

PHOTO OF THE DAY



A man carrying saplings at 'Brikkho Mela'. This annual tree fair is held on the national parade ground in Dhaka's Agargaon. With around 104 public and private nurseries, this year's 'Brikkho Mela' started on June 20 and will end on July 20.

BARAPUKURIA GRAFT CASE

Khaleda absent in court, charge framing hearing deferred

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday could not start hearing on charge framing against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and seven others in connection with Barapukuria Coalmine graft case as Khaleda was not produced before it due to her illness. Judge ASM Ruhul Imran of the Special Judge Court-2 of Dhaka set September 5 for next hearing after the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) authorities informed it about Khaleda's illness, Advocate Ziauddin Zia confirmed. Khaleda is now under treatment at BSMMU. BNP leader Dr Khondaker Mosharrar Hossain and six others, now on bail, were present at the court. On February 2008, ACC filed the case against 16 people including Khaleda and 10 of her former cabinet colleagues of taking Tk 159 crore in kickbacks on the Barapukuria coalmine deal awarded to the highest bidder.

ACC pressed charges against them on October 5, 2008. Meanwhile, another Dhaka court once again asked detectives to submit the probe report by August 26 in connection with a case filed against Khaleda and 13 others over hurling crude bombs on a procession in February 2015. Metropolitan Magistrate Debdas Chandra Adhikary passed the order after Inspector Fazlul Haque of the detective branch of police, also the case's investigating officer, failed to submit it yesterday. With this, the IO has taken 50 dates for submission of the probe report. The case was filed by one Ismail Hossain Bachchu on February 16, 2015 with Gulshan Police Station, accusing Khaleda as the mastermind of the attack. At least eight persons were injured in that crude bomb attack on a procession led by then shipping minister Shajahan Khan in Dhaka.

FREE TREATMENT AT INDIAN HOSPITALS

Applications sought from freedom fighters

CITY DESK

The Indian government has initiated a new scheme, in a bid to provide free medical treatment to 100 freedom fighters of Bangladesh every year, according to a press release from Indian High Commission in Dhaka. Under the scheme, the patients will be provided treatment at Indian Armed Forces hospitals. The Ministry of Liberation War Affairs of Bangladesh has partnered with Indian High Commission to select deserving patients covering all districts. A notification in this regard has been circulated by the ministry on its official web site -- www.molwa.gov.bd -- and on national Bangla daily Janakantha, on July 16 this year. Interested freedom fighters are advised to visit the website and submit applications to the civil surgeon's office in their respective districts as per the prescribed application format by August 22.

Make people aware of expired drugs: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday asked the authorities concerned of the government to take necessary steps to make people aware so that they do not purchase or intake expired medicines. While hearing a writ petition, the HC verbally ordered the authorities to broadcast advertisements on electronic media to this effect as advertisements have already been published in print media. The court also asked the inter-ministerial committee, led by the director general of drug administration, to consider the application that sought an order so that medicines' expiry and manufacturing dates and prices are visibly mentioned on the labels. Writ petitioner Justice Watch Foundation (JWF), a rights organisation, recently submitted the application to the HC. The HC asked Deputy Attorney General Abdullah-Al-Mahmud Bashar to hand over the application to the inter-ministerial committee for its consideration. The HC bench of Justice FRM Nazmul Ahasan and Justice KM Kamrul Kader passed the order, during hearing the petition filed by Barrister Mahfuzur Rahman Milon, executive director of JWF, on June 17. During the proceedings, DAG Bashar submitted a compliance report from the drug administration to the HC saying that his client has destroyed expired medicines worth Tk 36.5 crore, fined Tk 1.5 crore to the pharmacies, filed more than 100 cases and punished five people through mobile courts for preserving and selling expired medicines, following its order. The court expressed satisfaction at the report and set August 22 for passing further order. In response to the writ petition, the HC bench on June 18 directed the government to confiscate all expired medicines from pharmacies across the country and destroy those within a month. The HC ordered the authorities to take legal action within the same period against those involved in storing, supplying and selling such medicines.

PM flies to London today

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina leaves Dhaka for London today on an official visit to the United Kingdom. A VVIP flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines carrying the premier and members of her entourage will take off from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport for London this morning. The flight is scheduled to reach Heathrow International Airport at 3:55pm local time. "During the visit, the prime minister will attend a Conference of Bangladesh Envoys (in Europe) in the British capital on July 20," PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim told the news agency yesterday. At the advice of Bangladeshi doctors, Sheikh Hasina will also receive eye treatment in London, he said. The prime minister is expected to return home on August 5, said the press secretary.

