

Amar Probash Jibon o Rajniti launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A book titled 'Amar Probash Jibon o Rajniti' (My life in abroad and politics) written by UK expatriate Mushtak Qureshi was launched at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

Finance Minister Abul Mal Abdul Muhith unveiled the cover of the book.

Noted journalist Syed Abul Maksud presided over the launching ceremony while Prof Syed Manjurul Islam, theatre personality Ramendu Majumder and the daily Kaler Kantha executive editor Mustafiz Shafi spoke.

The book contains chapters on politics of Bangladesh and Britain and different historical events in the country.



Rab Director General Hasan Mahmood Khandaker gives away a crest to a Rab member at the certificate distribution ceremony for Rab Basic Course and Basic Computer Course at Rab Forces Training School in Gazipur on Wednesday.

PHOTO: RAB

Hell on wheels

FROM PAGE 1

perhaps had been the dashboard -- now only a steel skeleton with gaping holes through which a plethora of wires were sticking out like snakes ready to lunge at him. He saw nothing resembling a switch, neither could he find any glove compartment.

As he panned his eyes to the steering wheel, he saw the driver's hands clenching the bare metal frame of the wheel stripped of its covering.

Suddenly he became aware of his more intimate surroundings, and noticed the seat cover he was sitting on was tattered and sticky, emanating a foul smell.

Ashish coughed to draw the attention of the driver, who just briefly glanced back. Although the driver had been polite so far, his face fitted the profile of a junkie. He could well be a mugger or a 'molom party' member, Ashish became petrified as soon as the thought crossed his mind, as he had been mugged twice before in a cab and a CNG run autorickshaw.

So instead of complaining, he decided to sit back waiting for 'the moment' that seemed almost certain.

Ashish's fear of imminent danger was mounting, as the driver was also ogling every woman the cab was passing by, even turning his head backward while the taxi was zooming forward. So Ashish coughed to embarrass the driver into paying more attention to the road to avoid accidents, but in vain. Perhaps the driver thought him to be a patient of bronchitis, Ashish found no other reason for the total disregard.

As they came near Dhanmondi road no 27 crossing, it started to rain. Without

any warning, the driver suddenly pulled the car over to the curb. Ashish thought, "Now he is going to rob me!"

Within seconds, the driver pulled out something from under the seat, and Ashish was sure that was to be the weapon of the crime about to descend upon him.

Ashish was ready to jump out of the car and run for his life. He almost opened the door when he saw the driver standing outside next to the door saying, "Sir, I need to roll up the windows."

"What?" was the only word came out of flabbergasted Ashish, as he saw in the driver's hand a curious device resembling a handle of a car's window roller. He looked around inside the cab and noticed none of the window rollers had any handle except the one next to him. And the windows were all rolled down with rain getting in the cab. The 'weapon' in the driver's hand was indeed one such handle.

Ashish silently watched as the driver rolled up all the windows with the sole broken handle, one by one. Yet the window panes did not go all the way up. He was ultimately partly drenched by the rain by the time he reached his destination.

A large number of people, who commute in taxi cabs in the capital, face similar or worse experience everyday because most of the cabs have become junks on wheels. The drivers are rude who do not follow any professional code of conduct. They are not at all courteous to passengers -- rather the opposite is true, especially when it comes to bargaining a fare despite all the cabs having fare metres. And when you thought you

found a good cab driver, he would suddenly drop you at an odd location saying that his car needs servicing or a gas refill.

Although most cabs have police complaint phone numbers printed on their bodies or rear windows, passengers do not even bother complaining, as they find it futile.

According to Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), out of a total 10,857 registered taxis in Dhaka, around 7,500 were refused registration renewal, and were declared 'discordable' due to unfit conditions.

But the fact remains that many of those 'discordable' taxis are running on the streets amid the silence of the traffic police authority.

Taxi cabs were introduced in the city in 1999. Of the total number of registered cabs, 6,450 are non-AC 800 CC cabs which are also known as black or blue cabs, against which the passengers have the most complaints.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner AKM Shahidul Haque said if cabs are caught with faults, the traffic police only fine the owners instead of seizing the vehicles. Those vehicles are allowed to go free with fines because the police department does not have a junk yard big enough to store the junks, he added.

The junk vehicles tend to return to the streets within two to three weeks of being fined.

DMP Joint Commissioner Manjurul Kader Khan said the traffic police also avoid arresting the drivers or seizing the vehicles as that could involve themselves going to courts for dealing with cases, which would take away time from their duty hours.

Certificate giving ceremony of Rab Course held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The certificate distribution ceremony of Rab Basic Course and Basic Computer Course was held at Rab Forces Training School at Shimultali in Gazipur on Wednesday.

Rab Director General Hasan Mahmood Khandaker gave away certificates to the participants as the chief guest.

