18th anniv of Aug 21 grenade attack observed

AGENCIES

The country observed the 18th anniversary of the August 21 grenade attack on an Awami League rally in Dhaka with various programmes yesterday.

On this day in 2004, a grisly grenade attack was carried out on an anti-terrorism rally organised by AL at Bangabandhu Avenue in the capital.

Sheikh Hasina, then leader of the opposition, was the target of the attack. The BNP-Jamaat alliance government was in office at that time.

At least 24 people, including AL women affairs secretary and late President Zillur Rahman's wife Ivy Rahman, were killed. Three hundred others were also injured.

AL President Sheikh Hasina, who was addressing the rally, survived the attack but suffered injuries in her ears.

Fourteen years later, a Dhaka court sentenced 19 people, including the then BNP government's state minister for home affairs Lutfozzaman Babar, to death.

Tarique Rahman, the eldest son of BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia and the party's current acting chairman, and 18 others were also sentenced to life in prison.

Awami League and affiliated bodies observe the day as "Grenade Attack Day".

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People from all walks of life gathered at the capital's Bangabandhu Avenue yesterday to pay respects to those who lost their lives in the grisly August 21 grenade attack in 2004. At least 24 people were killed and around 300 were injured in the incident. An altar was set up at the site of the tragedy to commemorate the departed souls.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Govt mulls prepaid gas meters for all households

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

The government is planning to bring all the residential natural gas consumers under the coverage of prepaid meters.

If the plan is implemented, it will help reduce pressure from the natural gas, officials said.

Yesterday, the Energy and Mineral Resources Division (EMRD) held an evaluation meeting in this regard with the top officials of Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Limited (TGTDCL) and Karnaphuli Gas Distribution Company Ltd.

According to Petobangla, there are 44 lakh residential consumers using natural gas for cooking. Of them, around 4 lakh consumers are using prepaid meters.

The meeting -- presided over by EMRD Senior Secretary Mahbub Hossain -- discussed the proposal of the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) on financial aid to set up the meters.

"It was an internal meeting. Discussions took place on the companies' opinions on the [financial aid] proposals but no decision was taken," said

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AL will form govt in next polls too

Says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League will form government with people's votes in the next parliamentary elections as it is a political party of people, said Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday.

"People's powers are our powers. Awami League has formed government with people's votes in 2008, 2014 and 2018. It will form government in the next elections too... It has no need to depend on any other thing for this," he said.

He made the comments while presiding over a discussion and doa mahfil marking National Mourning Day in Dhaka.

The legislative and parliamentary affairs division under the law ministry organised the meeting at the office of inspector general of registration in Abdul Gani Road area. Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Secretary Md Moinul Kabir, Law and Justice Division Secretary Md Golam Sarwar, IGR Shahidul Alam Jhinuk and Supreme Court's acting registrar general Md Golam Rabbani, among others, spoke on the occasion.

When will we wake up?

Asks DNCC mayor at meeting with stakeholders on ensuring safety measures in ongoing development works

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) mayor Md Atiqul Islam yesterday showed his resentment over the lack of safety measures in ongoing development works under different projects in the capital.

Mayor said they will take action if anyone works on any project without ensuring safety measures.

"I did not see any safety measures at the project sites of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on August 16 just a day after the accident that killed five people. When will the authorities pay attention to safety measures?" the mayor asked in a meeting with all the stakeholders at Nagar Bhaban.

The mayor said they are repeatedly asking for proper safety measures on project sites but to no avail.

The contractor who is working there will have to ensure all kinds of safety measures, not only verbally or on paper, but rather they will have to apply it during their work, the mayor said.

At the beginning of the meeting, he showed a 10-minute video clip of a crane lifting goods as part of the construction work of the elevated expressway at Shewra, with vehicles moving underneath.

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How many lives will have to be lost before the authorities to pay attention to the issue? The government cannot be embarrassed due to this anymore. The people cannot be made to suffer.

MD ATIQUL ISLAM
DNCC Mayor

Enforcement of rules is the most important need in the capital's development activities. But in this case, we fell behind.

ARMANA SADIA HAQUE
Assistant Professor of Buet's Accident Research Institute

Qatar to recruit skilled manpower

Says its labour minister

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Qatar wants to recruit skilled and semi-skilled workers from Bangladesh in the fields of medical, hospitality, driving and IT, said Qatari Labour Minister Dr Ali bin Saeed bin Al Samikh Al Marri yesterday.

He said this during meetings with Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen and Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Imran Ahmad.

During a courtesy call on Momen at the State Guest House Padma, Marri mentioned that in the coming days Qatar would like to recruit manpower in those fields, according to a foreign ministry statement. Momen briefed him about the initiatives taken by Bangladesh government for skill development to meet growing demand.

He appreciated the cooperation of Qatar government in supplying LNG to Bangladesh.

The foreign minister requested Qatar government's political and economic support for

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With no harness in sight, a construction worker sets up rods on the top of an eight-story building near Jatiya Press Club yesterday. Despite repeated accidents, construction authorities fail to provide workers with a safe work environment.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

DU students demand removal of hall provost

DU CORRESPONDENT

Leaders and activists of progressive student groups have demanded removal of Prof Bellal Hossain from his post of Muktijoddha Ziaur Rahman Hall provost at Dhaka University.

They held a rally in this regard on the campus yesterday.

The organisations are Chhatra Federation, Chhatra Union Samajtantrik Chhatra Front, Bangladesh Chhatra Federation, Biplobi Chhatra Jubo Andolon, and Biplobi Chhatra Maitri. On August 18, the provost handed over a student to the proctorial team, suspecting him to be a member of a "militant group or involved in anti-state activity".

Later, the proctorial team handed him over to police. On Friday, police released the second-year student of political science, as they did not find any evidence regarding the allegation.

Yesterday, speakers at the rally alleged that the provost has been influenced by BCL men to take the step.

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Climate-resilient roads need of the hour

Speakers tell consultation event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In the wake of the repeated floods, cyclones and tidal surges, Bangladesh must look for climate-resilient roads for longevity and reap maximum benefit from the infrastructures, speakers told a stakeholder consultations event yesterday.

The event was organised at the LGED conference room in the capital yesterday by Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC).

Inaugurating the event, SK Md Mohsin, chief engineer of LGED (Local Government Engineering Department), said his department is engaging in huge development projects, particularly focusing on road infrastructure.

"In light of the country's climate vulnerability, we will look into the suggestions and guidelines presented to us," he said.

Dr Milad Zamanifar, regional transport specialist of ADPC, said in South Asia, road transport is vital for economic and social activities such as trade, public service delivery, governance and tourism.

"The government invests significantly in road infrastructures to provide connectivity to all economic zones," he said.

The resilient transport sector will not only develop a technical guideline for climate resilient roads and bridges, but will also formulate recommendations and frameworks for South Asia based on demonstrated experience in Bangladesh, he added.

ADPC and Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES) are jointly implementing a five-year (2020-2025) regional project called Climate Adaptation and Resilience (CARE) for South Asia to enable climate resilience

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