



A SIGHT TO BEHOLD... A blooming night queen flower boasts beauty, lovely scent and novelty all in one package. These flowers bloom at dusk, and wither away at dawn, an event considered wondrous to behold, and even worth travelling to witness. Not just one, 14 of these flowers bloomed at a house, belonging to Shahnaz Begum, in Chittagong's Green View Residential area on Tuesday night.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

DEATH OF CTG SCHOOLGIRL

Still a mystery

Not rape or poisoning, say police

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Ctg

It has been more than 60 days since the body of ninth-grader Tasfia Amin was recovered from the concrete blocks on the bank of Karnaphuli River on May 2, but investigators are yet to make any breakthrough over the mysterious death.

As Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP)'s Bandar Zone failed to make any significant headway over the incident, the case was handed over to Detective Branch (DB) of CMP on June 28, following an order of CMP commissioner Mahbubur Rahman.

Sub-Inspector (SI) Anwar Hossain of Patenga Police Station, who was the initial Investigation Officer (IO) of the case, told The Daily Star: "Now the case

is being investigated by DB police, to whom I have handed over all documents and findings."

Deputy Commissioner (DC) (DB) of Port Zone Md Shahidullah told The Daily Star: "We have just received the case docket of Tasfia on July 2, and DB police has already started investigation."

Alongside police, the Police Investigation of Bureau (PBI) has been conducting shadow investigation in the case.

After the body was recovered, Tasfia's father filed a murder case with Patenga Police Station accusing six persons, including a friend of Tasfia's who she was last seen with. Police have arrested two people in connection with the incident.

Another accused of the case, Md Firoj surrendered before a court in connection with the case last Tuesday, following which the court sent him to jail.

Investigators said she was not poisoned or sexually assaulted, based on reports. However, they are still waiting for the full post-mortem report to find out the cause behind the death of Tasfia.

Talking to The Daily Star, Assistant Commissioner (AC) (Karnaphuli Zone) Jahedul Islam said: "Police have received two reports -- chemical analysis and vaginal swab -- from the Forensic Lab of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in the last month, where there are no negative reports."

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Journalist

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labour secretary and chairman of the 9th wage board to explain in two weeks why the board should not be declared illegal.

The HC bench of Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Md Ashraful Kamal came up with the rule following a writ petition filed by the Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (NOAB), challenging legality of the formation of the 9th Wage Board.

The government on January 29 constituted the 9th Wage Board to propose enhanced salary and other benefits of news-men and employees of newspapers and news agencies.

AUGUST 21 GRENADE ATTACK

Closing arguments for ex-CID officials completed

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The defence lawyer for three former officials of Criminal Investigation Department (CID), yesterday completed closing arguments in the cases filed over August 21 grenade attack on Awami League rally in 2004.

The former officials are CID Special Superintendent of Police Ruhul Amin, CID ASPs Abdur Rashid and Munshi Atiqur Rahman, accused of diverting the probe and for falsely implicating Joj Mia in the case, who was later found innocent.

During the hearing Advocate Abdus Sobhan Tarafdar said his clients were implicated in the cases as part of a conspiracy to harass them, and they did not make any attempt to divert the probe.

The three officials took charge of the investigation in August 25, 2004 and made a sketch map of the place of occurrence, seizure list and recorded statements of 66 people, the lawyer said.

During the trial, prosecution produced most of the witnesses, including Awami League leaders late Suranjit Sengupta and Kazi Zafarullah before the court.

Denying false implication of Joj Mia, the lawyer said, he was produced before the court for recording confessional statement after he agreed to do so.

Therefore, the officials' probed the cases with due diligence, Tarafdar argued.

Earlier, defence lawyer for 42 others accused including BNP Senior Vice-Chairman Tarique Rahman, completed their closing arguments and sought acquittal.

BCC POLLS

BNP, Jamaat agree on 5 councillor posts

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

BNP has reached an understanding with Jamaat-e-Islami to set aside five councillor posts for Jamaat contestants in the upcoming Barisal City Corporation (BCC) election.

