopardised by discussing the transit issue.

"Indian side could have shown their good will gesture if agreed to eliminate non-tariff barriers and ways for reducing trade deficit in the JEC meeting," Tapan added.

FBCCI President Yusuf Abdullah Hanun said the Indian government has to eliminate non-tariff barrier on Bangladesh items prior to sign the FTA. He said India failed to implement its earlier commitment to awarding Bangladesh products a duty-free entry to its market.

On FTA, the FBCCI president proposed granting all Bangladesh items duty-free entry at the initial stage to the Indian market and the same facility to be awarded to India in 8 to 10 years after the signing of FTA.

"It is India, which has to respond positively towards Bangladesh's legitimate concern on its ailing trade deficit," FBCCI president told The Daily Star.

Executive Director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya believes the JEC will be successful if India takes up confidence building measures for Bangladesh and premiers of the two countries meet to resolve the differences.

"Immediate economic and trade achievements of the JEC meeting are very marginal," Dr. Bhattacharya said commenting on the three-day meet, "Bangladesh expects an early harvest based on earlier commitment by successive Indian leaderships."

But he believes that the holding of the JEC meeting itself was positive because the relations between Bangladesh and India dwelled in policy indecision and political apathy.

"A JEC meeting has been scheduled to be held in October. If such meetings are held regularly afterwards, it is a positive development," Bhattacharya added.

He observed from the previous JEC meeting that India had more offensive agendas than Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's lone countable demand is for zero tariff market access to India.

India on the other hand wants transport, transit, transshipment, rail and road communication and unspoken issue of gas export.

In such a context, JEC talks can be made more effective if two major issues are addressed, he added.

"There should be confidence building measures on part of India to reduce the credibility gap which the bilateral relationship currently suffers from. And these may come in the form of market promotion measures in India for the agreed list of potential Bangladesh exports," he observes.

"Without such confidence building measures on part of India, the proposed bilateral free trade agreement negotiation will be difficult to pursue. Secondly, there is definitely need for a more comprehensive political understanding at the highest level. Thus there is a need for a meeting of the two Prime Ministers."

Dr Bhattacharya notes that if differences are not sorted out at the Prime Minister level, such talks will not acquire momentum.

## Another case

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both newspapers defaming respectable politician Salauddin Quader Chowdhury.

Chowdhury is running for the general secretary of the Organisation of Islamic Conference.

The complainant lodged the case under the Bangladesh Penal Code 500, 501 and 502. The hearing of the case is scheduled for August 5.

## Himachal

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The Kulu valley is popular with tourists at this time of the year and police were not ruling out foreigners among the dead.

Hundreds of adventure tourists from India and abroad use the Kulu-Garsa route for trekking, which often entails a night halt.

## Fresh areas flooded

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Mahimaganjunions.

The vital Dhaka-Dinajpur highway via Gobindaganj was inundated in knee-deep water.

Diaghore which is spreading fast in the district claimed the lives of Beauty Begum, 30, at village Dhanerpa, Belal Hossain, 40, at Pardiya and Shafi Mollah, 44, at Kalurpara village.

However, waters in the Teesta and Brahmaputra began to recede, bringing the hope of respite to flood-worn people.

In Bogra, a large swathe of 150 villages in 31 unions of Sariakandi, Dhunat, Sonatala and Sherpur upazilas went underwater.

Gushing waters of the Jamuna marooned over one lakh people, made 30,000 of them homeless and swamped crops on 3,500 hectares.

A company of the army was deployed to protect the Bhandarbari dam on the west bank of the river.

The misery of people in submerged shoals in Bogra and Sirajganj loosed grip.

A spectre of starvation stalked people in Aagbohal, Dharaborsha, Manika in Sariakandi in Bogra and Shanbandhar Char, Char Giris, Char Nischintapur, Char Chongcha and Mircha in Kapurpur in Sirajganj.

Swirling waters from the Atrai river submerged over a 10 km swathe in Singra upazila in Natore district following the collapse of the Water Development Board (WDB) embankment in many places.

The WDB sources said 35 villages went under water as the

Madanbhanga embankment at Shukthikatabroke.

In Pabna, rising rivers and rains swamped lowlands in seven upazilas, marooning thousands of people.

Forty-seven villages in Sujaganar upazila and six villages in Iswardi upazila were the hardest hit.

