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## AUG 21 GRENADE ATTACK CASE

# Expert agency should probe it

### HC observes

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The High Court in the full text of its verdict in the August 21 grenade attack cases has observed that the cases should be referred to the home ministry for a fresh probe by a proper and expert investigation agency.

"It is a heinous tragic incident in the history of this country, where a lot of people, including Ivy Rahman, then Awami League leader, lost their lives. This killing needs to be investigated properly and independently in order to have a fair justice for the departed soul, which has totally been absent till date in this case," the HC bench of Justice AKM Asaduzzaman and Justice Syed Enayet Hossain said in the 79-page full text of the verdict released yesterday.

On December 1, the bench delivered its verdict clearing BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman, former state minister Lutfozzaman Babar and all the others convicts in two cases filed over the gruesome August 21, 2004, grenade attack.

The Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 of Dhaka delivered the verdicts in the two cases on October 10, 2018, sentencing 19 people, including Babar, to death. Tarique, now in London, and 18 others were handed life imprisonment while 11 others got prison sentences of different terms.

In the full text of the judgement released yesterday, the HC bench observed, "In view of the above factual aspect of this case, it can safely be said that the impugned conviction was based mainly on a mere presumption without having any legal or corroborative evidence."

A female greater painted-snipe, otherwise known as *Rostratula benghalensis*, spotted in Manikganj recently. The shorebird species is widely distributed across wetland habitats of Africa and southern Asia. They live solitarily or in pairs, but can sometimes also be found in large groups. The males and females are easily distinguishable from each other as the females are more boldly coloured and are bigger in size. The females are also polyandrous, meaning they can have more than one mate at a time, while the males are the ones in charge of incubating the eggs and caring for the young.

PHOTO: TIMU HOSSAIN

## Hamza cleared to play for Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The anxious wait and anticipation of football-loving people of Bangladesh is finally over.

Leicester City FC midfielder Hamza Choudhury has officially been acknowledged as eligible to play for the Bangladesh national team by world football's governing body, FIFA, yesterday.

The 27-year-old midfielder himself broke the news to his fans through a video message shared by the Bangladesh Football Federation.

"Hi everyone. It's Hamza here. So happy that everything's over the line. Can't wait to play for Bangladesh. Hopefully see you guys soon," Hamza said in the video.

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## Come up with viable roadmap for Rohingya repatriation

### Dhaka asks Naypyidaw

DIPLMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh yesterday asked Myanmar authorities for a viable roadmap to a safe and dignified repatriation of Rohingya people within a specific time.

"Bangladesh has every interest to see lasting peace, stability and democracy in Myanmar, and a conducive environment in Rakhine State for the Rohingya to have confidence to go back there in safety and dignity," Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain said at an informal ministerial consultation with Myanmar and its five neighbouring countries.

The meeting was held in Bangkok, said a foreign ministry statement.

He also offered Bangladesh's support for rebuilding the Rakhine State economy when the time is right.

Thai Foreign Minister Maris Sangiampongsa chaired the meeting attended by Myanmar Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister U Than Swe and delegations from India, China, Laos and Cambodia.

More than 80 percent of Rakhine State and the 271-km border with Bangladesh are controlled by the armed group Arakan Army.

Since July this year, some 60,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh joining the already a million Rohingyas, most

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## FIRST SECURITY ISLAMI BANK

# Almost 90pc of Tk 2,254cr loan to Sikder Group sours

### Show bank records till October this year

MD MEHEDI HASAN

As much as 89.3 percent of the credit extended by First Security Islami Bank, when controlled by the major Awami League beneficiary S Alam Group, to AL-affiliated Sikder Group by violating banking rules and regulations has become defaulted.

The bank provided the loan facility to the business group without any review of the loan proposals, verification of the client's repayment capacity, risk analysis and evaluation of the client's mortgaged properties or collateral -- all major violations of banking rules and regulation, documents show.

The loans were disbursed by the Senanibash, Dilkusha, Banani, Dhanmondi and Kawran Bazar branches of the Shariah-based lender between 2009 and January this year.

The bank disbursed Tk 1,025.47 crore as funded loans and Tk 167.47 crore as non-funded loans (bank guarantee)

against collateral valued at Tk 149.15 crore collateral and Tk 8.69 crore cash.

In the 15 years, FSIB recovered Tk 573.86 crore from the borrower during the 15 years, leaving the total liabilities of the business group at Tk 2,254 crore including interest or profit, documents showed. Of the sum, Tk 2,013 crore has defaulted.

