

Justice not

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in the capital. She was only 15 and a student of class-IX at Scholastica school.

After all these years' wait for exemplary punishment to the killers, Shazneen's parents are still longing for justice as the Appellate Division could not hold hearing on the final verdict of the case, in which the High Court upheld capital punishment to five persons in 2006.

The five accused -- contractor Syed Sajjad Mainuddin Hasan, domestic help Shahidul Islam Shahid, Hasan's accomplices Badal and maid servants Estema Khatun Minu and Parvin -- were sentenced to death on September 2, 2003 by a lower for raping and murdering Shazneen and assisting in the crimes.

The HC, however, acquitted carpenter Shaniram Mandal, also sentenced to death by the lower court, from the charge. The five convicted appealed to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court the same year.

Shazneen was killed in 1998.

Her family has arranged a milad mehil after the Asr prayers at 5:15pm today at her father's residence at House No- NE(J)4 on Road-83 in Gulshan-2, Dhaka.

Shazneen's father Latifur Rahman, chairman of Transcom Group, and mother Shahnaz Rahman request all relatives, friends and will-wishers to attend the milad mehil.

80pc survey

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Bangladeshi enclaves in Indian territory.

Before the identification of the enclaves, India will complete the headcount at the adversely-held enclaves by May 15.

"Once both sides agree upon areas that they possess, the only task remaining would be to exchange them," the official said.

The key challenge remaining for both the countries is how to overcome the "difference of opinion" on patches located in north-eastern Indian state of Meghalaya, which is hardly 20 percent of the total areas under dispute. There are eleven such areas in Meghalaya, he said adding "we hope to resolve the dispute in Meghalaya as soon as possible".

Once the problem on the ground is resolved, Home Minister P Chidambaram may visit Dhaka to carry forward the process into a logical conclusion.

Either Chidambaram or Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who is also expected to visit Bangladesh by the year-end, will sign the agreement with his Bangladeshi counterpart.

The pact will cover all outstanding border issues in line with the Mujib-Indira Land Boundary Agreement, 1974.

The fresh initiative has been taken following an agreement at the home secretary-level talks between India and Bangladesh in Dhaka early this year.

Home Secretary Gopal K Pillai and his Bangladeshi counterpart Abdus Sobhan Sikdar had agreed to initiate steps to resolve the border dispute.

Lightning

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village of Halaughat.

Boatman Nikli Mia, who survived the lightning and is now undergoing treatment at Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital, said the labourers were working in a paddy field of Kujla Beel.

As the dark cloud began to cover the sky, they hired Nikli's boat to cross the river.

"We were struck by the lightning while crossing the river," the boatman said adding that the labourers fell and drowned in the river.

The bodies were handed over to their relatives, said Gazi Sakawat Hossain, officer-in-charge of Sadar police station.

Murder for money

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Konabari in Gazipur, started for Dhaka on Padma Express from Rajshahi Railway Station in the afternoon of April 4. Sabbir and Joy were supposed to return Tk 4.5 lakh they borrowed from Russel once they reached Sabbir's home in Gazipur.

But the trio got off the train at Chatmohor Railway Station in Pabna and returned to Rajshahi by another train, Joy said. They took Russel behind Charu Mama's canteen around 1:00am on April 5 and smoked pot together. Sabbir and Joy then treated Russel to a bottle of Phensidyl which had six sleeping pills mixed in it, Joy told reporters.

Joy said when Russel fell asleep, Sabbir pushed him an injection and uttered in English, "He is confirmed dead now".

The injection was prepared with Bupi Vacain and Neosuxa which Sabbir and Joy had bought from a pharmacy in Rajshahi city on April 3.

After the killing, they spread bleaching powder and cement on Russel's body. Sabbir had kept the powder and cement at the scene beforehand. The powder and cement was spread so that the rotting body does not smell, Joy said.

Then they wrapped the body with cloth and polythene and buried it behind the bush. They even planted some arum plants on the spot for good measure, Joy said.

Russel and Joy were friends since their HSC times. They passed the HSC examination from Dayarampur Cantonment Supper College of Natore in 2005, said law enforcers and the victim's family members.

Joy got into RMC while Russel enrolled in the Rajshahi college. Russel was introduced to Sabbir by Joy.

Russel was the son of retired BDR personnel Mokbul Hossain of Uttar Banshbaria of Abdulpur in Natore. He had been missing since April 4.

In 2008, Russel dropped out of college, got married and started a business with the money his father got on retirement.

Studying at RMC, Sabbir got involved in gambling in IPL cricket tournaments and Joy had a business of supplying human skeletons to medical students. The three got addicted to pot and Phensidyl, said law enforcers.

BNP executive

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to raise the demand for a permanent secretary general while a few others are trying to get the grassroots to support Alamgir.

The secretary general post fell vacant following the death of Khandker Delwar Hossain.

The executive committee sits today for the second time since its formation in the party council in December 2009.

BNP Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, who is also in charge of office secretariat, told The Daily Star that they have completed all preparations to make the meeting successful.

