

CNG FILLING STATIONS

# Robberies create panic among owners, staffs

MUKHLESUR RAHMAN

The recent spate of robberies by armed muggers at different CNG filling stations in and around the city has made running the business risky and created panic among employees of the stations.

In a span of 12 days, gunmen snatched around Tk 17 lakh from three filling stations, leaving two employees bullet injured.

Armed criminals snatched Tk 6.18 lakh from Shahjahan Filling Station at Paribagh on March 16, leaving its cashier bullet hit, another gang of gunmen snatched around Tk eight lakh from SS Filling Station at Gabtoli on March 8, leaving an employee injured, while Tk three lakh was looted from Somar CNG and Conversion at Gazipur on March 4.

Joint Secretary of Bangladesh CNG Filling Station Owners' Association Zakir Hossain Nayan told The Daily Star that following the snatches, the victims filed cases with concerned police stations, but police are yet to recover the looted money.

Around two-thirds of the amount they earn by selling compressed natural gas (CNG) goes to the government. In this sense, the government has turned a blind eye to the matter, leaving the station owners and employees at stake, he added.

Tanvir Rahman, managing director of SS Filling Station, said armed muggers looted around Tk eight lakh, leaving its assistant accountants officer Mehedi Hasan bullet hit at his waist, adding that law enforcers are yet to recover the money or arrest any of the criminals.

He further said that it seems very tough for the employees at the station to discharge their duties at night, as they are panic-stricken.

Sources said though they feel it risky in operating the CNG stations at night, they cannot close them as it requires prior permission of the concerned authorities to close any station.

Zakir said employees of Shahjahan Filling Station at Paribagh on March 15 caught a snatcher, while the armed snatchers were escaping after snatching over Tk six lakh from the cash counter, leaving its manager bullet hit.

He alleged that though one of the armed snatchers was caught red-handed and handed him over to Shahjahan police, they could not dismantle the network of the organised armed gangs of snatchers. DMP Commissioner AKM

Shahidul Huq told The Daily Star that it is not possible to give force to the filling stations now, but police are making regular patrols in the DMP areas which will cover the filling stations.

There might have organised gangs of armed snatchers behind the robberies at different CNG filling stations. Police are trying to detect the network to contain the robberies, he added.

The commissioner further said that as a snatcher was caught red-handed at a filling station at Paribagh, law enforcers would be able to find out the network and root it out very soon.

## New student immigration system in UK

Points-based system aims to simplify application process

UNB, Dhaka

International students looking to study in the United Kingdom (UK) will be able to apply for their visa through Tier 4 of the new streamlined Points Based System from yesterday.

The global system is fairer for applicants because it uses transparent and objective criteria. Under the new system, international students need to pass a points-based assessment and score 40, said a press release.

They will need 30 points to prove that they have been accepted onto a course run by an educational institution which is a UK Border Agency (UKBA) licensed Tier 4 sponsor, and 10 points to prove that they have the means to support themselves.

They will also supply their biometric details at their local visa application centre.

If granted a visa, the new Tier 4 regulations allow international students to undertake part-time work of up to 20 hours per week during term time, full time work during the holidays and undertake any course related work placements.

Stuart Percival, Head of Immigration Services at the British High Commission in Dhaka said, "The UK has a lot to offer international students. Now they see whether they are eligible for a visa before they even apply-making the system much clearer and easier to understand. The aim is to make the application process more transparent and straightforward."

For the first time, all independent fee-paying schools, colleges and universities that want to accept international students to study with them now need a licence to do so.

The system will help protect students from exploitation by bogus colleges, something which will be welcome news to many Bangladeshi students, who can now be sure the language school, college or university they intend to study at is an approved educational institution.

So far over a thousand UK institutions have signed up to sponsor international students.

## GC Dev's death anniversary observed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gobinda Dev Darshan (Philosophy) Research Centre of Dhaka University (DU) organised a discussion marking the 38th death anniversary of Prof Gobinda Chandra Dev popularly known as GC Dev at RC Majumder auditorium of the university yesterday, says a press release.

GC Dev, a teacher of philosophy department of the university, was brutally killed by the Pakistani forces on the night of March 25, 1971 on his campus residence.