A total of 120 members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) took part in the six-week Basic Course and 26 others in the four-week Basic Computer Course.

BD Thai goes to court

FROM PAGE 1

capital from Bangladesh stock market.

Lock-in is a measure by which investment companies are barred from selling their acquired shares before a certain period.

BD Thai, which had issued shares against warrants to a foreign investment fund, also sought a stay order on the SEC notification issued in mid July this year.

A lock-in had been in place before as well since the 1996 share market scam until it was lifted a little before the share subscription deal was struck between BD Thai and the foreign investment firm GEM Global Yield Fund.

SEC re-introduced the lock-in following unearthing of questionable large amount of share sales by GEM Global in absence of any lock-in on the sales.

GEM Global bought a huge chunk of shares of BD Thai against warrants and dumped almost all the shares within a month and a half of the acquisition, repatriating \$2 million from the Bangladesh capital market, according to a Dhaka Stock Exchange report.

GEM Global is incorporated in the Cayman Islands, a British overseas territory in the Caribbean. It is billed as a centre for tax evasion. It has a tax rate of zero for corporation tax, income tax, and capital gains, drawing some of the world's biggest banks and hedge funds to its shores.

The High Court heard the case on August 5, and set October 15 for further hearing, said sources present at the hearing.

BD Thai lawyers raised two questions, whether SEC has the authority to issue the notification, and what prompted the imposition of the lock-in?

In reply, SEC informed the court that it certainly has the authority to issue such notifications according to the securities ordinance.

Moreover, the stock market regulator argued, the notification was not issued for BD Thai only, rather it was issued for all listed companies including foreign ones.

Responding to the inquiry about the cause for the SEC notification, the regulator comprehensively said it imposed the lock-in to prevent flight of capital from the local market.

It explained, in March 2008, BD Thai's share price was well below its face value of Tk 100 each, which rose to more than Tk 1,000 only within a year.

The news of large investment by GEM Global into

Work together for welfare of country

Azad urges all

BSS, Dhaka

Minister for Information and Cultural Affairs Abul Kalam Azad yesterday said all have to work together for ensuring the welfare of the country in a coordinated way imbued with the spirit of the War of Liberation.

"The country is ours, so that we should work together for the economic development of Bangladesh," he headed.

Azad was addressing the inaugural function as the chief guest at the photography exhibition titled 'Itihaas Katha Koy' organised by Awami

Swachhashebok League on the occasion of

The National Mourning Day held on the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum premises, an official handout said.

He said the students should involve themselves in the social welfare activities for the betterment of the people side by side with their studies.

"More discussion on life and ideals of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman would bring benefit to the nation," he headed.

The minister said the younger generation would be imbued with patriotism and moral values by studying the life and works of Bangabandhu.

He said everybody should perform their duties and responsibilities from their respective positions to help new generation learn the real history of Bangladesh.

A total of 1,000 photographs, containing the era of Nawab Sirajuddowla to the caretaker government, have been displaying in the show.

The function, chaired by acting president of Awami Swachhashebok League Mollah Mohammad Abu Kawser, was addressed by Awami League Organising Secretary AFM

Bahauddin Nasim, Deputy Publicity Secretary Ashim Kumar Ukil and Swachhashebok League General Secretary Pankaj Dev Nath.

Tremors jolt Nilphamari, adjoining areas

UNB, Dhaka

A series of mild earthquakes jolted Nilphamari district and some nearby areas early yesterday as a moderate tremor struck in the Indian Ocean off Andaman Islands for a third consecutive day.

"The quake with a magnitude of 5.6 on the Richter scale occurred at 4:21pm (BST) at Andaman Islands, 979 km south-southwest of Bangladesh Seismic Centre at Agargaon in the city," said the Met Office.

The first quake occurred at 2:17am while a second one at 2:35am. Within 14 minutes, the third tremor shook the district at 2:54am, leaving many people panic-stricken.

With the latest occurrence, different parts of the country have been jolted by quakes in the last three days.

BDR camp

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An agitating settler said they have been feeling unsafe in the area since the withdrawal of army camps. The incidents of abduction and killing might rise after the BDR camp pull-out, he headed.

Panchhari Upazila Nirbahi Officer Sheikh Abdul Kader told The Daily Star that they failed to pull out the camp as of 5:00pm.

Authorities also failed to withdraw the 30 Rifles Battalion on August 12, he added.

However, they successfully withdrew Lemuchhari Armed Police Battalion camp under Mohalchhari upazila in Khagrachhari yesterday. The camp was then attached to Mohalchhari battalion.

Mohalchhari Upazila Nirbahi Officer Safiul Arif said they had withdrawn the camp on the quiet not giving Bangalee settlers any chance to protest.