Chairperson Khaleda Zia will preside over the meeting at Mahanagar Natya Mancha in the city while acting Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir will place the report of the secretary general.

Agitation programmes, current political situation, activities of front and associate bodies, internal conflicts, and how to make the field-level committees more effective may get priority for discussion.

3 stalkers

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Earlier, Surotunnesa, mother of the college girl Shamima Akter, lodged a complaint with the UNO, accusing the trio.

In the complaint, Surotunnesa said Mujaffar, Alal and Rafique used to stalk her daughter on her way to school.

UNO asked the accused and the petitioner to appear in his office yesterday. After a hearing, Abul Hashem, also a magistrate, delivered the verdict against the three.

3 commit

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Police recovered her body from there and sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue for an autopsy.

In another incident, Afroza Akhter, 18, killed herself on Thursday night by hanging herself from the shower of a flat's bathroom in the city's Kakrail area.

She had been a domestic help to Rafiqul Islam's family for a month.

Afroza entered the bathroom for taking a bath around 5:00pm but did not come out till 9:00pm, said Shibli Noman, officer-in-charge of Ramna Police Station, quoting members of Rafiqul's family.

Breaking the door open, flatmates discovered her hanging there.

Law enforcers recovered her body around 10:00pm and sent it to DMCH mortuary for a post-mortem, added the OC.

Swapon, 30, committed suicide by drinking poison around 11:00am in the capital's Kadamtali area yesterday.

He took poison at his Boubazar residence and was rushed to DMCH, where he expired later, Kadamtali policemen said.

Law enforcers sent his body to DMCH morgue for an autopsy.

Expats get

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particulars and biometric data of MRP applicants.

The Agargaon passport office will print passport books for mission offices, after the Special Branch of police in Bangladesh verifies the identity of MRP seekers.

At least 200 SB personnel have received training so far to do verification and put the information in the online database of the immigration department. Besides, 70 SB and DSB district offices will be provided with necessary equipment for the task, the official said.

Eight more Bangladesh missions and 14 regional passport offices in Bangladesh will soon get enough manpower and necessary equipment to issue MRPs, said the government high-up.

A project to issue MRPs and MRVs was launched at Agargaon office of the Department of Immigration and Passport on April 1 last year and now the service is available in the department's 19 regional offices in the country.

The government last year signed an agreement with Malaysia-based IRIS Corporation Berhad for implementation of the Tk 526 crore MRP and MRV (machine-readable visa) project, which was originally taken in 1989.

A total of 190 member countries of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) at Chicago Convention in 2002 agreed to switch to MRP from manual one by 2015.

Bangladesh will be able to meet the deadline, if the current pace in issuing MRP is maintained, said project officials.

Amini finds

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abduction to foil his party's protest against the women policy, claimed the chief of the IOJ faction, a component of the BNP-led four-party alliance.

Their ongoing movement will pick up momentum no matter how hard the government tries to thwart it, added Amini, also ameer of Islamic Law Implementation Committee.

He also said Hasina should know that worse days are in store for her.

Hasanat at the press conference said kidnappers blindfolded and forced him onto a Pajero on April 10. He could not identify them or give any description about the four-wheel drive.

Amini on April 10 claimed that some plainclothes law enforcers picked up his son around 11:00am from the city's Dholaikhal area where he went to get his car repaired.

The law enforcers have all along been denying the allegations.

Talking to The Daily Star on Wednesday, Inspector General of Police Hassan Mahmood Khandker termed Amini's claim "totally baseless".

US cable leaked

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Yunus told Henry Jardine, the US consul general in Kolkata, that he was aware of the "potentially bruising response" his entry in politics would provoke from the "two ladies" -- Sheikh Hasina, the current prime minister, and Khaleda Zia, former prime minister -- and other established political figures, according to the cables accessed and published by The Hindu, an Indian newspaper, yesterday.

An unclassified cable sent on February 13, 2007, from the US consulate in Kolkata documented in detail the conversation between Jardine and Yunus when the latter visited Kolkata to participate in certain programmes.

During a conversation over lunch, which was hosted by the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce (CCC), Jardine enquired about Yunus's political plans.

Hearing of Yunus's strong interest to join the political fray, Manoj Mohanka, president of CCC, raised some

questions about the "messy world" of Bangladesh politics and the "likelihood of Yunus's reputation being tarnished".

Yunus responded by saying "he understood the dangers" but "felt that responsible people had to step into the political field to make a real change in Bangladesh, which was wracked by corruption and poor governance".

When Jardine raised questions about rising levels of fundamentalism, Yunus explained that "Muslim fundamentalists are a fringe not accepted by the Bangladesh mainstream".

The consul general, however, pointed out that "even the Awami League (the political party led by Sheikh Hasina), which had been the primary advocate of a socialist, secular nation, had signed an agreement with fundamentalist group Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish (BKM)" to "recognise fatwas issued by Imams and block the introduction of laws contrary to sharia law."

Summit to sign

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But it took around six months before the company and the government could sign the final agreements. The government needed some time to acquire land for the Bibiyana power projects, but it had asked Summit to initial the agreements. But Summit insisted on getting the land ready first.

