

**Robbers shoot man, loot gold**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Robbers looted 20 tolas of gold ornaments and cash shooting a man in a house at Meradia in the city's Khilgaon yesterday evening.

Rashedul Huq Rashed, 30, a resident of a flat on second floor of the building was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with bullet wounds at his buttock.

Rashed at DMCH told reporters that he and his father went to Mosque for prayers around 7:30pm while the robbery took place at their flat.

When he reached the flat the robbers shot at his buttock and fled the scene with the booties, he said adding, he found around six armed robbers.

OC Nazim Uddin of Khilgaon said the domestic help opened the door with ringing of the doorbell by the robbers.

**Kidnapped boy rescued**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five-year old Jibon finally returned to his mother yesterday after passing seven days of nightmare at his abductors' den at Muktagachha in Mymensingh.

Taherul Islam and Shilpi Begum, parents of Jibon are residents of Mirerbagh of the capital's Ramna where they run a mess for day labourers.

Police said acting on a tip off they raided a house at Charipara village of Muktagachha on Tuesday afternoon and found Jibon along with one of his abductors Rojina, 30.

Two other abductors Mijan, 32, and Kalu alias Ranju, 33, were also arrested on the same day while Rojina's husband Billal and one Halim managed to escape.

Police said a local security guard's suspicions arose after he heard a child screaming in that house for several nights in a row and he informed the police.

"I was not allowed to go out and ate only once a day," said Jibon, adding, "They used to beat me up whenever I asked for my parents and pressed a pillow on my face if I cried."

Jibon went missing since December 28, they said in a press briefing at Ramna Police Station yesterday.

"That night around 8:00pm we got an unidentified caller on our cell phone who claimed Jibon was held by them and said we had to pay a ransom of Tk 7 lakh if we wished to have our son back alive," said Shilpi.

The caller directed them to wait with the money at Modhupur bus stand in Tangail which they did twice on December 30 and 31, Taherul told the reporters.

However, the abductors harassed them by sending them to and fro various places near Muktagachha and Rasulpur till late into the night, he added.



Accused in BDR carnage case try to have a glimpse of their relatives (not in picture) standing beside the prison van that carried the detainees to the court premises nearby Dhaka Central Jail yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

PHOTO: STAR

**Make strategy to end violence against women**

Speakers urge stakeholders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The stakeholders working to prevent violence against women must revise their terms of reference and strengthen coordination to get better result, said speakers at a workshop yesterday.

They stressed the need for strengthening cooperation among the Directorate of Women Affairs, Jatiya Mahila Sangstha and local level representatives so that the organisations can work as the substitute for each other.

Naripakha organised the workshop titled 'Formulating comprehensive working strategy to resist violence against women' at the city's Biam auditorium and placed six recommendations in this regard.

They suggested that the government should publish the annual reports of different organisations working to prevent violence against women, revisit the existing laws and take steps to protect interest of women.

Those who are accused of women repression in no way can get political shelter, they said adding that the justice system should be speedy and the stakeholders must be provided with enough resources as well as giving responsibilities.

President of Naripakha Tamanna Khan said on an average 12,000 to 13,000 incidents of violence against women took place in the country every year.

The government is aware and strict in resisting violence against women, said State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Shirin Sharmin Choudhury at the workshop.

"There are one stop crisis centers at seven divisional cities to provide medico legal service to the victims. The government has taken initiatives to extend these one stop crisis centers to district level," she said.

The state minister also said many women are not aware of their repression and don't know how and where they will seek legal services. These women must be brought under the programmes, she added.

**Ensure better medical services**

Health minister tells seminar

UNB, Dhaka

Health Minister Dr AFM Ruhul Haque yesterday stressed the need for decentralisation of health sector to ensure better medical services for rural and poor people.

"If we could not be able to involve the local government in health sector, improvement of the health sector would not be possible," he said at a seminar at Dhaka Reporters Unity in the city.

Health Reporters Forum (HRF), a professional body, organised the seminar, highlighting the government role in the health sector.

Director General of Health Directorate Dr Sifayetullah, Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) president Dr M Mahmud Hasan, BMA Secretary General Sharfuddin Ahmed, Dr Moniruzzaman and Dr Rashidi Mahub spoke at the seminar with HRF President

Moniruzzaman Ujjal in the chair.

Awami League's Health and Population Affairs Secretary Dr Badiuzzaman Bhuiyan presented a keynote paper focusing on the grand-alliance government's activities undertaken in the past two years to develop the health sector.

Dr Ruhul Haque said the government is committed to reach health services to the doorstep of poor. He hoped that the proposed health policy will be placed in the next parliament session after cabinet approval, aiming at developing the country's health sector.

About the National Nutrition Programme (NNP), he said although the NNP has been continuing in 142 districts, the government is planning to expand the programme to every district to save poor women and adolescents from malnutrition.

**Root of Shaivism lies in this sub-continent**

Says Historian Mannan

OUR CORRESPONDENT, CTG

"If we do not know our root, we do not know our history," said the US-based physician-turned Historian Dr MA Mannan MD.

Mannan presented his article "7000 years of Ancient History of India with special reference to Bengal" at the Premier University in the port city yesterday.