### CREDIT PROVIDED WITHOUT

- Any review of loan proposals
- Verification of repayment capacity
- Risk analysis
- Evaluation of mortgaged collateral

companies of the Sikder Group against Tk 83.19 crore collateral. The outstanding amount is Tk 1,099.63 crore.

Besides, the branch issued five bank guarantees worth Tk 13.67 crore to two companies of Sikder Group against only Tk 1 crore as margin. No other collateral was taken against the non-funded loan facility.

The Kawran Bazar branch disbursed

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## Murder case filed over Ijtema ground clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A murder case was filed yesterday over the clash between two factions of Tablighi Jamaat at Biswa Ijtema ground in Tongi

SM Alam Hossain, a resident of Kishoreganj and follower of Kakrail Mosque-based Tablighi leader Maulana Zubair Ahmed, filed the case with Tongi West Police Station in the afternoon, said Habib Iskandar officer-in-charge of the police station.

Alam named 29 followers of Delhi-based Tablighi leader Maulana Saad Kandhalvi and hundreds of unidentified others as accused in the case, the OC told The Daily Star last night.

In the case statement, the complainant said the accused tried to tarnish the image of Islam, embarrass the government and obstruct the first phase of Ijtema scheduled to be held by the followers of Zubair from January 31 to February 2.

Defying decisions taken in meetings with home ministry officials on November 4 and 7, Saad's followers are trying to gather their fellows at the Ijtema ground for Jor Ijtema, a preparatory event, from December 20 to 24, Alam said in the case statement.

Alam mentioned in the complaint that provocative statements of the accused led to attacks on followers of Zubair who were sleeping or guarding the ground around 3:00am on December 18.

At least four people were killed

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## Five killed as truck crushes autorickshaw

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Five people, including three of a family, were killed and two others injured in a road traffic accident at Pekua upazila in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

The accident occurred when a CNG-run three-wheeler carrying the victims collided head-on with a dumper truck around 7:30am in the Dhaniakata area on ABC regional road, said Mohammad Sirajul Mostafa, officer-in-charge of Pekua Police Station.

The deceased included Firoz Ahmad, 49, of Madhya Madarsha area of Chattogram's Hathazari upazila; his wife Shaheen Aktar, 29; and their six-month-old child Jahedul Islam.

The others were Monirul Mannan, 22, driver of the three-wheeler and resident of Dhaniyakata area; and another passenger Abdur Rahman, 32, of Sonali Bazar area of the upazila's Ujantia union.

## Graft allegations against Tulip make headlines in UK

AGENCIES

Several news outlets in the UK yesterday reported on the corruption charges brought against UK Treasury's Economic Secretary Tulip Siddiq by Bangladesh's Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

The ACC accused her and family members of embezzling billions as part of a deal for a nuclear power plant in Bangladesh -- Rooppur Power Plant Project.

Tulip Siddiq, 42, who is responsible for tackling corruption in UK financial markets, is alleged to have brokered a deal with Russia in 2013 that overinflated the price of a new nuclear power plant in Bangladesh.

The allegation is part of a wider investigation by the ACC into Siddiq's aunt, Sheikh Hasina, who was deposed as prime minister of Bangladesh in August.

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## US welcomes interim govt's election plan

DIPLMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The US has welcomed the interim government's announcement of holding the national election between late 2025 and mid-2026, and said it will monitor the timing.

"We welcome the steps that have been taken by this interim government of Bangladesh to prepare for elections that ultimately will allow the Bangladeshi people to choose their own government representatives," US State Department Spokesperson Vedant Patel told a press briefing in Washington DC on Wednesday.

Last Monday, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus announced the possible time of the national election.

Patelsaid the US will "continue to monitor the timing" and encourage the respect for the rule of law over the course of the whole election process,

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## ACCREDITATION CARD

### PID to mull reinstating cancelled ones

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Press Information Department (PID) will reconsider cancelled accreditation cards of journalists in applicable cases.

The PID issued a statement in this regard yesterday after a number of accreditation cards had been cancelled recently.

The statement said that the reasons for card cancellation included long delays in renewing the cards, more cards than the quota for an institution, yellow journalism, and being used as a political tool of the previous government for personal gains.

It said journalists also lost accreditation for being accused in criminal cases, being arrested and imprisoned for various reasons, receiving cards on political considerations by unprofessional individuals

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A Palestinian girl carries water containers on a broken wheelchair in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday, as Palestinians wait to collect water following a Human Rights Watch report that says Israel's deprivation of water in Gaza is an act of genocide. PHOTO: REUTERS