



A close shave

Only a table, human shield were Hasina's protection against grisliest grenade attack 12 years ago

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and WASIM BIN HABIB

The day before August 21, 2004, Dhaka city Awami League leaders had an informal meeting with party chief Sheikh Hasina for her directives on the next day's rally.

At the end of the meeting, Hasina, in a lighter vein, asked her party leaders to get a big truck so that most of her senior leaders could stand on it.

"Get a table in front of me at the edge of the truck so that no one would fall from the truck should there is any shoving and pushing from behind," Hasina said, laughing.

Never in their wildest dreams did the party leaders imagine that the small table, brought from the Jubo League office, would serve as a temporary shield to protect their party president when grenades would start raining down by the truck on the fateful afternoon of August 21. But that's exactly what the small table did.

The place at the heart of the capital turned out to be a scene of chaos, SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



21 AUGUST ATTACK



Awami League leaders and members of her personal security wing shield Sheikh Hasina during the grenade attack on an AL rally in the city on August 21, 2004. Twenty-four AL leaders and activists were killed in the attack. Hasina narrowly escaped death.



AUG 21 BLACK DAY

2004 [BNP-LED ALLIANCE IN POWER]

AUG 21

At 5:22pm: Banned militant outfit Huji carries out the grenade attack on an Awami League rally in Dhaka, killing 24 people and injuring 300 more. Sheikh Hasina narrowly escapes assassination.

Attackers leave the spot safely, reportedly with the help of the administration and the law enforcement agencies.

Hasina blames the BNP-led government for the attack and asks it to quit.

AL activists hold angry protests.

AUG 22

Shock waves run through the AL. Party activists stage protests and clash with police in the capital. Police file a case with Motijheel Police Station in connection with the grenade attack and investigate for a day only.

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Justice in long wait

Verdict likely towards year end

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On this day 12 years ago, an attack was carried out to annihilate the top leadership of a major political party.

Some influential leaders of the then BNP-led government allegedly hatched the plan to eliminate their political archrival Awami League. They engaged Islamist militants to execute it, according to the charge sheet of the THAT'S WHAT THEY SAID -- PAGE 10

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IMMORTAL

ATIQUE ANAM From Rio De Janeiro

Immortality: Sealed with a burst of speed, in the blink of an eye and in the matter of 37.27 seconds.

Usain Bolt must have lived many a memorable 37.27 seconds in his life, but those on Friday 19th of August, 2016 at Rio de Janeiro's Olympic Stadium will forever remain special, for it transcended the Jamaican from the realm of greats to the pantheon of immortals.



37.27 seconds was all it took to script the closing chapter of this incredible journey. A journey that had started on a grass track of a nondescript Kingston school some two decades ago and first hit the highs eight years ago in Beijing reached its climax on Friday night, culminating in a ninth gold medal in nine Olympic finals. The journey has been written in blazing black, green and gold.

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With a burst of speed on the final leg, Usain Bolt led Jamaica to gold in the 4x100m relay race at the Olympic Stadium on Friday, completing an unprecedented 'triple-triple'.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Hajj crisis deepens

Agencies, ministry trade blame over visa trouble; Biman cancels another flight

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Religious Affairs Ministry and Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (Haab) are blaming each other for around 15,000 hajjis not getting their visas and pushing their pilgrimage into uncertainty.

Meanwhile, Biman yesterday cancelled

another dedicated hajj flight, the 11th to be cancelled this year, due to shortage of hajjis, Biman sources told The Daily Star.

This has raised concerns that many hajjis would not be able to perform their hajj this year.

Haab at a press conference yesterday

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Turn sorrow into strength

PM calls on people on Aug 21 attack anniversary

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon all citizens to turn the grief of the August 21 grenade attack into strength to build a peaceful democratic

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5

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20th & 21st August '16 - 10am to 5pm @ Spectra Convention Centre - Hs 19, Rd 7, Gulshan 1, Dhaka
22nd & 23rd August '16 @ MUAC Office, Uttara, Dhaka | 25th August '16 - 10am to 6pm @ Rose View Hotel - Shahjalal Uposhohor, Sylhet
27th & 28th August '16 - 10am to 6pm @ Peninsula Hotel - O.R. Nizam Road, CDA Avenue, Chittagong | 29th August '16 @ MUAC Office, Agrabad, Chittagong

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Dr. Imtiaz Karim
Birth : May 13, 1965
Thursday, 11:30 am
Death : 21 August, 2015
Friday, 12:30 pm
He shined like a star in our firmament
"In your life you touched so many In your death many lives were changed."
Dr. Imtiaz Karim, lovingly known to all who knew him as Rumi left us forever, on this day a year ago. Rumi by the dint of his brilliance in studies, illustrious achievements in sports, his social awareness and patriotism, his dedication, honesty in the profession, his exceptional caring for his patients as a doctor and lastly his love for family and friends endeared him to all.
The mysterious circumstances surrounding his death left us all in an abyss of despair.
Dear Rumi, Please forgive our inadequacy and powerlessness to unravel the baffling event till today.
We can only supplicate to Almighty Allah to forgive and award you a place in Jannah. We also humbly pray that Almighty Allah Grants us the ability to carry on the task of double living that has devolved upon us on your passing. We envisage to implement both the dreams of yours and ours.
Mother: Mrs. Shamsun Nahar Karim
Brother: Eng. Iqbal Karim, Mohammad Irshad Karim, Eng. Faisal Karim
Sister: Mrs. Nasima Hoq, Mrs. Naima Asker
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Tahmid sent to jail after 14 days' remand
STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Tahmid Hasib Khan, who had been arrested on suspicion of being involved in the Gulshan café attack, was sent to jail yesterday after his remand for 14 days in two phases ended.
Police neither implicated him in the terror attack nor submitted a fresh remand prayer for him as they produced him in the court.
However, the law enforcement agencies told the court that Tahmid should be kept under judicial custody for the sake of investigation.
"Tahmid gave crucial information about the Gulshan attack. We are scrutinising the information. So, he should be kept in jail until the investigation is completed," said Inspector Humayun Kabir of the counter-terrorism
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