

Kidnapped student rescued, 6 held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detective Branch (DB) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police yesterday rescued a kidnapped student from a dormitory of Sher-e-Bangla Agriculture University and arrested six people in this connection on Friday night at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city.

The victim was identified as Imtiaz Sarkar Mamun, 21, who passed HSC last year. Mamun was kidnapped from Section No 6 of Block B at Pallabi at gunpoint allegedly by the arrestees on Thursday morning.

The criminals made a phone call to Mamun's father, Abu Bakar Sarkar, and asked to pay Tk 50,000 as ransom by 10:00pm on Friday near the Bangladesh China Friendship Conference Centre.

They also threatened to kill Mamun if the ransom is not paid in time. After getting the phone call, Mamun's father complained it to the DMP crime information department.

According to police advice, Bakar went to the spot with the money in the specified time. Police arrested the criminals as Mamun's father was handing over the money to them.

Later, police rescued Mamun from a room of a dormitory of Sher-e-Bangla Agriculture University according to the confessional statement of the arrestees.



Rokia Afzal Rahman, former adviser to the caretaker government, hands over the Shahdat Chowdhury award to artist Emdad Hossain, left, while models, right, display dresses at the Banglalink-Shaptahik 2006 Eid Fashion Competition 2006 at the Spectra Convention Centre at Gulshan in the city yesterday.



PHOTO STAR

\$15 b British aid to promote edn worldwide

Bangladesh will receive a substantial amount from a \$15 billion British aid package designed to promote education around the world over the next 10 years, visiting Chief Secretary to the Treasury Stephen Timms MP announced yesterday, says a press release.

Under the plan, the UK government will enter into a 10-year agreement with Bangladesh to contribute to the further expansion and development of the country's primary education.

The United Kingdom is committed to supporting Bangladesh to make sure that every boy and every girl completes his or her primary education over the period, Timms said.

The announcement came at a function at Mirpur Bangla High School in the city, organised to mark the visit of the British cabinet minister.

We committed \$15 billion from the British government to help with the provision of providing primary education across the world over the next 10 years, he said, adding that some of the money will be flowing to Bangladesh for the improvement of its primary education.

The UK's aid programme will also help Bangladesh to focus on quality education and teachers' training, he told the function.

He hoped that the provision of providing free meals to schools would make a difference to the children and help reduce drop-out rates that hover at 35 per cent.

Timms is now in the city on a three-day official tour intended to cement further the existing bilateral relations between Bangladesh and the United Kingdom.

One way of supporting the development of education systems is by establishing a linkage between a school in the United Kingdom and a school in Bangladesh, said Timms.

The British Global Gateway programme, launched in January this year, is designed to support these links by allowing teachers and students to exchange information and ideas to learn from each other about different cultures, to share problems and develop solutions, he mentioned.

He said his visit reflects the 'deep' and 'longstanding' relations between Bangladesh and the UK.

We'll be providing extra-funding with the provision of primary education in Bangladesh in accordance with that plan, he added.

The UK has already pledged 100 million pounds in support of this plan and is now ready to expand its already 'strong partnership' with Bangladesh.

The country's primary education development project, which runs until 2009, has already built 30,000 classrooms and recruited 14,000 teachers.

Education Minister Dr Osman Faruk, British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury, Country Representative of the DFID David Wood and Senior Education Adviser of DFID Barbara Payne were present at the function.

Osman Faruk underscored the need for ensuring quality education and bridging the gap of quality between rural and urban schools.

In his address, the British High Commissioner said the United Kingdom handed out US\$250 million in development aid for Bangladesh and the amount would be doubled in the coming years.

Earlier, the British cabinet minister visited Mukul Fozil Primary School at Mirpur.

The Department for International Development (DFID), the British government's official development agency, contributed 32 million pounds to the Brac.

Need for common strategy to fight terrorism in S Asia underscored

Speakers at a book launching ceremony in the city yesterday underscored the need for a common strategy and extradition treaty among the countries in South Asian region to combat terrorism.

They said though the region is badly affected by terrorist activities, the fighting against terrorism does not get ground due to lack of common strategy and extradition treaty between the countries.