The university and English daily The Independent jointly organised the seminar at 11:00am.

In his article Mannan said our history is very luminous. The most ancient religion of the world, Shaivism (The worshipper of The God Shiva) originated from this soil.

He said our political history is also very rich as we have two genius Bangali politicians--Netaji Shubhash Chandra Basu and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

In his speech Mannan showed similarity of action in terms of political stand between the two great leaders. Both were nationalist and very much popular among the people, he added.

He told this to the seminar because Netaji said, "Give me blood, I will give you freedom," where Bangabandhu in his historic speech on March 7, 1971 said, "Rakta jokhan diechi, rakta aro debo, ei desher manushke mukta kore charbo Insha'Allah (Since we have given blood, we will give more of it. But, Insha'Allah, we will free the people of this land)."

Vice-chancellor of the university Prof Anupam Sen, presided over the seminar while Editor of daily Mahbubul Alam attended it among others.

**Factory fined for polluting Mohesh Khal**

CU CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Environment (DoE) yesterday fined an industry around Tk 4 lakh for polluting the environment in the port city.

In a drive on Tuesday, Equity Ready-mix and Concrete Products Ltd was found discharging its effluent into Mohesh Khal (canal).

Mohammad Munir Chowdhury, director (Monitoring and Enforcement) of the DoE, led the drive.

According to DoE officials, the industry does not have air filter, dust collector or any other system to prevent air pollution.

Earlier, the DoE had directed the factory to plant trees in 33 percent area of the industry to green the environment. But Equity Ltd did not do that.

The industry also has not renewed its environment clearance certificate for the last three years.

For damaging the environment and violating the environment law, Equity Ltd authority was summoned to the DoE headquarters in Dhaka and penalised Tk 3.95 lakh yesterday.

The authority was also directed to take proper measures to prevent air pollution within January 15.

For establishing a chemical warehouse in Agrabad CDA residential area, the owner of Momotaz Monjil was summoned to the DoE headquarters yesterday.

The DoE fined the owner Tk 20 thousands and asked to remove the depot within January 13.

**Increase scholarships for officials**

FM urges Colombo Plan Secy

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni yesterday requested the secretary general of the Colombo Plan Secretariat to increase number of long-term scholarships for Bangladeshi officials.

She made the call when the visiting Secretary General of the Colombo Plan Secretariat Patricia Yoon-Moi Chia called on her at the ministry yesterday, said a press release.

Patricia is the 4th secretary general after the revitalisation of the organisation in 1977 and the 1st Asian female to assume this position.

Colombo Plan Secretariat is now working in five major areas, namely a) human resource development, b) skill development, c) South-south Cooperation, d) Socio-economic development in Asia and the Pacific and d) drug demand reduction in Asia and the Pacific, particularly in Afghanistan.

During the meeting, Patricia appreciated Bangladesh achievement in these areas including in all sector of MDGs.

The secretariat imparted training to Bangladeshi officials under the Colombo Plan's training programmes and some 397 Bangladeshis have so far received training in different fields under this programme.

In case of long-term scholarships, the foreign minister mentioned that out of 97 scholarships, only two were awarded to Bangladeshis.

Dipu Moni mentioned that the government's priority areas are poverty alleviation, good governance, women empowerment, eradication of illiteracy, and thereby attaining the MDGs by 2015.



Vice Chancellor of Khulna University Prof Dr Md Saifudin Shah places wreath at the casket of Dr Purnendu Gayen, former pro-VC of the university and a teacher of Agro-technology department, yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

**BNP, Jamaat for army**

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centres to ensure fair voting in the upcoming municipal elections.

Delegations of both the parties placed the demand in separate meetings with Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda at his office. Election Commissioner M Sohul Hussain was also present at the meeting at the Election Commission Secretariat.

The CEC, however, reiterated the commission's earlier stance that it would deploy army personnel only in risky municipalities where troubles might be created during the polls.

The EC has confidence in the civil administration for holding free and fair elections, he added.

Elections to over 250 municipalities of the country are scheduled to be held from January 12.

A nine-member BNP delegation led by

its standing committee member MK Anwar talked to the CEC about the election in the afternoon.

After the meeting, MK Anwar told reporters that candidates of the ruling Awami League have been creating anarchy and threatening the opposition-backed candidates, and the administration is working in favour of the government.

Earlier the day, a three-member delegation of Jamaat led by its Nayebe Ameer Mohammad Abdus Sobhan met the CEC.

Talking to reporters, Subhan said deployment of the army is necessary for free and fair elections and the CEC assured them that the EC will think over their demand.

The Jamaat leaders also urged the EC to engage fewer administrative officials in the elections and to control showdowns before the polls.

**Saba's body arrives today**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Body of Sabina Yesmin Saba, a young theatre personality, will arrive in Dhaka from US in the morning today.

The body, to be received by relatives, colleagues and well-wishers, will be kept at her residence for mourners to pay last tribute and will be buried at Azimpur Graveyard, says a press release.

A commemorative meeting will be held at Studio Theatre Hall of Shilpakala Academy in the city on December 12.

Saba, who went to US for higher training on psychodrama, passed away on December 17.

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