



INTO NAZRUL'S CREATIONS

Chhayanaut pays tribute to the rebel poet through dance, music and recitation

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MATERNAL MORTALITY MATTERS

A roundtable on Safe Motherhood: Achievements and Challenges

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'EVIL EMPIRE' ROW

Film director George Lucas dismisses claims he is waging class warfare

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Tarique promised attackers safe exit

Witness tells court

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER

BNP Senior Vice Chairman Tarique Rahman assured Huji chief Mufti Abdul Hannan and his associates that he would arrange a safe passage out of the scene once they carried out the grenade attack on an Awami League rally in 2004, a witness told a Dhaka court yesterday.

Abu Hena Md Yusuf, inspector of Criminal Investigation Department, said this in his deposition to the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 as a prosecution witness in the August 21 grenade attack cases.

He claimed that Hannan, while on remand in Ramna Batamul blast cases, told him about Tarique's assurance.

After recording Abu Hena's deposition, Judge Shahed Nuruddin fixed June 3 for the next hearing. Defence lawyers will cross-examine the witness on that day.

Twenty-four AL leaders and workers, including Ivy Rahman, were killed and 300



AUGUST 21



others were injured in the grenade attack on the AL rally at Bangabandhu Avenue in the capital on August 21, 2004.

The attack was aimed at assassinating AL President Sheikh Hasina, then leader of the opposition. Hasina narrowly escaped death.

Two cases -- one under the explosive substances act and the other for murder -- were filed after the incident.

Abu Hena told the court that he had earlier investigated the Ramna Batamul blast cases and submitted charge sheets against Huji chief Hannan and

13 others on November 29, 2008.

During investigation of the Ramna Batamul blast cases in 2005, Abu Hena interrogated Hannan about the grenade and bomb blasts that took place at different places in the country.

Hannan admitted that he along with his accomplices in 2000 had planted a 76-kg

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BEATING THE HEAT

Children take a dip in the Dhaka University pool even as the summer heat and humidity result in a near overcrowding of the pool. The photos were taken around 11:30am on Friday.



PHOTO: RASHED SHUON

FIRE IN BAHRAIN

Smoke kills 10 Bangladeshis

STAR REPORT

Ten Bangladeshi workers died from smoke inhalation as a fire broke out at their rented house in Bahrain early yesterday.

Muhammad Ibrahim, first secretary (labour) at the Bangladesh mission in the oil-rich state, confirmed the report, but could not go into details of the workers' identities.

He said nine of the workers were from Comilla and the other from Chandpur.

The fire originated from an electric short circuit around 4:00am at the house in East Riffa, 30 kilometres off the Bahrain capital Manama, Ibrahim said.

Firemen rushed to the scene after a tip-off from neighbours and found all the 10 dead; the residence was engulfed in smoke, he told The Daily Star over phone from Manama.

The firemen had to break the wall to enter, he said,

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SIDDHIRGANJ POWER PROJECT

Tender mishandling costs govt dearly

SHARIER KHAN

Due to mishandling of a tender and non-fulfilment of financial commitment by the World Bank (WB), the government is being forced to inject from its own funds \$194 million into a 335 megawatt gas-fired combined cycle power project in Siddhirganj.

The Electricity Generation Company of Bangladesh (Egcb) is set to sign an agreement with Spanish Isolux and Korean Samsung joint venture today.

The joint venture is locally represented by Science and ICT Minister Syed Abul Hossain's family company Sahco.

In re-tender for the project, the Egcb in August last year picked the lone joint venture bidder -- Isolux-Samsung -- for the job.

The joint venture offered to build the plant at cost of \$ 341m. Together with other components which include a long term servicing of the plant, the project cost now stands at a staggering \$529 m.

But the project was originally approved in 2009 with a \$ 269 m budget including a WB fund of 196m.

In late 2010, before the re-tender was floated, the WB had promised to increase its funding by another \$220 m. But despite repeated requests, it has not agreed to provide the extra fund till date.

Now, the authorities have worked again on the project's finance and found that it needed \$194 m in foreign currency to have the project implemented by Isolux-Samsung.

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CLEMENCY

SC stays verdict for 6 weeks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday stayed for eight weeks a High Court verdict that directed a fugitive convict with presidential clemency to surrender before the lower court in six weeks.

The chamber judge of the Appellate Division passed the order after hearing a petition filed by Sarwar Kamal, the then fugitive convict, seeking stay on the HC verdict.

Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain also asked him to file a regular leave to appeal petition with the

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ARSON CASE

5 opposition MPs get bail

May come out of jail today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted six-week ad-interim bail to five opposition lawmakers in an arson case, considering their "parliamentary privileges".

The court also issued a rule upon the government to explain in a week why twenty-nine other accused should not be granted bail.

On May 10, detectives pressed charges against 45 leaders, including BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, in the case, filed with Tejgaon Police Station after the torching of a bus in front of Prime Minister's Office during the April 29 hartal hours.

On May 16 and 21, a metropolitan magistrate sent the leaders to jail after rejecting their bail petitions. The magistrate on May 21 accepted charge sheets against the 45.

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AC Shahidul suspended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The home ministry has suspended Shahidul Islam, assistant commissioner of police of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (Tejgaon division), and attached him to Chittagong Range for

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Litchi farmers prepare their produce for the market at Machhimpur on the outskirts of Dinajpur town yesterday. Machhimpur is famous across the country for its quality litchis.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

It's litchi time in Dinajpur

KONGKAN KARMAKAR, Dinajpur

One may think the roads through the green, quiet northern district are adorned on purpose. Clusters of pink-red beauties sit on green leaves covering long patches of pitch-road.

It's the month of May; it's the month of litchi.

Some 430 kilometres from Dinajpur, vendors in different neighbourhoods in the capital, as elsewhere in the country, have rearranged their display with the delicious,

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Join JS, propose polls system

Speaker urges opposition as Sangsad goes into budget session

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speaker Abdul Hamid yesterday urged the main opposition BNP to place proposals in parliament outlining the system under

which the next parliamentary election should be held.

"If they [opposition] come up with proposals in the House, I can ask the

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