In return, Jamaat will ensure that its voters will back BNP candidates in other posts as well as the mayoral post in the election, scheduled to be held on July 30.

Moazzem Hossain Helal, Jamaat's amir in Barisal district, confirmed the development with The Daily Star early this week.

"Jamaat wanted to contest the BCC election for the mayoral post under the banner of 'Nagorik Parishad', but BNP has urged Jamaat not to nominate any of its candidates for the post," he said.

Jamaat has agreed to BNP's demand with the assurance that BNP would set aside five councillor

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Fire guts BNP office in Gazipur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

The Gazipur district office of BNP was gutted in a fire yesterday morning.

According to witnesses, a group of youth entered the office on Rajbari Road around 11:30am and poured some liquid on furniture and set those on fire.

No one was inside the office at that time.

On information, firefighters rushed there and doused the blaze within 30 minutes, said Md Zakir Hossain, senior station officer of Joydevpur Fire Service and Civil Defence.

He, however, said the reason for the fire could not be known yet.

Meanwhile, some of the BNP activists alleged that a Jubo Dal leader was behind the attack as he did not get any post in the recently-formed committee.

However, Kazi Sayedul Alam Babul, general secretary of district unit BNP, said it



could not be confirmed yet who set the office on fire. "If any party men were involved, strict actions will be taken against them. A team has been formed to investigate the incident," he added.

Gazipur district and city Jubo Dal committees were announced on Tuesday.

HC defers

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Attorney General Mahbubey Alam sought time for preparation, Deputy Attorney General Dr Md Bashir Ullah told The Daily Star.

Seven people were killed and 25-26 others injured after a bus was torched in Comilla's Chaudhagram upazila on February 2015.

The following day, two cases were lodged with Chaudhagram Police Station for murder and arson under the Special Powers Act.

On May 28 this year, the HC granted six months anticipatory bail to Khaleda in the murder case.

The former premier submitted the petition to the HC in May this year pleading the court to scrap the trial against her in the arson case.

In the petition, Khaleda said her name was not included in the first information report (FIR) and there was no specific allegation against her in the arson case.



Mayor-elect Jahangir Alam of Gazipur, left, and BNP's Hasan Uddin Sarker offer each other sweets at the latter's office. Jahangir paid a courtesy call on Hasan yesterday morning.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

16,000 Hajj-bound Biman tickets unsold

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Biman Bangladesh Airlines yesterday called on Hajj agencies to buy tickets immediately as 16,000 seats still remain unsold, warning that no additional slot will be allotted by Saudi authorities this year.

"All Hajj agents are requested to procure their required tickets immediately to avoid complexity to transport Hajj pilgrims at the last moment," said a release from Biman.

Last year, the national flag carrier had to cancel 24 scheduled hajj flights, as agencies were reluctant to send pilgrims too early for the Hajj.

According to the release, as of yesterday 45,779 tickets have been issued while, some 16,000 seats are still available for hajj flights between Jul 24 to Aug 10, 2018.

This year, Biman Bangladesh Airlines will transport approximately 63,600 pilgrims between July 14 and Aug 15 by 187 flights, Biman's official sources said. Biman started selling tickets for this year's Hajj flights from May 27, on first-come, first-serve basis.

"We don't want to leave anyone behind here. We therefore urge all hajj agencies to buy tickets in favour of their registered pilgrims soon," Biman's General Manager (PR) Shakil Meraj told The Daily Star. He also said the national flag carrier is cautious this time to prevent any kind of complexity in hajj flight operations, as Saudi authorities have already declared they won't be able to provide any additional flights to Biman this year before the Hajj.

Last year, Biman was able to manage additional slots from Saudi authority to operate hajj flights, after a number of hajj flights were cancelled due to scarcity of passengers.

Parliamentary

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placed in parliament on April 9 amid growing concerns from journalists and rights activists that freedom of the press and expression would be put to the sword if the bill was passed.

The committee has been given four weeks to place its report before the House following scrutiny of the bill. The House on June 7 extended the time by two months.

