

## JCD leader Idul gets death Benapole port

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on 11 others in two separate cases yesterday.  
Judge Mohammad Firoz Alam of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-3 convicted Idul, Ariful Islam Shimul and Mamunur Rashid Mamun for killing decoration trader Rabiullah Khokon in Gopibagar on April 23, 1999.  
Idul was present in the court during the delivery of the judgement, but his accomplices were tried in absentia.

The court acquitted two accused - Amir Hossain alias Tota and Jabel alias Jaba - as the charges brought against them were not proved.

The convicts can appeal to the High Court (HC) against the verdict in 30 days from the day of receipt of the judgement copy. Punishment of the fugitives will be effective from the day of their arrest or surrender, the judge said.

Idul and his men killed the trader over a previous enmity when the victim was returning home after saying Juma prayers at about 12:45pm.

The victim's father Chand Miah, wife Parvin Akhter and daughters - Sony and Anamika - at the court expressed satisfaction over the verdict.

Idul used to run a gang with the support allegedly of a leader of Dhaka University unit JCD, student wing of ruling BNP. The gang gunned down two policemen and hurt a few others during a robbery at a currency exchange shop in Motijheel on June 20 last year.

Police arrested bullet-hit Idul and seized from him Tk 20,000, a sophisticated CZ pistol, two magazines and 30 bullets the same day.

He is accused of over 14 charges including four murders.  
In another case, Judge Shahed Noor Uddin of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 sentenced a woman and three others to death for killing her husband.

The convicts are Lutfunnahar Baby, her fiancée Mamun Pathway alias Mamun, Mozammel Haq and Kuddus. Except for Kuddus, the convicts were tried in absentia.

After developing an illicit affair, Baby and Mamun hired two goons to kill her husband Milzan.

They killed him in Kafur, cut his body into three pieces and dumped those in front of a house in Shewrapara on November 14, 2003.

Police arrested Baby and Mamun, who gave confessional statements before a magistrate. But they became fugitives after obtaining bail from the HC.

**RAJSHAHI**  
Our staff correspondent from Rajshahi said: Rajshahi divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal sentenced seven cadres of outlawed Furbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCF) to death in the Bachchu murder case of Kuthia.

Tribunal Judge AFM Aminul Islam acquitted nine others accused of the killing.

The case was shifted to Rajshahi from the tribunal in Khulna following anonymous death threats to the judge concerned.

The convicts are Niaz Murshid Pannu, Kabil, Hoar Babu, Shafulik

Islam, Rabiul Islam, Shahjahan and Plikchar.

Shahjahan is now behind bars, while the others have jumped bail.  
Nurul Islam Bachchu, a businessman, was shot and slaughtered on October 2, 2001 when he was returning home.

His journalist brother, Harun-ur Rashid, filed a case accusing 16 PBCP cadres of killing Bachchu to take revenge on his writing against drug peddling and crimes.

## Arrest

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She wrote Reza a cheque for the sum to be withdrawn from the First Security Bank Limited, Reza said.

The complainant added that he deposited the cheque on June 27 but it was dishonoured.

He served a legal notice on Bidisha on July 9 and she received it the next day. But she neither showed any respect to the notice nor made any moves to repay the amount.

Bidisha was arrested on June 4 after Ershad filed a theft case against her. Ershad filed another case for marriage forgery, while police filed two other cases.

Meantime, Bidisha on July 23 filed a case against Ershad for withdrawal of money from her account through blank cheques bearing her signature.

## Don't vote

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over the river Shitalakhya, said, "You have to evaluate under which government people have been better with ensured development."

She expressed her confidence that people will once again vote the BNP to power in the next general elections for the development and welfare programmes.

"Realising this, the opposition party is hatching conspiracy in the name of reforming the caretaker government system," she said.

"People now do not believe in street politics," Khaleda said, mentioning that the BNP has ensured parliamentary democracy and made the parliament the focal point of development.

Criticising Awami League's propaganda at home and abroad against communal harmony in Bangladesh, the prime minister asserted that religious harmony prevailed in Bangladesh with people of all faiths enjoying their festivals with due fervour and gaiety.

