

'ONE MORE REALITY SHOW'
Obama says Trump never took presidency 'seriously' as Harris accepts VP nod
SEE PAGE 6

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AUGUST 21 GRENADE ATTACK 2004



Bodies and the injured scattered in pools of blood in front of the Awami League's central office on Bangabandhu Avenue after grenades were hurled at an AL rally there on August 21, 2004. Left, shocked Sheikh Hasina, then leader of the opposition, after the attack. An unexploded grenade, right, at the scene.



PHOTO: STAR FILE

Railway allows purchase of 4 tickets against one NID

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Up to four tickets can be bought online showing one NID card, the railways ministry has said.

Earlier, Bangladesh Railway had made national identity cards mandatory for passengers to check ticket scalping.

In a press release yesterday, the railways ministry said the authorities have relaxed the provision of showing NID cards "for the passengers' benefit".

"Up to four tickets can be bought for a family with a single NID card and can travel on trains," it added.

The change in decision came following criticism over the move.

Rights activists said the mandatory use of NIDs to buy train tickets online would shrink access to the rail services for the marginalised and those not tech savvy.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

School feeding for 1.41cr students

Proposed 5-yr programme involving Tk 19,280cr to cover all govt primary schools by 2023

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The government has chalked out a mammoth Tk 19,280 crore project proposal to provide daily school meals for all 1.41 crore government primary school students to increase attendance and reduce dropouts.

Primary and mass education ministry officials said they sent the Development Project Proposal (DPP) of Primary School Feeding Programme (PSFP) to the planning commission in early July for approval.

They said the project will be vital to containing the regular trend of dropouts as well as dropouts following the Covid-19 outbreak.

Many government documents and international reports have warned that the ongoing closure of schools in the country due to the coronavirus pandemic is increasing the possibility that thousands of marginalised students across the country may have to drop out and fall into child labour.

"If the project approval is delayed, we may face some problems as the tenure of the ongoing school feeding programme

will end in December this year," said a top official of primary and mass education ministry earlier this week.

"Many project approvals take place in quick time, but in the past, we had seen approval process of many large projects takes a long time," said the official, adding that in case of delays in approval, they might fall behind and face extra dropouts caused by the coronavirus-induced closures.

Primary and Mass Education Senior Secretary Akram-Al-Hossain, however, said he believed that the school feeding project will be approved quickly and they will not fall behind in responding to the coronavirus situation.

"I believe the project will be passed in the PEC meeting soon and subsequently it will be approved by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council," he said.

The process will be completed within two or three months, he added.

THE PROJECT PROPOSAL
According to the officials, the five-year school feeding programme will run from July 2020 to June 2025. The government

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

PROBE REPORT ON SINHA KILLING
Govt body gets seven more days

Yet to quiz key accused OC Pradeep now in Rab custody

STAR REPORT

A high-level committee formed to probe the murder of Maj (ret'd) Sinha Md Rashed Khan has been given seven more working days to complete the investigation.

The committee formed by the home ministry was asked to submit its report to the government by August 31, said the ministry Information Officer Sharif Mahmud.

The committee requested for the additional time as the members were yet to interrogate a key accused -- suspended Teknaf OC Pradeep Kumar Das, a member told The Daily Star yesterday wishing anonymity.

This is the second extension of its deadline by seven days. In another development, the officers-in-charge of Teknaf and Cox's Bazar police stations, who had just joined the stations, were unexpectedly transferred yesterday evening.

"The Police Headquarters have taken the steps, and the transfers have nothing to do with the ongoing issues," said a high official of the district police. Mohammad Khairuzzaman joined as OC of Cox's Bazar Police Station on August 17 And Abul Foysal started work in Teknaf on August 8.

Pradeep, along with five other suspended policemen, is now being grilled by Rab officers on remand. The five include Inspector Liaquat Ali, who shot Sinha at a check-post, and Sub-inspector Nandadulal Rakshit.

Rab, which is probing the murder case filed by Sinha's sister, is also interrogating three suspended members of Armed Police Battalion (APBn)

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

SHIPRA CYBERBULLIED
HC rejects writ plea on technicalities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday rejected a writ petition that challenged the legality of two police officers posting photos of Shipra Debnath with provocative comments on Facebook.

The bench of Justice JBM Hassan and Justice Md Khairul Alam passed the order considering that the petition was not placed properly.