Edited by Prof Imtiaz Ahmed of Dhaka University, the book titled 'Understanding Terrorism in South Asia Beyond Statist Discourses' contains articles by strategic experts from India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

The launching ceremony was organised by The Daily Star at the Bangladesh Institute of International Strategic Studies (BISS).

Editor and Publisher of The Daily

Star Mahfuz Anam moderated the function.

"It is very important for South Asia to develop a strategy for counter-terrorism in the region," said Faruq Sobhan, former foreign secretary.

He termed the publication of the book very timely and underscored the need for finding out the root causes of terrorism.

Sobhan laid emphasis on regular interaction and roundtable for exchanging views among the Saarc countries for evolving the common strategy.

"Malgovernance in a state, marginalisation of communities, and national deprivation have contributed directly to the expansion and consolidation of non-state terrorism," said Muhamamd Zamir, former ambassador.

Globalisation has also provided fresh impetus to terrorism in terms of international network, he added.

Zamir said though attempts were

made several times, a common South Asian extradition treaty has not yet been agreed upon.

"The current tendency to term liberation wars against occupation and repression terrorism is a gross misunderstanding of the history," said Dr M Enamul Hoque, adding liberation of France from Nazi Germany cannot be called an act of terror.

Major General (Retd) Amin Ahmed Chowdhury said sending of troops to Chittagong Hill Tracts was a wrong decision as it was responsible for forcing the tribal people to resort to insurgency against the government.

Mutual suspicion and distrust have complicated and frustrated the efforts to combat terrorism in South Asia, said Mufleh R Osmany, director general of BISS, in a written comments on the book.

He could not attend the function because of illness.

Explaining the recent trends in

Islamic terrorism, Imtiaz Ahmed pointed out that almost all the Islamic countries spoke against al Qaeda-led terrorism.

He underscored the need for in-depth reporting on the root causes of terrorism in the print media.

The speakers pointed out that the terrorism in the area was often a direct outcome of state actions.

They also blamed the West for terrorist activities in the Middle East and other regions.

Australian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Douglas Foskett, former inspector general of police Nurul Huda, journalist Zaglul Ahmed Chowdhury, Brigadier (Retd) Shakhawat Hossain and Shahedul Anam Khan also spoke on occasion.

The book was published by Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Colombo.

Life became difficult on many counts

FROM PAGE 1

The eighth parliament constituted through the October 1, 2001 election has not been as effective as it should have been, failing to advance towards its objectives including ensuring executive accountability and transparency.

The allegations that the BNP and its allies had levelled against the AL government in the run-up to the last general elections ironically have now boomeranged on them.

The government has clearly shown its lack of interest to separate the judiciary from the executive, as promised in its electoral manifesto, by repeatedly seeking time-extensions from the Supreme Court.

Appointment of judges to the High Court during the alliance government has been bitterly criticised for alleged politicisation and nepotism in the process.

The government has not yet initiated any move to form a National Human Rights Commission although the country has witnessed an alarming rise in human rights violation, especially in the hands of law enforcers, since last year. Extra-judicial killings in the form of "crossfire" have surpassed all records.

The government ordered for mass arrest and detention of people in an apparent bid to foil the opposition's movement in the earlier years.

The ruling BNP's pledge to establish and uphold the rule of law actually proved to be a gimmick when the government last January granted presidential clemency to a BNP man sentenced to death in a double murder case over 22 years ago.

There is also little possibility for the state-run radio and television to have full autonomy in line with the government's electoral pledges as its tenure expires on October 27. Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television have as usual been used to serve the purposes of the ruling parties.

Politicisation in the public administration and Election Commission is also getting worse with the next parliamentary election nearing. The government has awarded promotion to a significant number of public servants loyal to the ruling parties and recruited favoured candidates in different important posts.

PRICE HIKE AND POWER CRISIS

The ever-soaring cost of living, resulting from tremendous price hike of essentials and rise in transport fares, coupled with unemployment has brought unremitting misery to the lives of commoners.

The government has failed to

initiate proper measures against the syndicates controlling the price of essentials.

