

BANANI RAPE CASE

Charge framing hearing against Shafat, Nayem, 3 others June 19

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday fixed June 19 for hearing charge framing against five people, including prime accused Ahmed Shafat and Nayem Ashraf, in the Banani rape case.

Judge Md Shafiqul Azam of the Second Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression passed the order after getting the case from the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka.

The court also directed the jail authorities to produce all the five before it on the scheduled date.

Earlier on June 8, Ismot Ara Ame, inspector of Women Support and Investigation Division of Dhaka Metropolitan Police and investigation officer of the case, submitted a charge sheet against the five accused.

Shafat and Nayem, also known as Halim, were charged with raping two university students, while the three others face charges of helping them in various ways during and after the alleged incident at a city hotel on the night of March 28.

The three are Shafat's driver Billal Hossain, bodyguard Rahmat Ali and Shadman Sakif, a friend of the two victims.

Shafat is the son of Dildar Hossain Selim, one of the owners of Apan Jewellers.

All the five are now behind bars. Of them, Shafat, Nayem, Sakif and Billal gave confessional statements before magistrates on different dates.



Anticlockwise from top left, rescuers scour a landslide spot for missing victims in Lemujiri Aga area of Bandarban Sadar yesterday. At least seven people including three siblings were killed and five others injured in the area following heavy downpour caused by a depression over the Bay. Mother and relatives of the three siblings wail. Army personnel recover a body of a fellow on Manikchhari-Chittagong road in Rangamati. An army team fell victim to a landslide there while clearing the road. A team of Chittagong district administration asks people living in the city's Motijharna area to move to safety after a few people died in a landslide earlier. A damaged house in Rangamati.

PHOTO: ANVIL CHAKMA, SANJOY KUMAR BARUA

THREAT AGAINST SULTANA Government's silence emboldens extremists

Say 7 int'l orgs urging it to ensure her security

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Seven international organisations have called upon the government to ensure an enabling environment for human rights defenders so that they can express their opinions freely without any fear of reprisals, harassment or intimidation from state and non-state actors.

Expressing deep concern over the threats to rights activist Sultana Kamal by Hefajat-e-Islam, the organisations demanded that the government take measures to guarantee the physical and psychosocial security of her, her family members and fellow human rights defenders.

The government's silence in this regard reinforces a culture of impunity which emboldens the extremists to act criminally without fear of prosecution, according to a statement jointly issued by Amnesty International, Front Line Defenders, Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development,

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The damaged portion of the metal fence surrounding the Anti-Terrorism Raju Memorial Sculpture on the Dhaka University campus after a speeding car crashed into it yesterday. Shahbagh police seized the badly damaged car and detained the female driver who was released later. The sculpture was created by Shaymol Chowdhury in late '90s.

PHOTO: STAR

Interim deal framework on Teesta water sharing finalised

Minister Anisul tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A framework of interim agreement on Teesta water sharing has been finalised, Water Resources Minister Anisul Islam Mahmud told parliament yesterday.

The finalisation came as per the directions of the Bangladeshi and Indian prime ministers, he said in a scripted answer.

"It is expected that the agreement would be signed soon based on equality, fairness and not harming anyone," said Anisul while replying to lawmakers' queries.

The minister said the framework of interim agreement on sharing of the Feni River water has also been completed.

Besides, discussions on sharing of waters of the Manu, Muhuri, Khowai, Gumti, Dharla and Dudhkumar rivers are going on, he added.

Hang Bangabandhu's portraits in classrooms

Suggests JS body for inspiring primary students

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The parliamentary standing committee on primary and mass education ministry yesterday recommended that the government take measures to hang portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in classrooms, and office and conference rooms of primary schools to introduce children to the Father of the Nation.

"The parliamentary body came up with the recommendation so that children grow up knowing about the father of the nation and the country's history from the early stage of their lives," Awami League MP Shamsul Hoque Chowdhury, a member of the parliamentary watchdog, told The Daily Star.

He also said nine members of the parliamentary body had recently visited primary and other schools in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, and seen that the photographs of fathers of the nation of the respective countries were being hung in every primary school classrooms. In Vietnam, the photograph of Ho Chi Minh hugging a child was placed in the classrooms of primary and secondary schools across the country, said Shamsul.

Therefore, he said, the children of Vietnam know their father of the nation

well and have a high regard for him.

"We also want to implement the same strategy in Bangladesh so that our boys and girls grow up respecting the father of the nation," he added.

According to the directorate of primary education, there are around 1.22 lakh primary schools in the country. At present, all the schools have to hang portraits of Bangabandhu and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the office rooms of headteachers only. From this year, National Curriculum and Textbook Board are publishing photographs of the PM on the back cover of textbooks from Class I to Class V.

The parliamentary standing committee also recommended that all teachers of primary schools submit their mobile phones to the school headmasters before entering the classrooms.

In this regard, Shamsul said primary teachers often spend time in classrooms "chatting through their mobile phone devices".

"That's why, we have asked the ministry so that no primary teachers can carry mobile phones in their classrooms," he added.

AL MP Motahar Hossain, chief of the JS body, presided over the meeting held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Overcrowding not risky As vessels don't carry goods during Eid, claims shipping minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan yesterday said vessels carrying passengers beyond capacity during Eid rush is not risky because those do not carry goods at that time.

"They do not carry goods during Eid. Which is why, it [carrying extra passenger] does not seem to me much risky," he told journalists emerging from a workshop at a hotel in the capital.

Shipping ministry, industries ministry, Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries, and World Bank jointly organised the international workshop on unlocking the transformative power of waterways.

To ensure hassle-free journeys for holidaymakers during the Eid, the shipping ministry held separate meetings with stakeholders and took precautionary measures including restricting vessels from carrying passengers over the limit, he said.

Earlier, at the workshop, speakers said transporting cargo on waterways instead of on roads will help meet climate goals with lesser carbon emission and reduce traffic congestion on Dhaka-Chittagong highway.

Inland waterways transport carries close to 200 million tonnes annually on about 14,000 vessels -- the figure is smaller in comparison to other countries, said FBCCI President Shafiqul Islam Mohiuddin.

Annual volumes of over 615 million tonnes of goods are transported on rivers in the US while some 1.1 billion tonnes in China, he said, referring to data available.

Inland waterways transport has enormous room for capacity expansion as only three percent of containerised cargo traffic in Bangladesh are currently transported on inland waterways vessels, said Rajashree Paralkar, acting country director of World Bank.

Shipping Minister Shahjahan at the workshop said the government has identified 65 main river navigation routes that are essential to passenger and freight transport within the country. The country has a total of 24,000 kilometres of waterways, he told the workshop. Industries Minister Amir Hossain Amu, among others, spoke.

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