

The Daily Star

TODAY'S ISSUE 20 PAGES



People's Right to Know

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XIV NO. 239

DHAKA SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2004

ASHWIN 4, 1411 BS

SABAN 3, 1425 HJRI

20 PAGES PRICE: Tk 7.00

www.thedailystar.net

Grenade attack probe seems set to fizzle out

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK and SHAMIM ASHRAF

The probe into August 21 assassination attempt on Awami League President Sheikh Hasina appears poised to fizzle out as the local investigators try to divert the focus of the investigation.

The government announcement of a Tk 1 crore reward for information leading to the catching of the perpetrators, repeated visits by

Interpol and FBI experts and formation of a high-powered judicial probe commission have yielded no result. Worse still, the investigators are still clueless about the grisly attack that left 20 people killed and over 200 injured.

An investigator said yesterday on condition of anonymity that it is impossible for them to get any lead and that the mystery would remain unresolved until witnesses identify the attackers or unless anyone

admits to their role in the deadly attack.

The local investigators did not care for preserving the evidence of the incident, neither did they provide the international experts with necessary evidence and information.

They keep on saying that 'probe is on and nothing can be disclosed at this stage for the sake of investigation', having failed to arrest a single perpetrator.

They investigators of the local security agencies instead kept the international experts cordoned and barred the media from getting near them, killing off the chances of their saying anything about their finds and touching off numerous questions.

To cover their incompetence, the investigators showed four persons, who had been arrested in connection with other incidents, as

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

City suffers another cloudburst

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After a day's respite from a six-day spate of incessant rain that near-froze the city life, sporadic cloudbursts yesterday once again stopped Dhaka residents on their tracks.

Heavy rainfall from midday to early afternoon left some parts of the capital waterlogged, including the central business district of Motijheel, Shantinagar and low-lying areas along the Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra embankment.

Thundershowers or light to moderate rainfall with temporary spurts of gusty winds is expected in

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

AL yet to decide on joining JS bodies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A big question mark still hangs over effective functioning of the parliamentary standing committees despite the inclusion of Awami League (AL) lawmakers as the main opposition is yet to decide its mind in joining the vital Jatiya Sangsad bodies.

AL policymakers dithered over the issue ahead of two standing committee meetings at the Jatiya

Sangsad Bhaban today.

A number of AL lawmakers were willing to participate in the committee activities, saying it would give them a chance to stand up to corruption and irregularities at different ministries and at least expose them to people.

Talking to The Daily Star, some AL deputies said as the party did not boycott the House permanently there was no bar to their participation in the committee meetings.

But Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdul Hamid said: "The ruling party is running the House denying all rights to the opposition. I'm fearful whether they will allow opposition lawmakers to speak at the committee meetings. We will think all these aspects before taking a decision."

The AL expressed indignation at the inclusion of its lawmakers in 44 parliamentary bodies on Thursday

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

BTTB bars int'l calls to many

MUSTAK HOSSAIN

In an abrupt move, state-owned Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) has barred outgoing call facilities of several hundred International Subscribers Dialling (ISD) telephones under various exchanges in the capital.

Many ISD subscribers, both private and commercial, under Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Mirpur, Gulshan, Nilkhet and Maghbazar exchanges now cannot make calls due to the call barring.

The BTTB started to block telephones with ISD facilities in the face of huge revenue losses due to lowering of call rates without issuing any notice to its subscribers.

BTTB Chairman Nurul Islam admitted BTTB is imposing call limits for ISD subscribers because of revenue losses as it has to settle

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

House wrecked in explosion, 5 hurt

Police suspect gas leakage; inmates suspect criminals' act

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A big explosion that police suspect from a gas leakage inside an empty flat of a five-storey Sutrapur house left five people wounded, one with serious burn injuries, on Friday night.

The explosion that occurred in the 1st floor of the building at around 11:40 PM blew up walls and window grills of the flat and caused large cracks in the building.