Power outages have made things even worse. Although the government claims to have taken a lot of measures to solve the power crisis and pledged to launch several new power plants, it has actually failed to ensure enough production of electricity.

In fact, the crisis in power generation during the present government's rule is more acute than during the previous government.

Amid widespread public protest against the severe power crisis, the government withdrew state minister for power Iqbal Hassan Mahmood on May 21 giving the office to Anwarul Kabir Talukder.

But Talukder was also removed from the post on Friday night just hours into his announcement for resignation.

While announcing his decision to resign, Talukder apologised to the people for his failure to meet the demand for electricity.

The inaction and wrong actions of the four-party alliance government have now led the country towards daily load-shedding of nearly 2,000 megawatts (MW). The country's daily demand for power is 5,200MW while it can generate only 3,000-3,500MW.

Meanwhile, the government has already started making fresh promise to initiate necessary measures to generate sufficient power if voted to power again.

UNBRIDLED CORRUPTION

The government in 2004 formed the Anti-Corruption Commission in line with its electoral pledges but did everything not to let the commission work independently in combating corruption.

In the absence of effective measures to check graft, the country seems to have made its own number one position in the corruption index of the Transparency International.

The parliament, which is commissioned to ensure government accountability, is unable to play its role due to the ruling alliance's indifference.

The House does not discuss the burning issues and the parliamentary standing committees have failed to monitor corruption and irregularities in government expenditure because of unwarranted pressure and interference from the government high-ups.

The parliamentary standing committees on various ministries formed several dozen sub-committees in the last three years to probe alleged corruption and irregularities of the ministries, but

they could not proceed due to non-cooperation of the ministers concerned and pressures from the ruling alliance bigwigs.

The alleged involvement of an alternative powerhouse in corruption and irregularities in the government expenditure has been a much-talked-about issue during the present government's term.

SLIDE IN LAW AND ORDER, RISE OF MILITANTS

None of the government's efforts—first, the Operation Clean Heart, a drive using the armed forces, and then the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) comprising members of the armed forces—could successfully cope with the existing lawlessness.

Extra-judicial killings by law enforcers, particularly the Rab, have drawn severe criticism both at home and abroad for violation of human rights.

Criminal activities including those of militant outfits soared to unprecedented levels in 2004 when Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) unleashed a reign of terror in different parts of the country, particularly the northwestern districts.

There are allegations that the outfits were patronised by some ministers and ruling party lawmakers.

Taking advantage of the government ignorance about the activities of the banned outfit, the JMB staged countrywide near simultaneous bomb blasts on August 17, 2005.

The masterminds behind the assassination attempt on Leader of the Opposition and AL chief Sheikh Hasina have not been brought to book although two years have passed since the attacks that left 23 people killed and scores of others injured.

Investigators are still in the dark about the identity of those responsible for the bomb attack on UK High Commissioner to Bangladesh Anwar Choudhury and the killing of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria.

Besides, the government is yet to unravel the mystery of the arms hauls in Chittagong and Bogra in 2004.



Former Ambassador Muhammad Zamir speaks at the launching ceremony of a book titled 'Understanding Terrorism in South Asia Beyond Statist Discourses' at the BISS auditorium in the city yesterday. The Daily Star organised the ceremony.

Mother, daughter gangraped in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A widow mother and teenage daughter of a poor minority family were gangraped in Barisal on Friday night.

The victims were admitted to local health complex in critical condition after being recovered by the local people.

Police and victims' family sources said the widow, 40, and her daughter, 13 (a student of class six) returned home after visiting the Durga Puja mandaps at about 11:00pm and went into sleep in their shanty at Alamdi village under Uzirpur upazila in the district.

About an hour later, Russel Howladar, son of Hossain Howladar of West Satia and Eshaque Bali, son of Asmat Bali of Alamdi, entered the shanty by breaking the door open.

They made the mother and daughter hostage at gunpoint and started raping the mother in front of her daughter.

When the daughter tried to run away, the other unidentified associates of Russel and Eshaque waiting outside the shanty caught her and gangraped after taking her to a nearby bush.

The locals recovered the daughter from the bush in unconscious condition in the early morning and rushed both the victims to upazila health complex.