"This party (Awami League) is spreading propaganda but is unable to draw the attention of the foreign countries," she told her audience.

The BNP chairperson blamed the main opposition for not keeping their word time and again.

She also recalled Awami League's joining election under the autocratic government although all the parties in the movement had taken the stand not to go for election under the autocratic government.

## No consensus

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procession was also brought out at the land port.

A third meeting of the customs authority and the leaders of the five port users' associations was also scheduled to be held at the Customs House yesterday afternoon, the previous two meetings on Saturday and Sunday having yielded no results.

Meanwhile the Federation of Bangladesh Clearing and Forwarding Agents' Association held a meeting on Tuesday with its President Abul Fazal Talukdar in the chair at its Eskaton office in Dhaka.

Attended by the leaders of C&F agents' associations from Benapole, Chittagong and Mongla, the meeting discussed the ways of extending the strike to all the ports of the country.

The strikers at Benapole alleged that the strike at the Benapole land port was enforced due to the monetary losses of some big shots in the Benapole C&F Agents' Association.

These officials earned a huge amount of illegal money by depriving the government of revenue worth over Tk 300 crore during the tenure of Customs Commissioner Dr Rafiqul Islam, who was made OSD (officer on special duty) on July 13, 2005 on allegations of corruption. They could allegedly earn Tk 5 crore by bribing Rafiqul Islam Tk 5 lakh, the traders said.

After his transfer Acting Customs Commissioner Atiqur Rahman and Joint Customs Commissioner Hossain Ahmed took several measures to increase the revenue earning, which apparently opposed the interest of the C&F Agents Association big guns, the traders alleged.

A total of 32 days' work suspension was enforced at the Benapole land port during the last seven months.

## Security

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and regional issues of mutual interest, including the Saarc summit in Dhaka scheduled for November 12-13.

Other bilateral matters encompassing trade, investment, tourism and other business activities as well as cultural, educational and other matters of mutual interest will also be discussed.

On August 6, Singh will hold talks with Bangladesh Foreign Minister M. Morshed Khan, which will be followed by the two foreign ministers' addressing a joint press briefing.

Singh is due to meet Finance Minister M. Saifur Rahman and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan also on that day.

On August 7, Nawaz Singh will visit the Liberation War Museum, call on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Opposition Leader Sheikh Hasina.

He will also deliver a speech on Indo-Bangladesh relations at the BRAC Centre.

In the morning on August 8, the concluding day of his tour, he will visit Ramkrishna Mission in the city.

During Singh's visit, India will persuade Bangladesh to support the G4 resolution for expanding the UN Security Council, sources said.

The G4 nations comprising India, Japan, Brazil and Germany are seeking permanent seats in the council.

Nawaz Singh will also try to resolve the difficulties in the \$2.5 billion Myanmar-Bangladesh-India pipeline project during his visit.

Dhaka is ready to sign the tri-national pipeline agreement if New Delhi agrees to provide a transit facility through India to facilitate transmission of hydro-electricity from Nepal and Bhutan to Bangladesh, a corridor for trade between the two Himalayan kingdoms, and take measures to reduce the \$2 billion trade imbalance between Bangladesh and India.

But India termed those issues bilateral matters and said she thinks it unreasonable to set the issues as conditions for the "commercial" pipeline project where India is ready to pay an expected transit fee of \$125 million.

During foreign office consultations held in New Delhi on June 21-22 Bangladesh and India agreed to activate bilateral mechanisms to enhance cooperation in areas like security, border management, sharing of river waters and economic cooperation.

The consultations were held after a gap of two years, when relations between the two countries had suffered over issues like trade gap, water sharing, India's plan for river-linking, killings in border and barbed-wire fencing, India's allegation of allowing rebels in its northeastern states to operate from Bangladesh and illegal immigrants from Bangladesh.

"It is a goodwill visit by the external affairs minister of India. We will exchange ideas on all existing issues in addition to discussing potential areas of cooperation," Foreign Minister M. Morshed Khan told reporters recently.