Earlier on May 22, Editors' Council, an organisation of editors of the country's national dailies; ATCO and BFUJ in their maiden meeting with the parliamentary standing committee voiced concern over section 8, 21, 25, 28, 29, 31, 32, and 43 of the proposed law, saying these would greatly hamper the freedom of speech and independent journalism.

They also unanimously said several sections in the proposed law have ambiguity and loopholes, which should be addressed. Otherwise, there will be ample scope for its misuse.

New power bill to extend some provisions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The "Supply of Power and Energy (Special Provision) (Amendment) Bill, 2018" was placed in Parliament yesterday extending some provisions of the existing law by three years.

State Minister for Power and Energy Nasrul Hamid placed the bill seeking the amendment as the construction of power plants for ensuring quick supply of power and energy in the country is yet to be completed.

With the passage of the bill, some provisions of the Speedy Supply of Power and Energy (Special Provision) Act-2010 will remain effective till October 11, 2021.

The proposed law was sent to the parliamentary standing committee on power, energy and mineral resources for further scrutiny. The committee has been asked to submit its report before the House within three days.

US embassy celebrates 4th of July

UNB, Dhaka

On the occasion of 4th of July, the Independence Day of the United States, US Ambassador in Dhaka Marcia Bernicat yesterday said the day is a reminder of the enduring truth that people can design their own future -- one that constantly seeks to ensure the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for all its citizens.

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Parliament passes Cantonment Bill 2018

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Parliament yesterday passed the "Cantonment Bill, 2018," to incorporate tougher punishment for various offences including delaying construction of buildings and breaking traffic rules inside the cantonment areas.

Law Minister Anisul Huq piloted the bill in the House and it was passed by voice vote.

According to the new law, various amounts of fines will be imposed for 43 different subjects, including exceeding the deadline of construction of buildings, violation of traffic rules, carrying arms and firecrackers in the areas.

The new law has substantially increased the penalties for offenders compared to the previous legislation.

Greater

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Bangladesh is actively participating in many bilateral regional and sub-regional connectivity activities like BRI and BBN, he said.

BISS Director General Maj Gen AKM Abdur Rahman in his welcome speech said connectivity is a must among the South Asian countries in order to proceed further.

Dr Nishchal N Pandey, director of Centre for South Asian Studies in Nepal, said, "BRI and BBN are projects of great significance. Both of them promised a great deal in terms of infrastructural development and connectivity, trade, transit, tourism and energy cooperation."

"There are challenges but the promises these two project hold are of greater value," he added.

Urging the countries of the region to come closer and build greater cooperation, Dr Nishchal said, smaller countries like Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka can be directly benefited by the connectivity projects.

The inaugural session of the two-day conference was chaired by BISS Chairman Munshi Faiz Ahmad.

Consortium of South Asian Think-Tanks (COSATT) arranged the conference.

Sons happy to be reunited with mother

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday ruled that siblings Salim Sadman Dhrubo, 12, and Sadik Sadman Lubdhoque, 9, will remain in the custody of their mother, Kamrun Nahar Mollika, 40, until further notice.

The bench of Justice JBM Hassan and Justice Md Khairul Alam issued the order following a writ petition filed by Mollika, a lecturer at a private college, to get the custody of her children.

Before issuing the order, the bench heard from the children and the lawyers concerned.

The HC fixed August 1 to issue further notice in this regard and directed Mollika, her former husband Mehedi Hasan, 45, and the children to appear before it.

Dhrubo and Lubdhoque reunited with their mother on June 25 following an HC order after 13 months following their parents' divorce.

Yesterday, the children told the bench they were happy to be reunited with their mother.

On June 25, the HC bench ruled that custody of the children will be given to the mother and their father could visit them when he wanted to.

Mehedi and Mollika got married in 2002. The couple got divorced in May 2017.

Three days before the divorce, Mehedi sent the children to his sister's house in Magura town without their mother's consent.

Mollika often tried to visit her sons but failed, following which she filed the writ petition, seeking HC's directive to get custody of her children.

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