DU Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Harun-or-Rashid attended the programme as the chief guest. Prof Aminul Islam, Prof Dr Abdul Matin, Prof Hosne Ara Alam, Prof Kazi Nurul Islam, and Prof Dr Prudip Kumar Roy spoke at the programme.



Students of Dhaka Medical College leave their dormitories yesterday after the authorities ask them to vacate the hostels following a factional clash of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) on the college campus. (Story on Page 1)

## Shaheed Minar demolished in Pirojpur

A CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Miscreants in the dark of the night demolished the Shaheed Minar at Baidhary Secondary School under Gutikathi union of Swarupkathi, Pirojpur.

Police have so far arrested Abdul Salam, the school night guard, for interrogation following filing of a case with the Swarupkathi Police Station.

The School Headmaster Md Nurul Islam told The Daily Star that he saw the Shaheed Minar in one piece last on March 28. The next day as the school resumed he found two of the monument's pillars grounded.

The miscreants might have demolished the structure at night, Nurul Islam said adding that he had absolutely no idea on their intentions.

Nurul Islam immediately informed the upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) about the incident. On the UNO's suggestion a case was filed against unnamed suspects on March 30.

Officer-in-charge (OC) Md Shahjahan Khan of Swarupkathi Police Station said the case had been filed under section 447/427 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

SI Mizamur Rahman is investigating the case.

## Two bodies recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered two bodies at Dakkhinkhan on the outskirts of the city yesterday.

Sub-Inspector Mohammad Tota Mia of Dakkhinkhan Police Station told The Daily Star that on information they recovered the body of Liton Ahmed Litu, 30, hanging from a mango tree at Sayedabad village of the area at around 9:15am.

Quoting locals, he added Liton, who hailed from Gaibandha, was a rickshaw van puller. Sometimes he used to sell coconuts in the area, too.

However, police could not ascertain the cause behind his death.

Meanwhile, Kamalapur railway police recovered an unidentified body hanging from Tongi Railway Bridge over Dhaka-Gazipur rail track in the area at around 9:30am.

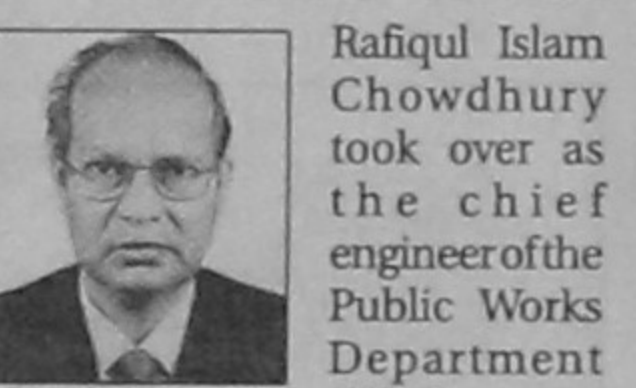
Assistant Sub-inspector (ASI) Ali Akbar of Kamalapur Railway Police Station told The Daily Star that they found the body hanging from a pipe of the bridge.

Railway police, however, could not ascertain the cause behind the death.

Both the bodies were sent to Dhaka Medical College Morgue for autopsy.

## Rafiqul takes over as PWD chief engineer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Rafiqul Islam Chowdhury took over as the chief engineer of the Public Works Department (PWD) yesterday, says a press release.

Before joining the PWD, he was a member of the National Housing Authority (planning, design and special projects).

Hailed from Comilla district Rafiqul Islam started his career as an assistant engineer (civil) in 1975.

## Iqbal made BRTC chairman

UNB, Dhaka



The government yesterday appointed Major (Retd) M M Iqbal Chairman of Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC).

Iqbal, a freedom fighter, was director (sports) and executive director of youth centre under the Youth and Sports Ministry. He also discharged his duties as deputy director of National Security Intelligence.

## Indian HC celebrates ITEC day

METRO DESK

Indian High Commission celebrated Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Day yesterday at its office in the city, says a press release.

Dr Hassan Mahmud, state minister for foreign affairs, attended the programme as the chief guest.

Indian government launched the ITEC programme in 1964 as a bilateral programme of assistance.