Dhaka is committed to strong bilateral relations with India, he said, adding that Bangladesh and India must remain closely engaged and work together in a fast-changing world.  
Nawaz Singh's visit to Dhaka aims at assuring the Bangladeshi government of New Delhi's sincerity about improving bilateral ties, a high official of Indian High Commission in Dhaka said.

Nawaz Singh's visit will be followed by several ministerial visits from India, including those of Commerce Minister Kamal Nath and Water Resources Minister Priya Ranjan Damsunshi, who will take part in a meeting of the Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) in Dhaka in October.

## India

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Monday, the bodies were kept at the Haskhali Police Station.

The Indian police confined and beat them up suspecting them as robbers, sources said but did not take steps to save the victims from mob.

The relatives of the victim were sent to the Haskhali Police Station to trace out their identity, the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) said.

The dead - Abul Uddin khokon, 28, Bisharad Ali, 25, Mobjur, 32, and Ismail, 28 - crossed the Benipur border point of Jibonnagar in Chuadanga to go their relatives' house in the Indian village at night to avoid passport complexities, said a source. Other sources said they were involved in smuggling.

Meanwhile, it is alleged that Indian police of Haskhali station reached the area but did not take steps to save the victims from mob.

The victims' family sources said they came to know of the incident when some relatives of the victims who live in the Gazna area of West Bengal sent a message through a cell phone after identifying the dead persons.

On information, BDR contacted the Border Security Force who confirmed the incident.

## US mission

**FROM PAGE 16**  
at the 12th Saarc Summit in Islamabad.

The South Asia Centre for Policy Studies (Saceps), a regional think-tank, in co-operation with the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), the premier think-tank of Bangladesh, organised the seminar on 'Promoting Regional Co-operation in South Asia: Issues for the Dhaka Saarc Summit' at Brac Centre Inn auditorium.

Adviser to Foreign Ministry Reaz Rahman, Saceps Chairman Professor Arjun K Sengupta, CPD Chair and Saceps Executive Director Professor Rehman Sobhan and CPD Executive Director Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya also spoke at the session.

The foreign minister said any process of regional economic integration needs to protect for the transitional period the smaller and the weaker member countries in line with the special and differential priorities of the World Trade Organisation.

He said to proceed towards a South Asian Economic Union (SAEU) requires drawing up a road map detailing the successive steps, progressive deepening of integration towards a free trade area, a customs union and a common market.

Morshed said in mapping out a course of action for the future we have begun with an 'Agenda for the Third Decade of Saarc', which should include initiatives and actions to facilitate the progress towards materialising the vision of a SAEU.

"We should ensure the Safta's entry into force by the agreed date of January 1, 2006," the minister said. He expressed the hope that the expert committee concerned will conclude parleys by mid-October.

At the seminar, Reaz Rahman said a key challenge facing the Saarc is predominance of politics over economy, and despite some achievements, doubts persist about the genuineness of the members' commitment.

"To achieve an effective economic integration of the South Asia, we need strong political will and change the distrusting mindset," he noted.

The Saarc commitments have remained largely unimplemented due to a lack of institutional and financial mechanisms for executing regional projects and programmes, Reaz added.

Prof Arjun Sengupta said the present Indian government is totally committed to improve its relationships with the regional countries, particularly Bangladesh.

On Reaz Rahman's remark that in the Saarc politics dominates over economy, he said it cannot stay for long.

Prof Rehman Sobhan mentioned that the stage for a regional energy co-operation is underway, adding the construction of the tripartite gas pipeline is going to be milestone in regional integration.

"We have to think how we can remove the constraints and limitations on official co-operation among

the Saarc members. We can't afford the luxury of keeping distance from each other," he felt.

Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya said presently the intra-Saarc trade a year stands at less than five percent of the total trade of the region. "It's not at all satisfactory if we look at what are happening in the Southeast Asian and other regions. We must boost the regional trade," said the CPD executive director.