Two young men -- Masud, 23, and Alhaj, 21, -- were killed when the motor boat they were riding on hit an electric pole in strong currents in the Majhgram field in Nimaichara village, causing the pole to collapse on the boat. The incident also injured 15 people.

The Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) yesterday said the Brahmaputra and Jamuna fell at all points and was likely to fall further, but the Ganges was still on the rise, although the pace of rise slowed down.

The flood situation in Pabna, Naogaon Tangail, Manikganj, Munshiganj, Narsingdi, Narayanganj, Kishoreganj, Rajbari and Madaripur are likely to further deteriorate, it said.

The flood situation in the districts of Gaibandha, Bogra, Sirajganj, Jamalpur Kurigram, Panchagarh, Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat and Rangpur are likely to improve. The inundation of the low-lying areas in the districts of Dhaka, Faridpur and Sariapur are likely to continue.

The Brahmaputra-Jamuna observed fall at all points. The Ganges-Padma recorded further rise at all points except at Goalundo. Other rivers in the basins registered both rise and fall.

## Charges framed against Anni, 31 others in explosive substance case

**COURT CORRESPONDENT**

The First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka, yesterday framed charges against former JCD leader Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anni (presently a ruling party MP) and 31 others in an explosive substance case.

Judge Sirajul Islam fixed October 22 for trial of the case.

Two of the accused, advocate Mohammad Golam Mostafa and Mahbulul, were present in the court. But Anni and 29 others remained absent during charging-framing.

In the case filed with Ramna Police Station on April 23, 1998, it was alleged that the accused led by Anni and Sohoh gathered at a place adjacent to the Surya Sen Hall of Dhaka University at around 11:30 am on the day and fired gunshot at the leaders and activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League. They also hurled bombs on the BCL men that left Partha Pratim Acharya, a BCL activist, dead on the spot.

A case under the Explosive Substance Act was filed against Anni, Sohoh and 30 others, the same day.

The investigation officer of the case submitted charge sheet against them on October 15, 1999.

## Engineer suspended

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He categorically told the launch owners that "no risky and unfit" vessels would be allowed to operate until they removed the faults of the vessels.

The minister informed the owners that no vessel would be allowed to leave terminal without a 100 per cent attendance of crew and each vessel must have a specified number of operators.

He said training of masters (sareng) and engine-room operators has been made mandatory.

The masters and engine-room operators will be trained on three natural phenomena -- storm, rain and fog -- so that they can steer a vessel out of trouble when caught in a difficult situation.

The first phase of the training programme will begin on July 21 and some 21 launch operators will take part in the programme.

The minister warned the launch owners not to carry a single passenger or any cargo beyond capacity.

The owners said the government is only lashing out at the private vessels, but it never takes action against the state-owned Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) steamers which always carry extra passengers and goods.

They also complained that the private launches have to pay a huge fine in case of collision with BIWTC vessels, but the government steamers never give any compensation when they damage private vessels.

Launch owners also said they

## BNP MP's brother

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secretary of the Zinjira Market Association and sports secretary of the Zinjira Union Jubo Dal, succumbed to his injuries and one Sentu, 30, a lessee of a cattle market at Zinjira Bazar, was shot dead on February 16, last year allegedly by the accused and his companions.

Monir and eight others are in jail custody while 10 others are on bail. Talim, Azad, Javed and Meshbah have been absconding since the incident.

Special Public Prosecutor Harun-ur-Rashid Khan appeared for the state while Masud Ahmed Talukder for the accused.

## Govt violated

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date-standing committee members proportionately, the resolution said.

"By taking this decision, the present government has once again proved that they are unwilling to make the House effective and has forced the opposition out of the House," the meeting said.

The presidium meeting criticised the government for remaining silent about the recovery of bodies after the Chandpur launch disaster and demanded immediate resignation of the minister concerned.

The meeting decided to participate in the Netrokona-3 constituency by-polls to be held on August 21.

The meeting said the AL will contest the election as part of its movement against the government and urged other democratic parties, social forces and professionals to unite against the "autocratic" government at the by-polls.

Meanwhile, Hasina left for Italy today to attend an international seminar on "The Rule of International Community and the Rule of Law". The Italian ministry of external affairs is organising this seminar with the slogan, "no peace without justice".

Senior party leader Abdus Samad Azad will stand in for Hasina during her visit.

have to pay money to the lessees of terminals and are harassed in many ways by organised groups of criminals controlling the terminals.

