

# No police action yet to rescue abducted trader

OUR CORRESPONDENT *Kushtia*

Police are yet to take any action to rescue a businessman of Chuadanga who was abducted on April 24.

Police do not know anything about the incident as nobody filed any case in this connection, said Sharmin Akther, duty officer of Chuadanga Sadar police station yesterday.

A gang of outlaws stormed into the house of Chitta Ranjan Das, 36, a trader of Zamzami Bazar, at about 10:00pm on Monday and took him to a undisclosed place at gunpoint, his

family members said.

Two hours after the abduction, the kidnappers sent a message to his family demanding a ransom of Tk one lakh for the release of the trader.

"But we could not afford to pay such a large amount," said a family member.

The abductors are now trying to negotiate with his family about the ransom, sources said.

The victim's family did not seek intervention of the police as the abductors have threatened dire consequence if any case is filed.

# US visa seekers have to wait 4 weeks for interview

The United States embassy yesterday announced that an applicant for non-immigrant visa would have to wait nearly four weeks for the visa interview due to recent procedural upgrades.

The procedural upgrades are intended to better secure visas and protect the travelling people, says an embassy press release.

This wait for an interview does not include any additional time that may be required for security clearance procedures.

The security clearance process may require another two months after

the interview until the final issuance of a visa.

Consul General Richard J Adams said, "While the wait for an appointment is slightly longer than before we remain committed to making the application for a visa as easy and secure as possible. Therefore, we strongly encourage those who wish to travel to the US to keep in mind the length of the wait for the interview and apply at least three months in advance of anticipated travel."

# Photography exhibition to commemorate cyclone victims

CU CORRESPONDENT

A daylong solo photography exhibition titled 'some memories' by Shishir Barua, a photojournalist, was held at the Chittagong Press Club (CPC) yesterday to commemorate the deaths of thousands of

people in a devastating cyclone that lashed the country on April 29, 1991.

A total of 60 photos were on display.

Chairman of Banani Group Prof Nurul Amin Chowdhury formally inaugurated the exhibition as chief guest.

He said the photos take us back to a dreadful night of 13 years ago when around one lakh people and 30 thousand domestic animals were killed in the cyclone.

Meanwhile, a publication ceremony of a book titled 'We are prepared to face cyclone' was held at the local engineers' institute yesterday to mark the occasion.

Noted physicist Prof Dr Jamal Nazrul Islam attended the meeting as chief guest.

# Death anniversary of Agha Yusuf today

Today is the first death anniversary of AM Agha Yusuf, a renowned industrialist, philanthropist and a social worker, says a press release.

He was the founder-chairman of Erba Limited.

A milad and doa mahfil will be held at his business office at National Scout Bhaban, 70/1 Purana Paltan Line, Kakrail, after Asr prayers and at his village home at Barkhada, Kushtia, after Juma prayers.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers have been requested to attend the milad.

# Obituary

Prof. Nurun Nahar of Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College died of kidney ailments yesterday, says a press release.

A life member of Bangladesh Society of Medical Microbiologists, Prof. Nurun Nahar is survived by one son and one daughter.

**Anwara Islam**

Al-haj Anwara Islam, wife of Al-haj AKM Saykatul Islam of Pabna, died in a road accident on Wednesday, says a press release.

She is survived by her husband, four sons and four daughters.

Her quikhwani will be held at Overseas Centre, Road # 113/A, House # 19-20, Gulshan after Asr prayers on May 3.



PHOTO: STAR

Firefighters spray water on the wreckage of a BRTC double-decker bus at Mahakhali in the city after the pickets set fire to it during the hartal hours yesterday.

## ATTEMPTED MURDER CASE

# 2 get 14 years RI in Manikganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Manikganj*

A court here yesterday sentenced two persons to 14 years rigorous imprisonment (RI) and fined Tk 10,000 each, in default, to suffer one year more RI in an attempted murder case.

The convicts are Kanai Moni Das, son of Anil Chandra Moni Das of Uttar Kholli village under Satoria upazila in Manikganj district and Sibul Moni Das, son of Pares Moni Das of Kantalia village under

Mirzapur upazila in Tangail district.

Additional District Magistrate Kazi Meraz Hossain pronounced the verdict in absentia of the convicts.

The victim Amjad Hossain, son of Nurul Haq of Uttar Kholli under Satoria upazila was stabbed by the convicts at about 10:15pm of October 6, 2002 after they called him out of his house.

Abdul Gafur, uncle of Amjad, filed a case against the convicts with Satoria Police Station on October 7, 2002.

## FIRE AT PATHARGHATA

# Property worth Tk 1crore damaged, 20 injured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Barisal*

More than 50 commercial and residential units were gutted in a devastating fire at Patharghata Bandar of Barguna district in the early hours of yesterday.

Twenty people were injured and property worth about one crore taka were damaged in the fire caused by an electrical short circuit at a seed store at about 5:15am.

Ten of the serious injured were admitted to local hospital. Later one of them Suhad, 23, was shifted to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

As Patharghata has no fire service station, local people and the administration had to fight to extinguish the fire.

Barguna district and police officials have visited the spot.