## US mission

**FROM PAGE 16**  
and Lipal Marandi, who were stabbed to death in Faridpur on July 29.

"Because of the circumstances surrounding their murder, we are concerned that Mr Roy and Mr Marandi may be victims of religious extremism," the press release said.

"We understand that police have arrested three persons in connection with this case, and we hope that the perpetrators of the murders will be brought to justice lawfully and promptly," it added.

Religious freedom is a basic, constitutionally-guaranteed right in Bangladesh and other democracies, the release said, adding, it is important the government and civil society work effectively to safeguard this fundamental right.

## 'Media gag'

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Mohammad Ali on Tuesday morning disclosed the proposed schedule for the election to women reserved seats in parliament before it was approved by the EC. The incident compelled the chief election commissioner (CEC) to convene an emergency meeting and rearrange the schedule.

CEC MA Aziz described Mohammad Ali's disclosure as surprising.

Officials at Election Commissioner Mohammad Ali's office yesterday said there is a restriction from the higher authorities on the election commissioner against talking to journalists.

"We conveyed the instruction to [Mohammad Ali] and he directed us not to allow any journalist to him," an official told this correspondent.

Officials at the office of the CEC, however, brushed aside the issue of imposing such a restriction.

Sources at the EC secretariat said they sent a file to Election Commissioner Mohammad Ali with a proposed schedule for election to women reserved seats on September 4. The election commissioner approved the proposal and disclosed it to a private TV channel.

The file was then sent to Election Commissioner M. Munser Ali for his consideration. He approved the schedule and sent the file to the CEC.

The EC later rearranged the schedule for polling on September 6 as Mohammad Ali disclosed the previous schedule.

## Conflict

**FROM PAGE 16**  
faction suspended Barrister Huda and BNP Law Secretary Joydul Abedin's membership in Jatiyatabadi Ainijibi Forum after Huda announced to dissolve the SC units of the Forum and Jatiyatabadi Ainijibi Oikya Parishad.

Both the groups termed each other's action as 'illegal and out of jurisdiction.'

"They have no right to suspend our membership because the positions they used to hold in the committee (Jatiyatabadi Ainijibi Forum) is no more valid as the committees has expired," Communications Minister Huda told The Daily Star last night.

"We will soon form a new convening committee of the Forum. Full committees of lawyers will be formed across the country in three months," he said.

Huda and Advocate Joydul led one faction while former BNP law minister TH Khan and Post and Telecommunication Minister Barrister Aminul Haque the other.

Huda and Joydul announced to dissolve the two committees at a press conference under the banner of Oikya Parishad at the Supreme Court Bar building at around 1:00pm.

They opposed a grand rally of lawyers convened by the Forum tomorrow in Dhaka. Law Minister Moudud Ahmed is scheduled to attend the rally as chief guest.

Later, Forum President TH Khan, Secretary General Aminul Haque and other top leaders at a press conference at the same venue announced the suspension of Huda and Joydul's membership in the Forum and said they will hold tomorrow's rally at any cost.

"The suspension is the first step of their expulsion from the Forum," TH Khan told reporters. Both Huda and Joydul are members of the Forum's standing committee.

At the press conference, Huda asked the Forum to refrain from holding tomorrow's rally, saying it would legitimise the opposition-backed lawyers' activities.

"Pro-opposition lawyers are carrying out activities that go against the Supreme Court verdict [that bans lawyers' agitation on court premises]," Huda said in a written statement. He added that such activities are tantamount to contempt of court.

Dissolving the Forum and Oikya Parishad units, he said the two units are working as 'pocket committees.' "I don't believe in pocket committees," he added.

Barrister Ziaur Rahman Khan MP and advocate Saidur Rahman are serving as president and secretary of the Forum's SC unit while State Minister for Law Shahjahan Omar and advocate Golam Kibria are convenor and member secretary of the Oikya Parishad.

Huda also announced convening committees of the two units. Advocate M. Shamsul Alam has been made convenor of the 164-member Forum committee while Shahjahan Omar convenor of 151-member Oikya Parishad committee.

