



"India's unilateral withdrawal of water from 3 transboundary rivers will lead to massive intrusion of salinity into Bangladesh."

ENVIRONMENT MINISTER ANISUL ISLAM MAHMUD,

AT A DIALOGUE IN THE CAPITAL (PAGE 3)



"In reality, steps are being taken to turn this country into a police state through this law."

BSD General Secretary Khalequzzaman says referring to the Digital

Security Bill. (PAGE 3)



"The entire world is watching and I would like to show the outcome of peace and prosperity to the people around the globe."

SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENT MOON JAE-IN IN CONVERSATION WITH NORTH KOREAN

LEADER KIM JONG UN IN PYONGYANG (PAGE 16)

AUG 21 GRENADE ATTACK CASES

Trial completes after 14 years

Special court to deliver verdict on Oct 10

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER and TUHIN SHUBRA ADHIKARY

The trial in the two cases filed over the grenade attack on an Awami League rally in the capital on August 21, 2004 has finally drawn to a close as a special court is set to deliver verdicts in the cases on October 10.

The Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 yesterday fixed the date after both the prosecution and the defence completed their arguments, more than 14 years after the incident that left 24 dead and scores injured.

BNP's acting chairman Tarique Rahman, two former ministers including Lutfozzaman Babar and former top police and intelligence officials of the then BNP-led four-party alliance government are among 49 accused in the cases.

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Timeline
July 3, 2011 CID submitted supplementary charge sheet against 30 more individuals, including Tarique and Babar

March 18, 2012 Court framed fresh charges against the 30, taking the number of accused to 52

March 27, 2012 Re-trial began

September 18, 2018 Trial completed



With a worried look on his face, former BNP state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar, an accused in the August 21 grenade attack cases, waits in front of a special court in Old Dhaka before being taken to jail yesterday. The court set October 10 for delivering the verdicts in the cases.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Passport in a day or two

Govt plans super express service for passport renewal in emergency cases

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACSHARJEE

Your passport has expired, and you have to make an urgent foreign trip. There's no need to worry.

The government plans to renew and even issue passports in just 48 hours. But the service will cost more.

In cases, if someone applies in the morning, they will get the passport in the evening, said Major General Masud Rezwan, director general of Department of Immigration and Passports.

"We've sent a proposal to the home ministry for introducing super express service, keeping in mind the patients need immediate medical attention or migrant workers whose passport expired when they still had visas," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

The passport department is currently issuing passport within a day or two on humanitarian grounds, but the officials

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Will work together for development

Says Hasina as she and her Indian counterpart open construction of a pipeline between Siliguri, Parbatipur



STAR REPORT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said she looks forward to continued support from India for the development of Bangladesh.

"I look forward to continued support from the government of India in our development pursuit. I'm quite sure we'll get many such happy events in the days ahead for the welfare of our people," she said, UNB reports.

Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi were jointly inaugurating the construction of 130km Bangladesh-India Friendship Pipeline between Siliguri in West Bengal and Parbatipur in Dinajpur.

They opened the work through videoconferencing. Hasina attended the

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ATROCITIES ON ROHINGYA
ICC launches preliminary investigation

AFP, The Hague

The International Criminal Court's prosecutor opened a preliminary probe yesterday into Myanmar's alleged crimes against Rohingyas, including killings, sexual violence and forced deportations.

Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda will look at whether there is enough evidence to warrant a full investigation into Myanmar's military crackdown which has seen some 700,000 people flee into neighbouring Bangladesh.

The move comes nearly two weeks after judges ruled that even though Myanmar has not signed up to the Hague-based ICC, the court still has jurisdiction over crimes against the

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Restore Rohingya rights to citizenship

UN fact-finding mission also calls on Myanmar to suspend verification based on 1982 law

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A group of UN investigators yesterday called on the Myanmar government to suspend the citizenship verification process based on the 1982 Citizenship Law and restore the citizenship rights of Rohingyas through a speedy administrative process.

They urged Myanmar to dismantle the arbitrary deprivation of nationality of the Rohingyas and restore their rights to citizenship and property through a meaningful consultation with the Rohingya community.

They made the call in the full report of UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar. The 440-page report was presented to UN Human Rights Council in Geneva yesterday.

The members of Fact-Finding Mission also called for ensuring safe, dignified and voluntary repatriation of Rohingya refugees in accordance with international standards.

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4,300 ACRES OF FORESTS, HILLS RAZED - PAGE 3

- » Prosecute top generals for genocide
- » Restructure army, replace leadership
- » Remove army from political, economic life
- » The international community has failed

They also stressed the need for adequate human rights protections for Rohingyas.

"The United Nations and international community must ensure that the repatriation of refugees and return of internally displaced persons only occurs when safe, voluntary and dignified, with explicit human rights protections in place, including citizenship. In the current circumstances, returns are not possible," reads the report.

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Rejoinder, our reply

In a rejoinder to a report titled "Ghosts within Janata Bank" published in The Daily Star on September 9, AnonTex Group said it has been repaying the loan instalments to Janata Bank duly since the beginning.

In case of any issue, it holds discussions with the bank and settles the matter through negotiation and consultation, it said.

"We have been holding meetings with the bank for our loan repayments on a regular basis and we are trying our level best to comply with the rules and regulations of the bank with regards to our loan repayment matter," read the rejoinder.

OUR REPLY

What the Group says in the rejoinder has already been accommodated in our report through comments of Mostofa Sarwar, a director of AnonTex Group. The rejoinder did not contradict or contest any points of our report. Our report was based on the Bangladesh Bank's investigation which confirms that AnonTex has defaulted on its loans.

We, therefore, stand by our report.



Oblivious to danger they are in, children are flying a kite standing on a rooftop water tank of a six-storey building in the capital's Kamalapur yesterday.

Tk 3,825cr EVM project okayed

1.5 lakh voting machines to be procured by 2023

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will purchase 1.5 lakh EVMs in three phases in the next five years.

The project, which will cost Tk 3,825 crore, was approved yesterday at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecnec).

EVMs may be used in the next election in urban areas on a limited scale, Planning Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal told reporters after the meeting.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave directives for gradually expanding the use of EVMs, he said.

The EC will purchase 50,000 EVMs in the first phase of the new project.

The planning ministry evaluated the feasibility of the project before placing it in the Ecnec, he said.

There is no alternative to automation of the voting process, he said, adding that EVMs have to be introduced at all levels.

According to the project proposal, the EVMs were used during different local polls before.

The EC has taken suggestions from an expert committee about the specifications of the EVMs.

The EVMs would have a control unit, ballot unit and external display unit. The polling agents of different parties will be able to check whether false votes are cast.

The voting process will be transparent, faultless, credible and technology-based, the minister said.

As part of the project, 3,110 officials would receive training.

After EC Secretary Helaluddin Ahmed last month disclosed the EC's plan on using EVMs on a large scale, Election

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