MANUFACTURING TOXIC PARACETAMOL

High Court issues injunctions on two drug officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued an injunction, barring two officials of the drug administration from continuing their jobs for negligence in dealing with a case filed for manufacturing toxic paracetamol that killed 28 children in 2009. The two officials are: Assistant Director of the Directorate General of Drug Administration Shafiqul Islam, and its Deputy Director Altaf Hossain. The HC bench of Justice Gobinda Chandra Tagore and Justice Mohammad Ullah passed the order following a petition moved by Advocate Manzill Murshid on behalf of Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB) seeking necessary order. Advocate Manzill Murshid told The Daily Star that the health ministry had suspended them on September 23, 2017 following an HC order for negligence in dealing with

the case filed for manufacturing toxic paracetamol. But the ministry withdrew the suspension order and reinstated them in the service on March 31 this year after simply rebuking them, which was not an adequate punishment, he said. Between June and August in 2009, at least 28 children across the country died of renal failure -- allegedly caused by Rid Pharma's paracetamol syrups and suspensions. In August 2009, Shafiqul Islam, the then superintendent of drug administration, filed the case with the Dhaka Drug Court. On November 28, 2016, the drug court acquitted all five of Rid Pharma's officials. Two officials of the drug administration involved in the case knowingly violated due procedure of law, and exhibited sheer negligence and incompetence in dealing with the case, the verdict said.

300km of port city roads damaged by waterlogging

City corporation says it could take a month to fix these

AMIR HASAN SHAHRIAR, Ctg

At least 25 percent of Chattogram city roads have been damaged due to nine consecutive days of rain and consequent waterlogging, hindering vehicular movement severely and resulting in immense sufferings for city dwellers. Officials of Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) said out of the 1200-kilometre road network in the city, at least 300 kilometres were damaged by waterlogging triggered by downpour in last week. Apprehending that the extent of damage is likely to increase, CCC Chief Engineer Lt Col Mohiuddin Ahmed said it would take at least one month to complete repair work of these roads. During a recent visit to different places in the city, this correspondent

found that the asphalt (the top layer of the road) at several places on most of the major roads in the city have been swept away. Numerous potholes were created on Siraj-ud-Doula Road, Station Road, Airport Road, Dhaka Trunk Road, Bayezid Bostami Road, CDA Avenue, and Mohammad Yousuf Chowdhury Road. Moreover, the rain has not only hindered the ongoing development work at Port Connecting Road and Agrabad Access Road, but also worsened the current condition there. At Boropole intersection on Agrabad Access Road, heavy vehicles were seen getting stuck in wet sand, leading to huge traffic congestion. 'IT'S LIKE RIDING A HORSE' "Slow-paced development work has

already caused traffic on this road to be in bad state for the last three years. Now it has become a nightmare to ply on it," complained Akbar Hossain, a bus driver. Badhon Ahmed, a dweller of Didar Market area on Siraj-ud-Doula Road, said the bumpy ride on this road has given him back pain. "It's like riding a horse. Yesterday I saw an old woman fall down from a rickshaw, as it hit a pothole and tilted badly," said Badhon. Another pitfall of the poor road condition is vehicle drivers demanding exorbitant fares for short distance trips, he added. Mohammad Jamal, a CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver on Bayezid Bostami Road, said such battered road damages pistons of the vehicle's SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



Many roads of Chattogram, like this one at North Patenga, have had their top layer scraped due to rain and waterlogging. City corporation authorities, however, have begun repair work at various points, such as Tiger Pass, inset.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN



Several thousand activists and supporters of BNP joined the party's divisional-level rally yesterday. Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, Mujibur Rahman Sarwar and Selima Rahman, among others, spoke at the event.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Two drug peddlers surrender

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two drug peddlers of Chattogram surrendered to authorities during an anti-crime police rally in port city's Bakalia area yesterday. They are Md Arafat, 27; and Md Absar, 27, said Officer-in-Charge Nezam Uddin of Bakalia Police Station. The duo willingly came to the rally and surrendered, he said, adding that they also pledged to not peddle drugs in future. Several drug peddlers had earlier surrendered since Nezam joined as OC and carried out campaigns.

Autocratic leader got state honours, democratic leader in jail: Fakhrul in Barishal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Autocratic president Hussain Mohammad Ershad was laid to rest with state honours and dignity, while Khaleda Zia -- who led movements for democracy -- is passing her days in jail for false cases filed against her, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam told a Barishal rally yesterday. The rally was held at Hemayet Uddin Eidgah field in the city, where hundreds of BNP leaders and activists of upazila, district, municipality and city levels joined peacefully and without any hindrance. "The country has become a failed state now, where rape, murder, abduction, corruption and disappearance are daily affairs; the government has robbed people of their voting rights to assume power using state machinery," he alleged. "As the judiciary of the country is

not independent, we cannot expect fair judgement for our leader Begum Khaleda Zia. We have to release our party chief from jail through political movements across the country, which has begun today from Barishal," he said. "Form a new Election Commission removing the present unsuccessful one, release Begum [Khaleda] Zia, then sit with all political parties to promptly hold fresh national elections; otherwise, you will face a tough time, and the history of the country will not forgive you," he said addressing the government. Mujibur Rahman Sarwar, joint secretary of BNP central committee and also president of Barishal city unit, chaired the rally, where central leaders of the party Maj (ret'd) Hafizuddin Ahmed, Selima Rahman, Shajahan Omar and others also spoke.