



BSRM building a safer nation

WITH BSRM FASTBUILD YOUR HOME WILL BE BUILT ON TIME WITH THE BEST QUALITY RODS

COMPLETE GUIDANCE APP FOR HOME BUILDING

Available on the Google Play and App Store

Social media curbs lifted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday lifted the restrictions on social media platforms, including Facebook, TikTok and WhatsApp, bringing a sigh of relief to the tens of thousands of F-commerce entrepreneurs.

The development comes after Zunaid Ahmed Palak, the state minister for telecom and ICT, held a meeting with the representatives of the social media platforms yesterday.

While representatives from ByteDance, the parent company of TikTok, were present at the meeting held at the headquarters of the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Authority, officials of Meta, the parent company of Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram, joined in virtually from Singapore. YouTube sent an emailed reply.

"We, through the BTRC, enforced some restrictions for a certain period, but we have now withdrawn those -- there are no barriers on Facebook, TikTok and YouTube operating in Bangladesh's cyberspace," Palak said after the meeting.

The restrictions on the platforms were lifted to facilitate the business of e-commerce and F-commerce sites and students who depend on the platforms for their studies.

"Facebook, in the meeting, promised that they will be more cautious in the future. We asked Facebook how the post of Tarique Zia (Rahman), who is a convicted and absconded person, stating 'Hasina's killing force has murdered our sons on the streets' meets its community standards. Which community standards allow such words?"

SEE PAGE 7 COL 3



Bronze medalist Jonghoon Lim of South Korea takes selfie with gold medalists China's Wang Chuqin (rear R) and China's Sun Yingsha (front L), silver medalists North Korea's Ri Jong Sik (2nd L), and North Korea's Kim Kum Yong (C) and bronze medalist and teammate South Korea's Shin Yubin (rear R) at the end of their mixed table tennis doubles competition at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Olympic spirit trumps cross-border tension

AFP, Seoul

Images of Olympic table tennis players from North Korea and South Korea taking a selfie together on the medal podium in Paris went viral in South Korea yesterday, hailed as a rare show of cross-border unity.

Nuclear-armed North Korea declared the South its principal enemy earlier this year and tensions between the two countries are at one of their highest points in years.

But after South Korea won bronze and North Korea silver in the mixed doubles behind China, South Korea's Lim Jong hoon took a group photo after the medal ceremony.

North Korea's Ri Jong Sik and Kim Kum Yong, the South's Shin Yubin and the victorious Chinese team Wang Chuqin and Sun Yingsha all beamed into Lim's phone, a South Korean-made Samsung.

"A selfie with both Koreas' national flags and a Samsung phone," said the widely read daily JongAng Ilbo.

It was the first time North Korea had been on an Olympic podium since 2016, as they did not send athletes to

SEE PAGE 7 COL 5

Nationwide drives on

281 more held over violence centring quota protests

STAR REPORT

Law enforcers arrested at least 281 more people in the capital and elsewhere in the country in 36 hours preceding 6:00pm yesterday amid the nationwide crackdown on alleged saboteurs over the recent violence.

Of them, 205 were held in 31 districts and the rest in the capital, according to police and court sources.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police produced 76 arrestees before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka during the same period. The court sent most of them to jail and placed some of the arrestees on remand.

With the latest arrests, at least 10,769 people, including students and leaders and activists of the BNP and Jamaat-Shibir, have been arrested in 673 cases filed in the capital and 51 districts over the last 14 days since July 18. One of those cases was lodged in Chattogram on Tuesday night.

Several thousand named and several hundred thousand unnamed individuals have been accused in those cases.

The cases were filed, mostly by police, with different police stations over violence, vandalism, arson, illegal gathering, rioting and assaulting law enforcers, said DMP sources.

The country witnessed violence after peaceful demonstrations of the quota reform protesters came under attack by Chhatra League men on July 15 on different university campuses.

Among those arrested in the 31 districts, 19 were held in Pabna, six in Madaripur, eight in Rangpur, three in Feni, 31 in Gazipur, two in Tangail, 18 in Rajshahi, five in Bogura, six in Gaibandha, 16 in Narayanganj, five in Khulna, seven in Mymensingh, two in Kishoreganj, four in Satkhira, three in Cox's Bazar, seven in Naogaon, six in Cumilla, three in Panchagarh, 17 in Chattogram, three in Chandpur, two in Magura, seven in Savar, two in Brahmanbaria, 11 in Noakhali, five in Laxmipur, and two in Barishal and one each was picked up in Thakurgaon, Moulvibazar, Joypurhat, Netrakona and Natore.

CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS, UNIVERSITIES

Academic calendars in total disarray

Most primary schools to open Aug 4

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and ARAFEAT RAHAMAN

The month-long disruption to university education and two-week long closure of schools have led to the cancellation of public and school exams, upsetting academic calendars and hampering the education of crores of students.

The government shut down all schools, colleges and universities on July 16. Activities at public universities, however, have been halted since July 1, when teachers went on work abstention to demand the reinstatement of the previous pension scheme in place of the Prottoy scheme.

Meanwhile, uncertainty hangs heavy on the academic lives of a large number of students as the reopening of secondary schools and universities are yet to be declared.

Yesterday, the primary and mass education ministry said primary schools across the country, apart from the 12 major city corporations -- Dhaka North, Dhaka South, Khulna, Chattogram, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Barishal, Cumilla, Sylhet, Narayanganj, Gazipur and Mymensingh -- along with Narsingdi district, will reopen on August 4.

Meanwhile, the situation at universities took a more volatile turn as the students demonstrating for quota reforms are yet to call off their movement, while agitating teachers continue their protest.

Many public university students, especially those from colleges under the National University, said they were already facing session jams and this prolonged closure will only make matters worse.

"We understand that we're all fighting for our rights, but at the same time we need to continue our studies ... It's the government's responsibility to stabilise the situation for the students as well as for the teachers."

a student of Comilla University

Prof Muhammad Alamgir, acting chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC), yesterday told The Daily Star that no decision has yet been taken regarding the reopening of universities.

Nizamul Hoque Bhuiyan, general secretary of the Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers Association, which spearheaded the teachers' protests, said, "We're protesting as this [the

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

QUOTA PROTESTS

Investigate allegations of rights violations

2 US senators, 2 UK MPs urge Bangladesh govt

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Two US senators and two UK MPs have called on the Bangladeshi authorities to urgently conduct an independent and impartial investigation into alleged human rights violations.

UK MP Rupa Huq stressed that Bangladesh's probe into the violence has an international element.

In a statement on Tuesday, US Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chair Ben Cardin and Senator Cory Booker also called for respecting the rights of the protesters and working in good faith to address their grievances.

They condemned Bangladeshi security forces for using force and violence against student protesters. "The security forces involved in these horrific acts include a paramilitary unit whose leaders have faced US sanctions over human rights abuses."

The government put the death toll in the violence at 150.

But according to The Daily Star's count, at least 163 people were killed.

The death toll from the violence could be much higher as this newspaper could not reach many hospitals, where dozens of critically injured patients were taken.

Also, many families reportedly collected the bodies of their loved ones from the scene, and this newspaper could not contact those families.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 5

GRAFT ALLEGATION

Matiur goes on early retirement amid probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government granted early retirement to former customs official Matiur Rahman, who was embroiled in allegations of corruption in June.

Over a month ago, the finance ministry transferred him to the Internal Resources Division (IRD) from the Customs, Excise & VAT Appellate Tribunal of which he was the president.

The government also removed Matiur from the position of director of state-run Sonali Bank PLC in June amid allegations over his illegal wealth.

Matiur applied for voluntary retirement on completion of his 25 years in service, said an IRD order yesterday.

The application was granted, and he will go on voluntary retirement without financial benefits on August 28.

Allegations of corruption surfaced after

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

Imran offers conditional talks with Pak military

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan has offered to hold "conditional negotiations" with the powerful military as he serves a year into



a jail term that he said he was given on trumped up charges designed to keep him out of power.

Khan did not specify what he wanted to discuss with the military, but in a post on his official X account yesterday said that one of the conditions for negotiations was that "clean and transparent" elections be held and that "bogus" cases against his supporters be dropped.

He said he had appointed Mahmood Khan Achakzai, a close political ally and a known critic of the military, to represent him in any talks. The military has previously ruled out talks with Khan.



Dhaka North City Corporation has recently recovered this land on the Ramchandrapur canal in Mohammadpur after evicting encroacher Sadeeq Agro, a farm that reared mostly cattle. The corporation put up a sign declaring that a playground and a park would be built here. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Female sharks make babies alone in Italy

AFP, Rome

Italian researchers have noted the first case of "virgin birth", or reproduction without fertilisation, in an endangered shark species, a scientific journal reported this week.



The findings published in Scientific Reports concern the first case of the phenomenon in the common smooth-hound shark, *Mustelus mustelus*, a species threatened by illegal fishing that inhabits the Mediterranean and other warm waters.

Researchers from the Experimental Zooprophyllactic Institute of Piedmont, Liguria and the Aosta Valley found that two female *M. mustelus* sharks under observation in captivity had exhibited parthenogenesis -- in which a female can reproduce asexually without the need of sperm to fertilise the egg -- each year since 2020.

The two 18-year-old sharks have been at the Cala Gonone Aquarium in Sardinia since 2010.