Though the police are suspecting it a gas explosion, Dr Donald James Gomez, nephew of the owner of the building and a professor of

Microbiology Department at Dhaka University (DU), said it might be an act of a criminal gang.

He said the gang has been demanding toll and threatening the house owner of dire consequences for the last few months if the toll is not given. The extortionists phoned him on September 5 and threatened him, added the DU teacher.

Army explosive experts yesterday visited the building, which is now under police guard. Officials of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) also visited the house on Hemendra Das Road in Laxmibazar area of old Dhaka.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

Protest as JCD man hurt in factional fight dies

DU CORRESPONDENT

Mahbub Islam Khokon, fatally injured in an attack by a Jatiyatibadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) faction at Jahurul Haque Hall of Dhaka University (DU), died in the early hours yesterday at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in the capital, triggering massive protests and demands by leaders and activists of the rival JCD faction for bringing his 'killers' to justice.

The protesters shouted slogans like 'death to JCD President Sahabuddin Lalmu', alleging leaders of the student body loyal to him killed Khokon in a pre-planned way.

JCD activist Khokon, a fourth-year student of political science and

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

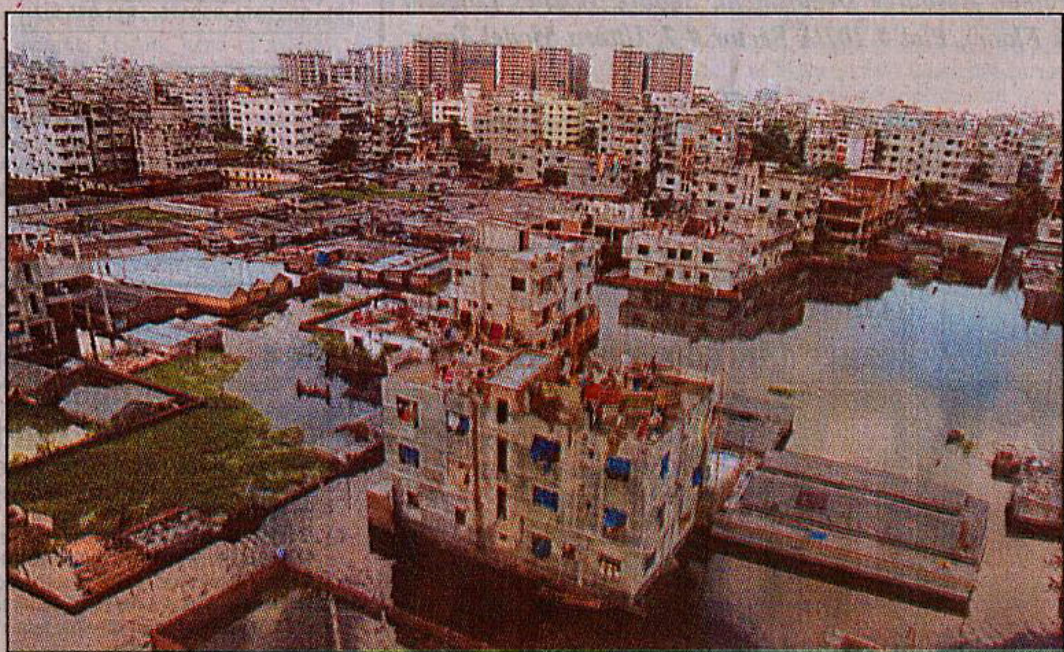


PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Nabodoya Housing Estate and surrounding areas, foreground, inside the flood protection embankment in Mohammadpur continue to reel from waterlogging as the sluice gate for releasing floodwaters remains shut.

AL leader files case with CMM court

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) Law Secretary Sahara Khatun yesterday filed a case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka regarding the August 21 deadly grenade attack on an AL rally on Bangabandhu Avenue in the capital.

In the case, the plaintiff accused a number of ruling alliance leaders, unknown "terrorists harboured by the BNP-led alliance" and the accomplices of the killers of August 15 tragedy and November 3 jail killing of 1975.