Brother-in-law of the widow lodged a case under prevention of women and children repression act, but none was arrested so far.

The incident has created panic among the members of the minority community.

Rashed Khan Menon, president of the Workers' Party, visited the victims at the health complex and gave assistances for their treatment.

He also condemned the incident and demanded immediate arrest of the rapists.

Menon said under the alliance government no body is safe even inside their houses.

The alleged miscreants are influential persons who are blessed by the powerful quarters of the ruling party, it is learnt.

Medical board to review President's health today

BSS, Dhaka

The medical board constituted to treat president Iajuddin Ahmed is to meet today at Bangabhaban to review the latest health condition, a brief statement from Bangabhaban said yesterday.

Robbery at Mohakhali

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Armed robbers looted cash, gold ornaments and other valuables worth around Tk 2.5 lakh from a house at Mohakhali Wireless Gate in the city during Tarabi prayers last night.

A gang of two entered the house of one Abdus Salam at around 8:00pm when male members of his family were out of the residence to say Tarabi prayers. Brandishing a bomb, the robbers said they would explode it if anyone shouts.

Later they confined all to a room and looted Tk 20,000 in cash, a mobile set, 11 tolas of gold and 1,000 Saudi riyals.

Schoolboy killed in road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

A schoolboy died in a road accident at Koddarmoh area on the Dhaka-Bogra highway in Sirajganj district yesterday noon.

The victim, identified as Ramzan Ali, 10, died on the spot when a speeding truck ran over him.

WEATHER TODAY

Rise in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Sylhet, Chittagong, Khulna and Barisal divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy falls are also expected at places during the period, Met Office said, predicting that day temperature may rise slightly over the country.

Highest temperature 34.8 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 24.3 degree Celsius at Comilla.

The sun sets in the capital at 5.46pm today and rises at 5:50am 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	32.6	25.5	79	83
Chittagong	32.6	24.8	90	76
Rajshahi	34.8	24.6	91	83
Khulna	33.0	25.5	81	92
Barisal	32.0	26.4	84	83
Sylhet	32.1	25.2	91	76
Cox's Bazar	32.0	25.5	88	83

DHAKA TODAY

Memorial meeting

Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) will hold a memorial meeting on journalist Sunil Banarjee. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 11:00am.

Anniversary

Habibs@Persona will celebrate its 2nd anniversary. Venue: Hotel Summer Palace, Baridhara. Time: 4:30pm.

Inauguration

University of Liberal Arts (ULAB) will inaugurate its Dhanmondi campus. Venue: Salmajid Road, Dhanmondi. Time: 4:30pm.

Memorial meeting

Bangladesh Awami League will hold a memorial meeting commemorating the 22nd death anniversary of Shaheed Moyezuddin. Venue: Institution of Diploma Engineers auditorium. Time: 3:00pm.



Bangabandhu Lehak Parishad forms a human chain at Shahbagh in the city yesterday protesting telecast of a programme undermining the contributions of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Sanitation month begins today

Sanitation in vehicles still a problem

BSS, Dhaka

Information Minister M Shamsul Islam yesterday said sanitation in trains, launches and low-lying areas still remains a problem despite massive success in coverage of the facility across the country.

"It is a very difficult task to ensure sanitation in trains, steamers and low-lying areas, but we will have to bring those under the facility for achieving 100 per cent sanitation," he said.

He, however, underscored the need for continued media campaign to achieve 100 per cent success in sanitation sector by 2010 to achieve millennium development goals (MDGs).

The minister was addressing a media workshop and press conference, jointly organised by Jatiya Sanitation Task Force Media Committee, LGRD and Cooperatives Ministry, Bangladesh Forum for Environment Journalists (FEJB) and NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation with the support of Unicef at Jatiya Press Club here.

The programme was organised ahead of the observation of sanitation month beginning today.

Presided over by Local Government Division Secretary SM Jahurul Islam, the workshop was addressed by Jatiya Press Club President Reaz Uddin Ahmed, Executive Director of NGO Forum SMA Rashid and Unicef Representative Shirin Hossain.

Prof Dr M Mujibur Rahman gave the salient features of sanitation of the country.