Writ petitioner Manoj Kumar Bhowmick told The Daily Star that he prayed to the HC bench to reject the petition as the bench was not likely to pass an order for taking action against the police officers.

The HC bench said that there is an alternative way to get remedy from the lower court concerned about such issues, he said, adding that he might move the same writ petition before another HC bench.

Manoj Kumar Bhowmick, a Supreme Court lawyer, on August 16 submitted the writ petition as public interest litigation to the HC, seeking its order on the authorities concerned of the government to launch a probe into this issue and take proper action against the police officers responsible for

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

SPLINTERS
remind it all

Survivors demand execution of verdict to punish culprits

RASHIDUL HASAN

Doctors say her ability to fight diseases is decreasing day by day because of over 1,500 splinters inside her body, including in the head, lung, and chest. She has undergone 24 surgeries but is still far from regaining her strength.

The splinters cause her unbearable pain constantly and remind her of the grisly grenade attack that left 24 people dead during an Awami League rally on Bangabandhu Avenue on August 21, 2004.

She is Nasima Ferdushe, now in her 60s -- one of the most unfortunate survivors of the blast.

"Doctors advised me to do an MRI test. But different hospitals and diagnostic centres said my body is not fit for it due to the presence of so many splinters in my body," said Nasima, a former lawmaker, on Wednesday.

"I know I am heading towards death," she added. "But I will die in peace if I can see the execution of the verdict over the heinous attack before my last breath."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

AUG 21 CASE VERDICT
Waiting for HC hearing on appeals

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The High Court is yet to start the hearing on the death references and appeals against the verdict of the sensational August 21, 2004, grenade attack case, although it accepted the appeals of the convicts more than a year and a half ago.

The pandemic caused an unusual delay for the offices concerned of the High Court and Bangladesh Government Press in preparing the paper books of the cases.

However, the authorities concerned were able to prepare the paper books and these finally reached the HC on Sunday [August 16], clearing the way for the court to start a hearing on the death references and appeals of the cases.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

BANGLADESH
UPDATE2,868
New cases in 24hrs2,87,959
Total cases3,822
Deaths1,68,991
RecoveriesGLOBAL
UPDATE793,289
Deaths22,698,145
Total cases

NEWS ANALYSIS

It's India's move
to refresh ties
with neighbours

PORIMOL PALMA

Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla's two-day visit to Dhaka is part of India's larger policy to boost relations with its neighbours as China seeks to draw them closer to it, foreign relations analysts said.

Even though India speaks of neighbourhood first policy, questions have been raised as to how sincere New Delhi is in implementing it, they said.

India-Nepal relations are tensed after India asserted control over the Kalapani-Lipulekh-Limpiyadhura region of Pithoragarh, which Nepal claims to be its territory, they said.

In response, Nepal issued a map depicting the region as part of the Nepalese sovereign territory.

Besides, Sri Lanka's ties with China, especially in using Chinese money for many of its development projects over the last few years, created concerns for India.

Meanwhile, India-China relation is at one of its lowest points after 20 Indian soldiers were killed in a clash between the troops of the two nations at Galwan Valley in mid-June.

Indians are now waging a movement to boycott Chinese products.

Analysts said Beijing-Dhaka ties have strengthened in recent years as China invested in various infrastructure projects in Bangladesh, which has concerned India.

Recently, China declared that 97 percent of Bangladesh's exports to China would be duty free. The far-eastern

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Traders in Chattogram's Chaktai-Khatungonj, one of the largest wholesale markets in the country, go about their business wading knee-deep water following high tide. This photo was taken in the afternoon yesterday. Story on B4.

PHOTO:
RAJIB RAIHAN

Coronavirus
positivity rate
rises again

41 more die, 2,868 test positive in a day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The health directorate yesterday reported 41 deaths from Covid-19 and 2,868 new cases in 24 hours.

With these, the total number of deaths now reached at 3,822 which is 1.33 percent of all confirmed cases, read a press release, adding that the total number of positive cases so far in the country stands at 287,995.

The rate of positive cases rose to 20.40 percent yesterday from 18.72 of the previous day.

The overall rate of positive cases now stands at 20.46 percent, according to the release of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Meanwhile, in the past 24 hours till 8:30am yesterday, a total of 3,253 Covid-19 patients have recovered.

The total number of recoveries stands at 168,991

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5