After hearing the petition, Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Emdadul Haq took the case into cognisance and directed

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



A big explosion, which police suspect to be caused by a gas leakage, torn this first-floor apartment of a five-storey house on Hemendra Das Road in Old Dhaka Friday night leaving five people wounded.

PHOTO: STAR

Grenade Attack Motion placed in British parliament for discussion

UNB, Dhaka

British MP Sally Keeble has submitted a motion to the House of Commons on "Escalation of Terrorism in Bangladesh" for discussion in parliament.

With the initial support of 16 MPs, Sally Keeble submitted the notice of the "Early Day Motion" to the British parliament on September 9.

In her notice Sally said: "This House, noting the concerns of United Kingdom citizens, especially those of Bangladeshi origin, condemns the assassination attempt on

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Rain delay at The Oval England in semis

REUTERS, London

Opener Herschelle Gibbs returned to form to hit a composed century and lead South Africa to 246 for six before rain stopped play in their Champions Trophy Pool B clash with West Indies at The Oval on Saturday.

Showers first delayed the West

Indies reply and drizzle then forced the players from the field after six overs with Brian Lara's side on 20 without loss.

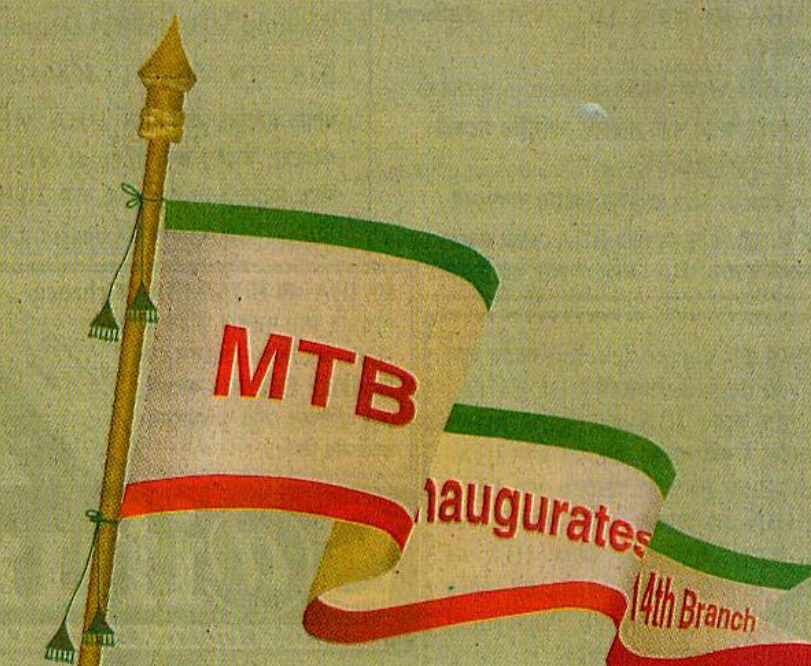
Gibbs had a torrid time with the bat in last month's tour of Sri Lanka and was in danger of the axe but he hit back with 101 from 135 balls, including a six to bring up his

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7



The promise of a new beginning and a new relationship at our new destination

We announce **INAUGURATION** of our **14th Branch** at Amanbazar, Chittagong



Mutual Trust Bank Ltd.
Head office: 68, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka, Phone : 7170138-40

Today, Sunday, 19th September 2004

N O W Y O U C A N C H O O S E Y O U R D R E A M

Presenting Dhaka Bank Get-A-Car fest.

A car finance festival where we promise you flexibility and speedy processing.

Just decide on the car you want.



- No security deposit
- Only 20%-40% downpayment
- Quick processing time
- 13% interest rate
- Loan tenure 5-6 years

DHAKA BANK

Phone- Motijheel: 9571392, 0171564920, 011830552, Dhanmondi: 8620689-90
Banani: 9882324-25, Uttara: 8919947-8, Chittagong: 031 813420-22, Website: www.dhakabankltd.com

Get-A-CarFest
19 Sep - 18 Dec 2004