

Cabbie kills 'girlfriend'



Lipi Akter

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A taxi driver killed his college-going "girlfriend" and tried to commit suicide yesterday at an alley in North Bhashantek of the capital. Lipi Akter, 22, died instantly after being stabbed indiscriminately by Hazrat Ali, 26, around 2:00pm. Hazrat, who took insecticide, was undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Talking to The Daily Star, Hazrat admitted the killing of

Lipi, a bachelor of commerce student of Titumir College. "We got married four months ago. But Lipi cheated on me and that's why I killed her," claimed Hazrat. He said Lipi's parents forced her to divorce him three months ago. Refuting their marriage, Lipi's father Shamsul Alam, a carpenter, said Hazrat had in fact been stalking his only daughter on her way to and from college for the last three to four months. As she refused Hazrat's proposals, he stabbed her to death at North Bhashantek, said Shamsul. Locals and police said Hazrat and Lipi lived in the same building in Bhashantek for around five years. When Lipi's family knew the relationship, her father moved the family to West Bhashantek last month. The family even filed a GD in connection with the stalking.



Winners and guests of Grand Finale of "Brain Brats" contest pose for photograph at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city yesterday. The Daily Star and Champs21 organised the contest. PHOTO: STAR

21 school children emerge victorious in 'Brain Brats' contest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A day after Bangladesh cricket team's triumphant victory over England, another group of tiger cubs yesterday gathered for a face-off in another battle. In a battle of wits, flair and burgeoning young minds, the grand finale of Brain Brats, a nationwide online quiz competition jointly organised by The Daily Star and Champs21, was held at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city. From the attending 210 students from 29 English-medium schools, 21 young participants walked away with prizes after a day of brain bashing with exams and quizzes. "Yesterday (Friday) was a win for

cricket and today, it is a victory for education," said Dr Tawfiq Elahi Chowdhury, energy advisor to the prime minister. "Education is light. It can enlighten, develop and brighten children's lives," he said, addressing the programme as the chief guest. Science and ICT Minister Yeafesh Osman, Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam and Champs21 Chief Executive Officer Russell T Ahmed were present as the special guests at the programme. However, it was the young participants or "Champs", as named by the organisers, who stole the limelight. The programme was brightened with more than just their red T-shirts. Their enthusiasm and energy

resonated from every nook and corner of the hall. "The new generation is here with a new and different spirit," said Yeafesh, adding that the youth will lead the country to a brighter future. "When our students grow up, they will face challenge at a global level," said Russell T Ahmed, CEO of Champs21. "We need to prepare them for these challenges." The 210 young participants outdid thousands of contestants in three phases of quizzes on the subjects of science, maths and general knowledge to reach the grand finale. "The importance of science and mathematics is everywhere in the world especially in the 21st century," said Mahfuz Anam.

This competition is a small trial to help the youth of the country stay ahead of the rest of the world, he said. After the final round of quizzes, a total of 21 students, categorised in classes I to X, were selected as second runners-up, first runners-up and Brain Brats. The second runners-up walked away with crests and digital cameras while the first runners-up were awarded crests and laptops. The seven Brain Brats received crests and a study tour ticket from Dhaka to Kuala Lumpur with their mothers. The winning schools were declared as "Champion Schools" and parents of the winners declared "Champion Parents". Special prizes were also given to mothers of each Brain Brat.

Govt trying to influence UP polls: BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Blaming the government of trying to influence the upcoming Union Parishad (UP) elections, the BNP leaders yesterday said they are not only worried about the free and fair elections but also the future of democracy. "A free and fair election is only possible if the government and election commission are sincere. But they don't want to hold the upcoming elections neutrally and free from rigging," said Nazrul Islam Khan, member of the party standing committee at a press briefing held at the party's central office. He alleged that the government is trying to influence the municipality elections to Brahmanbaria and Jhenidah scheduled to be held today. "Future of democracy will be in crisis if the government continues to influence the elections." The BNP leader also said the local administration ignores the directions of election commission as that would implement the commission's order to destroy an election camp of a ruling party backed candidate in Jhenidah. In January, elections could not be held in Brahmanbaria and Jhenidah during the countrywide municipality elections due to an order of the court. The UP elections will kick off from March 29 in the coastal areas and will continue till April 3. Party leaders Abdullah Al Noman, Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir and Ruhul Kabir Rizvi were present at the briefing.