## Supremacy of MPs over UZs violation of constitution

Says Shujan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expressing concern over the initiative to establish supremacy of the lawmakers over the local government institutions, Shushashoner Janney Nagorik (Shujan) yesterday said it would be a clear violation of the constitution if the lawmakers take the authority.

The Shujan leaders said lawmakers are not elected for running the local government institutions and it would be regretful if they get involved in the development activities of the local government ignoring the constitutional directives.

The leaders said this at a press conference at the Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium in the city.

In his keynote paper, Shujan Secretary Badiul Alam

Majumder said it would be a black law if the lawmakers are given the authority of the local government by enacting a law.

It would be inconsequence with the democratic practices if the lawmakers are made advisers of the upazila parishads and the provision of taking their suggestions over the parishad is made mandatory, he added.

The parliament may prove ineffective if the lawmakers get involved in the local administration and development as they may pay more attention to the local issues instead of parliamentary activities, he feared.

He said the government is going to formulate a new law without ratifying of the Local Government (Upazila Parishad) Ordinances 2008

promulgated by the immediate past caretaker government.

"Upazila parishads would be ineffective if the new upazila law is enacted," he said, adding that clash might erupt in many areas.

Shujan President Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said giving the controlling authority to lawmakers by making a law will not only go against the constitution, but it will also go against the verdict and directives of the Supreme Court.

Strengthening the local government is a must for democracy, he added.

Former advisers to a caretaker government M Hafizuddin Khan and ASM Shahjahan, advocate Sultana Kamal, Syed Abul Maksud and Dr Tofail Ahmed were also present.

## NATIONAL DISABILITY DAY TODAY

### 'Work together to ensure equal rights of people with disabilities'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 11th National Disability Day will be observed today with a view to ensure rights of the people with disabilities and create awareness on the issue.

Different organisations, including the Ministry of Social Welfare has chalked out elaborate programmes marking the day.

This year the theme of the day is 'United endeavor for the development of the people with disabilities'.

President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave messages on the occasion.

"The people with disabili-

ties are inseparable part of our society and they should be brought up as efficient citizens through affection, social security and training," said the president hoping the public, private and voluntary organisations would come forward to incorporate the physically and mentally challenged people into the mainstream of development.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in her message urged all to work together to create awareness in the society to ensure equal rights of the people with disabilities in every sphere of life including education, sports and culture.

Ministry of Social Welfare, Directorate of Social Services,

National Forum of Organisations Working with the Disabled and National Foundation for the Development of the Disabled People jointly will take out a rally in front of the Bangladesh Betar building at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city at 4:30pm. A discussion will be held at Directorate of Social Services auditorium at 5:00pm.

Action on Disability and Development (ADD) in association with National Organisation for the Grassroots People with Disabilities and National Council of the Disabled Women will take out a rally and stage drama at Rabindra Sarobar at Dhanmondi in the city.

## 14 were killed in political violence last month

Says BSEHR report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 565 people were arrested in connection with the BDR carnage at Pilkhana, 953 people arrested on different charges, 469 injured while 14 people were killed in political violence across the country last month.

Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR) revealed these at a statement yesterday. BSEHR prepared the report based on reports published on different national dailies and telecasted on television channels. Moreover, 159 people were

killed while 517 others injured in different incidents, including previous enmity, extortion, robbery and land disputes across the country.

During the period 8 people died mysteriously, Border Security Forces (BSF) gunned down 8 people and 1 was killed in police custody, it added.

Police recovered 88 bodies from different parts of the country, 3 were killed for dowry and 4 died in mass beating at the period.

National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA) revealed that a total of 146 women fell victim of different violence across the country last month.

They prepared the report based on different newspaper reports.

During the period, 16 women were raped, of them 3 were killed after rape. Five women were killed for dowry and 3 oppressed for the same reason and 5 women committed suicide. Seven women were physically tortured, 3 kidnapped, 17 trafficked, 6 remained missing, and 2 fell victim to 'fatwa', says a statement of the association.

## Implement UN convention to ensure child rights

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday said though Bangladesh is one of the very few countries to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in its early stage, it is yet to implement the document of the convention properly even after 18 years.