Identifying himself as the Forum's central committee vice chairman and Oikya Parishad's central convenor, Huda said 175 lawyers have asked to dissolve the two units.

Two hours after Huda's press conference, Forum leaders gathered on the Supreme Court premises and held a closed door meeting at TH Khan's chamber.

"Huda's unilateral statement that the August 5 grand rally will not be held goes against the discipline and constitution of the Forum. Their memberships [of the Forum] have been suspended for their act," TH Khan told reporters.

Asked about a law ministry letter that asked all government law officers of the country to attend the August 5 rally, Barrister Aminul expressed ignorance about it.  
On whether holding of the rally will be a violation of the High Court ban on agitation, Chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on law ministry Advocate Khondoker Mahbuddin Ahmed MP said, "No. We will hold the rally on the Supreme Court Bar Association premises which is out of the prohibition."

Former Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali was also present at the press conference.

Sources said top Forum leaders decided to hold the August 5 rally at a meeting at the law minister's office on July 28.

The meeting, attended by both Huda and Joydul, also decided that the Forum president and secretary will from now on also act as president and secretary of the Oikya Parishad and there will be no separate president and secretary of the Parishad.

As the decision hampered their supremacy, Huda and his supporters made the move yesterday to dissolve both the SC units of the two associations, sources said.

## All 309

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Descending in blustery winds and thundery skies after a non-stop flight from Paris, the plane touched down as passengers applauded, but then there was a loud jolt and the aircraft ran 200 meters (660 feet) past the end of the runway and plowed into the wooded gulley.

Within seconds, passengers dived down emergency chutes and dashed for safety shortly before the wreckage was engulfed in enormous fireballs.

"As soon as the plane stopped, they immediately opened the side of the plane where they couldn't see any flames, and then they told us to jump," said passenger Olivier Dubois. "And we all began jumping and running. We were running really fast... It was really, really scary. Very, very scary."

French and Canadian accident investigators Wednesday were to seek the cause of the crash after what appeared to be an uneventful landing. Some passengers said it appeared the jet had been struck by lightning, but a spokesman for Airbus said that for the moment this was only speculation.

Passengers told how they saw lightning flashes around them as the jet came to land in a heavy storm.

"I saw lightning," said one passenger, Roel Bramar. "Maybe the plane had already been hit by lightning. The reason I'm mentioning that is because just as we landed, the lights turned off. And that's unusual. So I'm sure that the bad weather was responsible."

Another passenger, journalist Gilles Medioni, said that when the plane touched down "a lot of people clapped their hands, but it was a little nervous. The pilot tried to put the brakes on, but he never made it. Then the plane began to lurch and bump. People began to scream and sense the plane was about to crash."

## Food strike hurts

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Parishad (BKBP), including restaurants owners, fast food shop owners, Sweetmeat shops and bakery items producers, observed the first day of their two day long strike programme, terming the mobile court's activities as harassment.

But the government sources said they would continue the raiding.

"The government instructed us to improve the situation in the food sectors. So we are going to continue the drive," said one of the magistrates, requesting anonymity.

The government formed the mobile courts on June 14, following a series of reports published in The Daily Star called 'Eating Dangerously', regarding the adulterated food items. The other newspapers also started a campaign against the food adulteration.

In the first day of the two-day long strike in the food sectors, most of the roadside restaurants and other fast food shops remained closed.

"We also support the government's initiative to check the adulterated food. But we oppose the system by which they are conducting the operation," said Khandakar Ruhul Amin, convenor of the BKBP.

Supporters of the strike patrolled in the street by car so that no owners could open their food shops. Police arrested nine supporters of the strike as they beat up workers and owners of a bakery and two restaurants from Shiddeshawari.

According to the BKBP, nearly 10,000 shops and food factories remained closed to protest the activities of the mobile courts.

Today the BKBP supporters will stage a rally where they will announce their next programme.

Bangladesh Doka Malik Samity, along with other food traders, greeted the government's activities.

**MOBILE COURT**  
A mobile court led by magistrate Rokanuddoulla yesterday raided factories producing adulterated ice cream and chewing tobacco.