Now the government has completed acquiring 32 acres of land for three Bibiyana power plants, including one for the future. However, the government is yet to complete acquiring 26 acres of land for a massive 400 kilovolt sub-station to evacuate the power from these power plants.

In addition, Jalalabad Gas Company Ltd is yet to ensure a right of way (ownership) to set up an eight-km-long and 20-inch-diameter gas pipeline that will supply gas to the power plants from the nearby Bibiyana gas field.

As per contract, Summit has to build both the power substation and the pipeline, and then hand over the ownership to the government.

As acquiring land for these remains incomplete, Summit has agreed to sign the contracts on two conditions -- that the government will hand over the land for the substation and the pipeline within 60 days of signing the contract, and also that if the government delays the handing over, Summit will be allowed to proportionately delay commercial launching of the power plants.

These three projects alone would demand close to \$800 million, while Summit needed another \$300 million for three other rental heavy fuel oil (HFO)-fired power projects, contracts for which were awarded to it earlier.

Meghna death

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night and continued rescue operation till 8:00 am yesterday, Md Helal Uddin, upazila nirbahi officer (UNO), said.

Rescuers found three bodies floating in the river. Two other bodies were recovered from inside the sunken vessel after dragging it to the shore.

The authorities abandoned the salvage operation at 1:00 pm as there was nobody inside the vessel, the UNO said.

Of the five bodies, two were identified as Md Hatem Ali, 8, son of Md Monir Hossain of Narsingdi, and Abul Hossain, 35, of Kishoreganj, said Md Shahid, sub-inspector of Sarail Police Station.

The rescuers also salvaged answer scripts of HSC exam, cash money and other valuables from the launch, Sarail thana OC Md Jahirul Islam said.

Out of 33 bodies, 30 were handed over to their relatives while three unclaimed bodies -- a man aged around 50, a 35-year-old woman, and a 12-year-old boy -- were buried at Rajpur graveyard.

Meanwhile, some people, who were passing tense

PM attends

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Hasina is due to leave Dhaka for Istanbul on May 7. In her summit speech she is expected to urge the rich nations to continue their focus on the LDCs' special needs and boost their support, added the sources.

She will hold bilateral meetings with a number of heads of state and government on the sidelines of the summit and return home on May 12.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni and a host of officials will accompany the prime minister in Turkey.

Foreign ministry officials and Bangladesh missions in Istanbul and Geneva are working out prime minister's probable meetings with her counterparts, who will converge on the events.

On May 17, the Bangladesh leader will address the World Health Assembly in Geneva as one of the keynote speakers.

The World Health Assembly, the decision-making body of World Health Organisation (WHO), will meet on May 16 and conclude on 24th. Most of the heads of state and government, however, will address the meet and join in policy-making process on May 16-17.

The conference, held annually in Geneva, will discuss a specific health agenda, including the programme budget, administration and management matters of WHO, said officials.

Delegates from all WHO member states are expected to join the meeting.

The LDC-IV conference aims to ensure sustainable economic and social development of the LDCs. All 192 UN member states are invited to the meet.

According to ministry officials, there are 48 LDCs in the world with a population of 950 million. Among those, 33 are in Africa, 14 in the Pacific and one in Latin America.

In 1971, the international community recognised the least developed countries as a category of countries distinguished by widespread poverty, weak economy and unskilled human resource.

Steps taken

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went on the rampage and vandalised the Gaibandha Water Development Board office there for allegedly not doing enough to protect their land and property from river erosion.

Following the violent protest, the district administration and the WDB high-ups stepped up their efforts and decided to start the work under special arrangements.

Shahidul Islam, deputy commissioner of Gaibandha, said at least 5,000 geo-textile bags were expected to reach Gaibandha last night for the bank protection work. He admitted a portion of the flood control embankment has been breached.

The tender for the bags and poor fund allocation were reportedly responsible for holding up the work.

Two separate tenders are being processed for supplying the bags worth Tk 14 crore and another for implementing work including dumping bags and laying concrete blocks worth Tk 24 crore, said Abul Kalam Azad, sub-divisional engineer of Gaibandha WDB.

Agitating people of Shaghata union on Thursday besieged Gaibandha WDB office demanding immediate start of the bank protection work of the Jamuna to save important structures including police station, health complex, market, schools and colleges in the area.

They went on the rampage later on. A general diary was filed Thursday night against 400 unknown people with Gaibandha Police Station.

Meanwhile, blaming the executive engineer of Gaibandha WDB of misconduct, Mohammed Ali, president of WDB Sramik Karmachari union, demanded that he be withdrawn from Gaibandha WDB office.

The engineer could not be contacted for comments despite repeated attempts.

The erosion situation is currently getting worse in Shaghata union and the Jamuna is now threatening to devour Shaghata High School and police station.

The outgoing chairman M Hafizuddin Khan, secretary general Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed and treasurer Sultana Kamal, will continue as trustees of TIB, the release added.

Shipping Minister