## BANGLADESH FESTIVAL IN SYDNEY

# Cultural team lauded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cultural affairs ministry has accorded a reception to the cultural delegation for its outstanding performance at the Bangladesh Festival 2004 in Sydney enhancing the image of the country.

The 20-member delegation, led by the member of the parliamentary standing committee on the Ministry of Cultural Affairs Rashiduzzaman Millat MP, participated in the festival at Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre from April 6-8.

Presided over by Director General of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy Ahmed Nazir, the reception programme on Tuesday night was addressed by State Minister for Cultural Affairs Begum Selima Rahman, Rashiduzzaman Millat MP, Cultural Affairs Secretary Modabbir Hossain Chowdhury and deputy team leader Sherin Sultana Sherin.

Appreciating the performance of the delegation, the state minister said the team had succeeded in familiarising the culture and heritage of Bangladesh to the people of Australia through their programmes.

"Our cultural team has successfully projected the Bangladesh as a culturally developed nation and placed the country in a dignified position abroad," she said.

Later, Selima Rahman distributed certificates among the participants.

The reception was followed by a musical soiree participated by noted singers Abida Sultana, Rafiqul Alam, Baby Naznin and young singer Luna Khandakar.

Team leader Rashiduzzaman Millat MP, Cultural Secretary Modabbir Hossain Chowdhury and deputy team leader Sherin Sultana

Sherin also rendered songs at the reception.

Besides, dancers presented dance.

Other members of the cultural delegation were Programme Director of Shilpakala Academy and Manager of the team Zinat Barkatullah, journalist Rezaul Karim, announcer Dr Fowaz Hussain Shuvo, singer Farida Parveen, dancers Shafiqur Rahman, Farhana Chowdhury, Irin Parvin, Shahrima Bari Sinthy, Shahadat Hossain and Masudul Amin Rintu, musicians Gazi Abdul Hakim, Swapan Kumar Nag, ASM Reza, Mirza Khairul Hossain Monu and Abdul Mannan.

## NDA to return to power: Advani

PTI, *Alwar*

Deputy Prime Minister L K Advani yesterday expressed confidence that the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) at the Centre would return to power and that Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee will occupy the top post after the general elections.

"Whatever exit polls say it is certain that the NDA would regain power and President APJ Kalam would be inviting Vajpayee to form the next Government," he said.

"People will bring back NDA Government into power because they do not want political instability which is not good for the country," Advani said while addressing an election rally in support of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate Chand Nath.

# Bush rating at all-time low: Poll

REUTERS, *New York*

President Bush's approval rating is at an all-time low and fewer than half of Americans now believe invading Iraq was the right thing to do, according to a CBS/New York Times poll released Wednesday.

The poll found that if the presidential election due in November was held today, 46 percent of Americans would vote for Democrat John Kerry and 44 percent would vote for Bush -- if independent Ralph Nader stayed out of the race.

The poll, with a sampling error of 3 percentage points, was conducted among 1,042 adults nationwide from Friday to Tuesday during a spate of fierce fighting in Iraq. More than 115 US soldiers have been killed in combat this month.

"Just 32 percent, the lowest number ever, say Iraq was a threat

that required immediate military action a year ago," the poll reported.

"Less than half, 47 percent, now say the United States did the right thing taking military action in Iraq, the lowest support recorded in CBS News/New York Times polls since the war began."

The poll said the Iraq war appeared to have hurt assessments of Bush -- his overall approval rating (46 percent), his rating on handling Iraq (41 percent) and his rating on handling foreign policy (40 percent) "are at the lowest points ever in this administration."

"His approval rating has dropped five points from early March, before the start of intense new fighting in Iraq. Immediately after the fall of Baghdad a year ago, 67 percent of Americans approved of the job Bush was doing as president," the poll said.

In March last year, at the time of the invasion, nearly seven in 10 Americans thought it was the right thing to do.

The poll said 56 percent of Americans thought Bush was "mostly telling the truth but still hiding something" when he spoke to them about Iraq.

It said 61 percent of respondents now believed the administration did not try hard enough to reach a diplomatic solution before going to war in Iraq -- a reversal of the public's belief last year during the war.

The poll said six in 10 Americans approved of Bush's handling of the threat of terrorism and 39 percent approved of his handling of the economy.

It said the economy and jobs were at the top of the list of issues voters wanted to hear the candidates discuss ahead of the Nov. 2 election.

# WEATHER

## T O D A Y

### No change in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at a few places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions till 6pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 35.6 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rangamati and the lowest 19.8 degrees at Dinajpur.

**The sun sets in the capital at 6:27pm today and rises at 5:24am tomorrow.**

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	32.5	25.2	67	48
Chittagong	33.5	25.2	69	62
Rajshahi	30.3	22.5	67	73
Khulna	34.5	25.8	74	88
Barisal	32.8	24.4	73	90
Sylhet	28.7	24.0	67	75
Cox's Bazar	34.0	25.2	70	58



PHOTO: STAR

Leaders of various professional organisations stage a demonstration on the Supreme Court premises yesterday to protest mass arrests and repression on opposition activists.