The mobile court first raided the Echo ice-cream factory in Mir Hazir bagh of Demra, where it found the label of Igloo and Kufli ice-cream and different unsafe chemicals.

"We produce the ice-cream just with flour, gur and spice," said Ali Akbar, a worker of the factory.

The court sent him to one month of vigorous jail and fined him Tk one thousand. The courts also issued a summons against Bashir Miah, the owner of the factory.

The court then raided a chewing tobacco factory, which used to produce fake 'Hakimipuri Zarda' a popular brand in the country. But the factory was closed, so the court broke down the lock and seized different chemicals inside.

Another mobile court led by ABM Abdul Fattah raided four bakeries, one restaurant and a small cooking oil factory, sending two bakery managers to jail for three months, and the chief executive officer of the oil factory to jail for one year. They also fined another bakery Tk 10,000, and another restaurant Tk 5,000. Workers at Moon Food Bakery fled from the mobile court, which later issued a summons against its owner, Abdul Kadir.

Our Chittagong office adds:

A mobile court here yesterday fined Tk 1,300 court to four firms and sent a bakery manager to three-days' imprisonment for having unhygienic environment, selling stale food and mixing toxic colours with sweetmeat.

Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) magistrate Shaifur Rahman during the daylong drive dumped about 10-mounds of stale sweetmeat from Shaad Confectionary into Karnaphuli water. He raided the main factory of the city's prominent baker at Omar Ali Market in Chaktal and found the workers mixing colours in sweetmeat. He instantly arrested bakery manager

Habibur Rahman, who confessed, realised Tk 55,000 and sent the manager to jail for three days.

The court then raided two branches of Cafe Zaman at New Market area and found the restaurant authorities preserve rotten food in dirty plates for sale. The two hoteliers were fined Tk 35,000 for the crime.

Magistrate Shaifur fined Tk 25,000 to Ching Lung Chinese restaurant near Cafe Zaman for selling stale and unhealthy food to customers. He also penalised Tk 15,000 to Maloncha restaurant of the same locality for failing to show a BSTI license and other legal documents.

"We are getting surprised to discover to our disbelief how some well known firms of the city could do such crimes, at the expense of common people's health risk," the magistrate told The Daily Star.

He said the on-going drive is achieving its result as well as raising consumer awareness. "The trend to dine at Chinese restaurants has already come down," he added.

## EC pays

**FROM PAGE 16**  
After receiving the allegation on September 23, 2003 the EC discussed the matter on several occasions but could not find any way to resolve it. Nor did the EC respond to the European Union (EU) about the allegation, sources said.

"We have shelved the allegation as the list was prepared three years ago. We would have to revise the voter list if the Election Commission wanted to probe the allegation," a senior official told The Daily Star, wishing anonymity.

Some officials at the EC secretariat also believe there was duplication and triplication of a number of voters, which is why the number of increased voters has been questioned. They fear that the same might happen while preparing the voter list for the next parliamentary election unless the officials at the field levels are aware of such inclusion.

The EU in a report sent to former chief election commissioner MA Syed said the figure of 74.7 million registered voters was too high, given a population of 130 million. "I believe that the demographic profile of Bangladesh would suggest a lower figure," Michael Meadowcroft, the then EU consultant, said in the EU report examining the demographic profile of Bangladesh.

The information states that 55 percent of Bangladeshis are over 15 years of age. Thus, even if the age qualification was 15 rather than 18, there would only be a maximum of 71.5 million voters, the EU report said.

Under the age of 15, there is an average of 3.7 million males and females in each year. "Assuming slightly fewer than this in each of the years for the ages 15, 16 and 17, I would estimate that there is a total of 10 million inhabitants in those three years," Meadowcroft pointed out in the report.

"Thus, extrapolating the census figures, the maximum number of potential voters in Bangladesh is 61.51 million," the report claimed.

## At 9:47am, time stops

**FROM PAGE 1**  
showing the mug shots of the suspected terrorists who made the July 7 attacks. Shahara's killer-suspect is also there, looking straight at her father Shafulik.</