They demanded cancellation of such leasing and agreed to pay the "lease money" to the government for using the terminals. They also demanded that a police box be set up at the terminals and movement of small boats be banned.

In reply, the minister informed the launch owners that the boat terminal at Sadarghat would be shifted elsewhere within a month.

The minister assured the private owners that the government would do everything possible to ensure the security and safety of passengers as well as to fulfil just and logical demands of the private launch owners. But he added that all vessels must abide by navigational rules.

## Sadarghat

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ture schedule," said Rahman.

The July 8 disaster has also prompted the authorities to ban carrying of goods on the floor of the vessel. The passenger launches are only allowed to carry light cargo in the hatch. Each vessel berthing at the terminal is also required to show fitness certificate and other documents for the officials to check on the spot. In addition, officials are making sure that an adequate number of lifebuoys are kept in the vessels.

The operators of the Bhandaria-bound triple-decker Tarika-2 yesterday said the number of passengers has dropped drastically. The master of the vessel said, showing documents, the launch had a capacity of 722 passengers but since the accident it could not even fill half its capacity.

A Bhandaria-bound passenger, Humayun Kabir, said he still did not feel that river journey is safe.

"These safety measures are temporary and as soon as people forget about the Meghna tragedy, things would be back to square one," he said.

The authorities have also evicted more than 200 hawkers from the pontoon of the terminal.

## Vietnam

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permanent membership and membership in WTO.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Reaz Rahman, Foreign Secretary Shamsheer M Chowdhury and the Director General of (SEA) were present.

## Unocal

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Agreement (GPSA) is also expected to be signed shortly, said a source yesterday.

The work plan includes going into production by 2005 to increase supply to Petrobangla's system, the source informed.

The proposed wells will be located within a short distance of the existing two wells in the Moulvibazar Gas Field, developed by the then Occidental Company.

Preliminary structural works will start by September while drilling is expected to begin by late 2004.

At the end of the project, the four new wells together with the existing two will be able to supply about 150 MMCF gas every day to Petrobangla, the source added.

Unocal may entrust the drilling to a foreign company, sources further informed.

A German company, Deutag, had done the drilling in the Magurchhara, Bibiyana and Jalalabad gas fields. The gas fields were developed by Occidental that left Bangladesh handing over the business to Unocal in 1999.

## Transit, duty-free access

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Indian goods to its seven north-eastern states.

As opinions remained sharply divided on these thorny issues from the beginning of the talks that began Monday, policymakers failed to wrap it up on schedule on Tuesday night. Finally, a joint agreed minutes could be signed by Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan and Indian External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha at 10:20am yesterday.

"We have discussed all bilateral issues and we have achieved huge gains," Morshed Khan told a joint press conference at Hotel Sheraton following the signing of the minutes. "The JEC will enhance bilateral trade both in depth and dimension. We achieved unanimity of approach by viewing the issues from the same lens."

"We have made very, very positive gains at the JEC. We made very substantial progress and will continue to remain engaged to resolve other issues between us," Yashwant Sinha told the press conference.

About transit, Sinha said, "We discussed it and will discuss it further," Morshed Khan said. "The point was raised and we are discussing it. We have not shied away."

## Hit-and-run case

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police classified it as a murder case.

The investigation officer of the case, Assistant Sub-Inspector Noor-e-Alam, is on a seven-day training at the Rajbargh Police Lines, Malek said.

Fifteen days after the tragedy, police are yet to trace the owner of the vehicle," because they said the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority was yet to provide them with his address.

The Daily Star found out the address of the driver and details about the incident within the last three days, having trailed the death path, talked to shopkeepers, residents and security personnel at different buildings who witnessed the incident.

Md Haider Ali, a cigarette vendor on the footpath, said as the victim was being dragged along the Panthapath, a van carrying bottled water hit the victim near the Green Road intersection.

The collision dislodged the victim from the additional bumper of the

vehicle, a Proton Saga, carrying the number plate Dhaka Metro Ka 02 0626.

Sujon kept driving towards the Sonargaon Hotel and took a right turn into Free School Street and Kathal Bagan Box Culvert Street with the bumper of the vehicle fully stretched in the rear (left).

A van driver of the Nilpadma Furniture on the narrow street, Siddique said several rickshaw vans parked on the side of the street got entangled with the bumper and were damaged.