A total of forty-five personnel were engaged in that camp for ensuring security in the area since 2002.

The government started withdrawing temporary army camps from the hill district last Friday as per the CHT Peace Accord, 1997 and four of them have been pulled out till date.

IN'T COMMISSION VISITS CHT

A delegation of International Commission on Chittagong Hill Tracts visited Barkal upazila in Rangamati to observe implementation of the CHT peace accord yesterday.

It had 12 members split into two groups--one led by Sultana Kamal, a rights activist, and the other by barrister Sara Hossain. They exchanged views with indigenous people and Bangalees, reports our Rangamati correspondent.

Sultana Kamal's team went to Bhushionchhara, Gorasthan, Aimaichhara, and Billachhara.

"We are visiting to see for ourselves the measures taken by the government to implement the peace treaty," she said adding that their commission would soon sit with the prime minister to brief her about the visit.

Sara Hossain's team visited Suvalong Bazar. They collected information on the killing of Tarun Kumar Chakma. Tarun was reportedly shot dead by the security men.

The commission members will today meet the chairman of CHT Regional Council, brigade commander, DC, SP, indigenous and Bangalee leaders.

CHT Commission was first set up in 1990 by the CHT Campaign, an Amsterdam-based organization, and Copenhagen-based International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs.

On various occasions, it published reports on the hill districts.

It however had been inactive since 2000, and was re-established as International Commission on CHT in 2008. Human rights activists and renowned civil society personalities at home and abroad are its members.

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Tel: 882 4051-4 ext. 4003; 885 3948, 885 3949. Fax: 881 0383. email: admission@bracu.ac.bd



James P Grant School of Public Health BRAC University Admission to MPH Programme

BRAC University James P Grant School of Public Health (JPGSPH) is accepting applications from Bangladeshi nationals for its 6th Masters of Public Health (MPH) Programme Beginning in February, 2010.

Features of the MPH Programme:

- MPH is a 51 credits programme which runs for 12 months, full-time (9 a.m. to 5 p.m.)
- Multi-disciplinary in design, the programme emphasizes development of the core public health competencies: epidemiology, biostatistics, medical anthropology, health systems management, health economics and health care financing, health communication, monitoring & evaluation, public health nutrition, demography, reproductive health, aging, and non-communicable diseases
- Current faculty come from BRAC University, ICDDR,B, Columbia University (USA), Harvard University (USA), Johns Hopkins University (USA), George Washington University (USA), Karolinska Institute (Sweden), London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (UK), and University of Amsterdam (The Netherlands)
- To facilitate experiential learning, the programme is residential, of which the first 6-month semester is spent in the rural setting of BRAC University campus in Savar
- The second semester is taught at ICDDR,B, Dhaka, where the students receive access to their many facilities including library, laboratories and field sites

Fees:

- Bangladeshi students are only required to pay the living cost (US \$ 6000 equivalent to BDT 400,000). However once admitted, deserving candidates may apply and receive a waiver of up to 50 % of their living expense (up to BDT 200,000).
- The School has separate policies for other developing countries and high income countries. For details visit <http://sph.bracu.ac.bd/>

Admission requirements:

The MPH is particularly suited to individuals who wish to build or further enhance their career in public health or allied areas. Candidates fulfilling the following criteria are eligible to apply:

- A Bachelor's/ Master's degree (at least 16 years of education) in Medicine, Nursing, Health Sciences or any physical, biological or social sciences. Excellent academic records with no third division or with GPA of less than 3.0 (out of 4)
- Basic Arithmetic and English skills are required. For proof of proficiency in English (written and spoken) a minimum TOEFL score of 250 on computer-based test/100 on internet-based test or IELTS of 6.5 is required. [Submit score sheet]
- At least 1 year experience in health related work.
- Computer literacy is must; skill in using data analysis software will be an advantage.
- Candidates must also attend (i) a written test in Logical Reasoning, Basic Arithmetic and English, (ii) Group interview and (iii) Individual interview.

Application deadline: August 31, 2009. Only short listed candidates will be called for written test and interviews. Application forms may be downloaded from the website: <http://sph.bracu.ac.bd/academics/mbph/> Application form2.doc or collected from BRAC University Admissions Office. For further inquiries please visit <http://sph.bracu.ac.bd/> (Tel. +88 (02) 8824051-4 Ext: 4164). Submit the application form with detailed CV & 2 copies of recent passport size photographs. Please mention "MPH programme 2010-11" on top of the envelope. Applications should be sent to: Sabina Faiz Rashid, PhD, Coordinator, MPH Programme, & Mrityunjoy Das, James P Grant School of Public Health, BRAC University, 66 Mohakhali, Dhaka 1212 or email to: sabina@bracu.ac.bd with cc to mrityunjoy@bracu.ac.bd (PDF format preferred).