They reasoned lack of awareness in the society that hinders ensuring child rights and creating pressure on the government in implementing the UNCRC document.

The document was accepted by all at the United Nations General Assembly in November 1989 and Bangladesh ratified it in August 1990.

Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF) organised the seminar on 'Promotion of child rights: Role of media' at Dhaka

Reporters' Unity (DRU) auditorium in the city.

The speakers called on the media persons to highlight the themes of the UNCRC as well as to create awareness in the society to ensure rights of the children.

Presenting a keynote paper, BSAF Coordinator Abdus Shahid Mahmood said, "Those who are below 18 years old are considered as children in the country and currently 49 percent of the total population are aged below 18 years. During budget allocation, the government considers little about the people of this age group."

Political commitment, special session for the children in the parliament, articles on child rights issues in the school textbooks, formulation of a child council in every education institutions would be

helpful in creating awareness in the society, he added.

Media also can play a crucial role in creating awareness in the society by writing investigative reports on how child rights are being violated in the country, giving better treatment of child rights-related reports and keeping special pages for children where their success stories would also come to light.

The speakers also stressed the need to appoint a child ombudsman through which accountability would be created in implementing the UNCRC.

Sohrab Hasan, associate editor of the Jugantar, moderated the seminar which was chaired by Md Kafil Uddin, director of BSAF.

Representatives from different news media also spoke at the programme.

## UNDP assures help in dev programmes

UNB, Dhaka

UNDP Resident Representative to Bangladesh Renata Dessalieu said UNDP will provide its all possible assistance for the programmes to be taken by the government for the welfare of the people.

Renata made the assurance during a meeting with Planning Minister AK Khandakar at the minister's office yesterday.

Renata said the government in its election manifesto made a lot of pledges for welfare of the people of Bangladesh.

UNDP will provide all possible assistance for the programmes to be taken by the government on priority basis for the implementation of the pledges, said Renata.

Election manifesto of the government, poverty alleviation strategy, UNDP's ongoing programmes in Bangladesh, implementation of annual programmes and power also came up for discussion during the meeting.

The minister said the government has attached top priority to the sectors such as food security, agriculture, education, health and housing for the welfare of the people.