Ten-year old Rana, son of one Shabuj Ali, living at 58/10 Free School Street, Kathal Bagan Box Culvert Street, was on one of those entangled vans.

"Rana was tossed on the street and he sustained deep bruises all over his body. He was lucky that the entangled vans did not fall over him," said the owner of Nilpadma Furniture.

The shopkeepers and van drivers chased the car through the narrow street, urging it to stop.

## Bangabandhu Murder Case

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case at the High Court level. He (Justice Hamidul Haq) will retire this December to give place to Justice MA Aziz.

Justice Abu Sayeed Ahmed of the Appellate Division will retire on August 23 this year, and Justice Tafazzul Islam will fill the vacuum. Still, it will leave the bench short of a judge, and hearing the petitions needs a bench of at least three.

Of the remaining six in the Appellate Division, four had expressed embarrassment and two had handed down the verdict on the case in the High Court. The latest appointee, Justice Amin, had expressed embarrassment at the High Court level.

If Justice Amirul Islam had been appointed in line with seniority, Justice Amin would have been elevated to the Appellate Division from the High Court in August, followed by Justice Tafazzul Islam in December and Justice MA Aziz in January.

The seniority-based appoint-

ment then would have created a scope for setting up a three-member bench comprising Syed Amirul Islam, Tafazzul Islam and MA Aziz.

The present queue of High Court judges suggests that the government would appoint Justice Amirul Kabir Chowdhury on January 27 to fill the vacancy to be left by the retirement of Chief Justice KM Hasan.

But the appointment of Justice Chowdhury will not make a three-member bench, as he had expressed embarrassment to hear the case on April 10, 2000.

Justice MA Aziz of the Appellate Division will retire on September 3, 2004 and will be replaced by Justice Hassan Ameen.

Justice Syed Modassir Hossain, who had expressed embarrassment before, would retire on March 1, 2005, making way for the government to appoint Justice Badrul Haq.

The new appointment can make a three-member bench with Justices Badrul Haq, Tafazzul

land customs centres on both sides of the border for smooth customs cooperation.

They also agreed to strengthen banking links and sign accords on cooperation in education and cultural sectors. It was agreed that the Joint Working Group on Agriculture would be reactivated.

Sinha said the state-to-state credit of 200 crore rupees earlier sanctioned for various development projects in Bangladesh would be renewed and it would continue to be extended until the credit is exhausted. Much of the credit would be spent for development of Bangladesh Railway.

According to Sinha, bilateral trade agreement will be extended on ad hoc basis while agreement on customs regulations and improvement of border infrastructure will be an integral part of the deal.

The two nations agreed to sign separate agreements for educational and cultural interactions.

The two will make also efforts to modernise telecommunication and information technology. A meeting in Delhi will soon finalise modalities to improve telecommunications and IT between the two neighbours.

## Ready for worse

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with the lowlands on the outskirts of the capital going under water because of the swelling Buriganga and Sitalkhaya.

According to a weather watch, this year's monsoon rain is 50 per cent higher than before and the flood extremity will increase if rain continues one week more.

Official sources said the government is bracing for deterioration of the flood situation, as worse threatens in August and September.

An official estimate says the floods triggered by heavy rain and onrush of swirling inflow of waters from upstream have affected as many as 795 unions in 131 upazilas of 23 districts, leaving 35,54,746 people of 7,43,893 families marooned.

The floods that began more than a month ago have damaged about 9,677 kilometres of road completely and 1,023 kilometres of road partially.

As many as 126 educational and religious institutions have been washed away and 1,517 other institutions have been left in partial damage. The number of damaged embankments is 979 and 996 bridges and culverts collapsed.

The water development board has been asked to take steps to protect the embankments under threat of collapse.

The disaster management and relief ministry said about 9,000 metric tonnes of rice and Tk 1 crore were distributed among the flood-hit people.

Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf told The Daily Star yesterday that there was an adequate stock of grains

and cash in all districts.

He also said all other ministers and lawmakers have been engaged in monitoring the flood situation in their districts and constituencies on an instruction from the prime minister.

Relief is being distributed through the district administration under the supervision of elected representatives, headed.

Several hundred medical teams have already been engaged in working in flood-hit areas and more to come, said sources. The government has also asked voluntary organisations to come forward to help the flood victims and the NGO Affairs Bureau has been instructed to request NGOs to work in the affected areas.

## Mayor, son

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through the city of about 150,000 about 150 miles northwest of Baghdad.