## Robbery at GP Gazipur centre

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

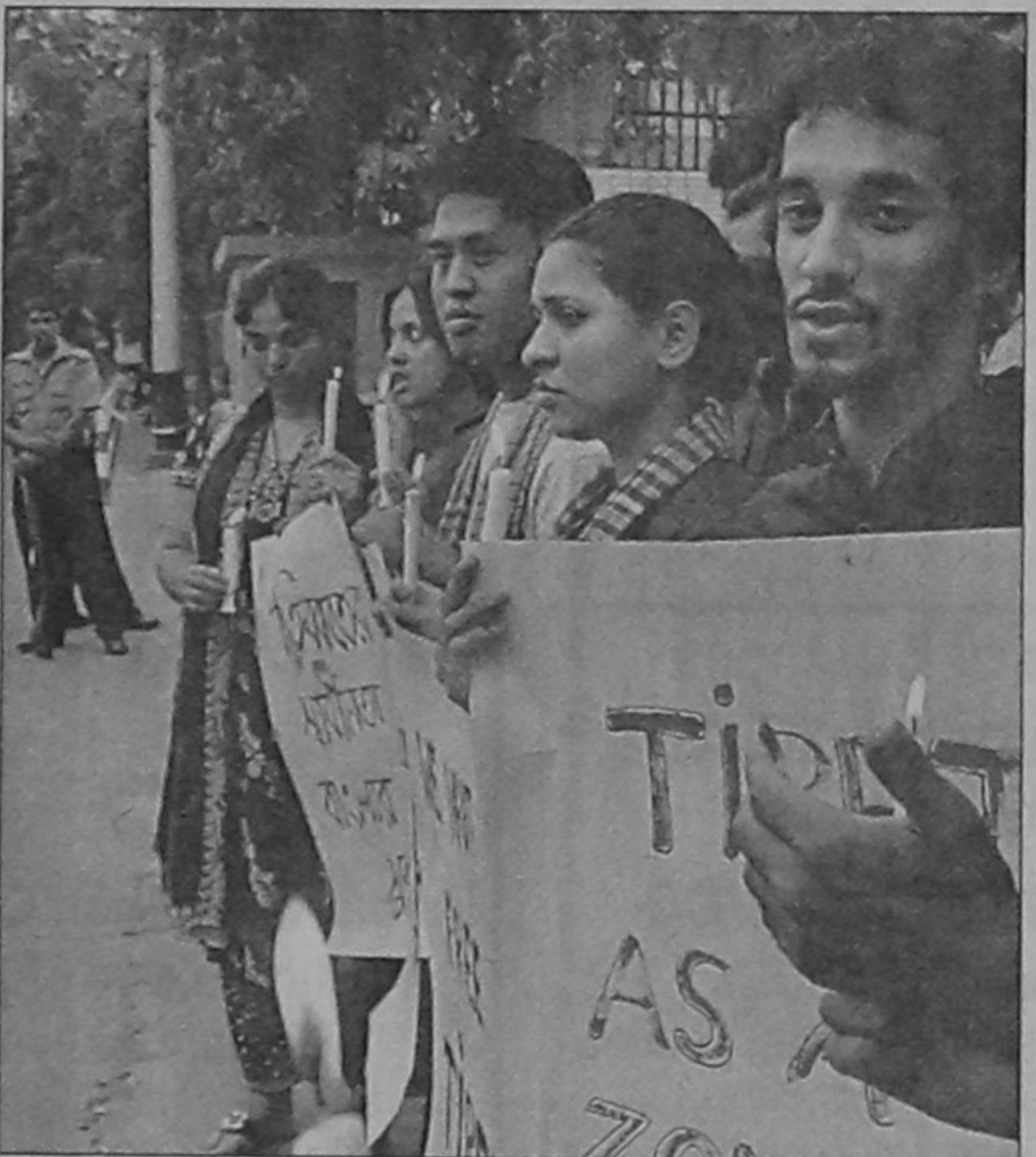
A robbery was committed at GrameenPhone (GP) Centre at Chandna Plaza at the Chandna crossing in Gazipur Sadar on Monday night.

The robbers looted valuables worth about Tk 9 lakh, including 198 mobile sets, and Tk 96,000 in cash at gunpoint.

About eight to 10 robbers entered the centre at around 10:00pm when it was about to close. They took Harunur Rashid, owner of the centre, and four other employees hostage at gunpoint.

After robbery, the youths left for the capital in a microbus by which they came.

Joydevpur officer-in-charge (OC) Abdur Rashid said no case was filed until 9:00pm yesterday.



A group of conscious students hold a candlelit vigil in front of the Chinese embassy at Baridhara in the city protesting repression on the Tibetans.

## BSTI asked to achieve certifying capability of 'halal' products

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Industries Minister Dilip Barua yesterday asked Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institute (BSTI) to take initiative to achieve certifying capability of 'halal' products for smooth access of Bangladeshi products to the international market.

He also asked the BSTI to intensify drives against the adulterated and substandard products in the country to ensure consumer's health safety.

He said this while he was presiding over the 23rd council meeting of BSTI at its headquarters in the city.

The minister said the government will reform BSTI to make it a modern and effective standard controlling institute in future.

Management system certification regulation, security logo on weight sets, and mutual recognition arrangement with different countries, a one stop service at Chittagong, compulsory melamine test of milk products came up for the discussion.

The meeting yesterday also discussed the requirements sought by the law ministry to formulate the management system certification regulations to achieve certifying capability on environment, social responsibilities and management systems of goods producers.

The 22nd council meeting sent a draft to the law ministry for its approval.

Law ministry returned the draft to BSTI recently seeking clarifications on some points.

BSTI Director General Azzam Hossain told The Daily Star that if the regulation was approved, local companies would be able easily to collect certificates on environment, management system and social responsibilities. At present Bangladeshi companies are to collect such certificates from foreign institutes which cost at least Tk 9/10 lakh.

On security logo on the weight sets, the council gave BSTI some more time to search more suitable security guards on the weight sets to maintain accuracy.