NEWS IN brief

Three die in city road crashes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Three people were killed in separate road accidents in the city yesterday. At the city's Chowkbazar, Nasrin, 5, died instantly and her uncle's employee Asif was injured when a truck hit the motorbike they were riding around 3:00pm, said her father Liakat. Meanwhile, Demra police recovered the body of a woman, aged around 50, from Konapara road in Demra around 2:00am and the body of a youth, aged around 25, from a road in front of Matuail Matrisadan and Shishu Hospital of Jatrabari around 1:00am and sent those to Sir Salimullah Medical College for autopsy.

Govt considering master plan to combat climate change: Rizvi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The government is considering a multi-decade master plan to combat adverse effects of climate change, prime minister's Adviser Gowher Rizvi said yesterday. "The plan is needed as a large part of the country may go under water due to climate change. There is already tremendous pressure on the land due to the rising population," he said. He was speaking at the inauguration of Noazesh Knowledge Centre (NKC), a joint venture of Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh (WTB) and Zoological Society of London, at Cosmos Centre in the city. NKC is named after eminent photographer and botanist Dr Noazesh Ahmed. Rizvi said the main challenge is to create awareness on the issue and this centre would help people.

Kadamtali murder: Police clueless

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Police are still in the dark on identity of the murderers and the reason behind the brutal killing of three youths in the city's Kadamtali, five days into the discovery of the bodies. Gagged and rope-bound bodies of Johnny, his brother Babu and their friend Hasan with their throats slit were found on a wetland at West Mohammadpur on March 7. Two local youths Ibrahim, 22, and Kuddus, 20, were arrested on suspicion and taken on a two-day remand.

INTERNATIONAL CRIMES TRIBUNAL Call to provide facilities to remove 'controversy'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

International Crimes Tribunal of Bangladesh should be provided with all necessary facilities so that it can work independently and avoid any sort of controversy about the trial of war crimes suspects, said some speakers at a discussion yesterday. They said controversy over government's influence on the tribunal would exist until all sorts of logistic and sufficient financial support are provided to the tribunal. Ekatturer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee (forum for secular Bangladesh and trial of 1971 war criminals) organised the discussion to mark the publication of a book in the city's WVA auditorium. The book written by the committee's Executive President Shahriar Kabir focuses on war, war crimes and trial of war crimes in the history of civilisation. Discussants expressed concern over whether the trial would be complete within the tenure of the present government as the process could not begin formally since the beginning of the tribunal a year ago. Justice Syed Amirul Islam said not a single charge sheet was placed before the tribunal against the arrested war crimes suspects. In response to the concerns, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed said, "There should not be any confusion about the trial of people who

committed crimes against humanity during the war in 1971 and the trial process will formally start soon." "Trial of war criminals is not a business of any other state as it is totally an internal matter of an independent country -- Bangladesh," he stated, after saying that some people often opine that a few countries may oppose the trial. "International standard of the trial will surely be ensured and observers from abroad will be welcomed to watch the process," he said. Shahriar said the present government should complete the trial of war criminals and reinstate the constitution of 1972 within its tenure as per the government's electoral pledges. Dr Turin Afroz, law secretary of the committee, said the book describes historical reasons and aspects of war, war crimes and trial of war criminals and would help researchers and law students in academic activities. Ghulam Arif Tipu, chief prosecutor of the prosecution team of the tribunal, said he was mesmerised by the way Shahriar described such a tough topic easily in the book and hoped it will help him. Attorney General Mahub-e-Alam and President of Human Rights Congress for Bangladesh Minority Prof Ajoy Roy also spoke.



(From right) Attorney General Mahubey Alam, Justice Syed Amirul Islam, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed, Justice Ghulam Rabbani, Prof Ajoy Roy and Shahriar Kabir at a discussion of Ekatturer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee at WVA auditorium in the city yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

Cut groundwater usage for eco balance: Experts

BSS, Dhaka
Irrigation through groundwater should be reduced to maintain ecological balance and cut irrigation cost in the agriculture sector. Experts suggested increased use of surface water for irrigation to avoid adverse impact on ecology. They feared that overuse of groundwater would make adverse impact on environment and agriculture sector. Groundwater level is declining gradually in the country as irrigation still depends largely on groundwater, Chief Geologist of BADC Khandaker Fazal Hasan told the news agency. In the last Rabi season, total irrigated area was 52,17,626 hectares, while groundwater covered 41,27,387 hectares which was 79.10 percent of total irrigated area. Surface water irrigation covered 10,90,239 hectares which was 20.90 percent of total irrigated area, according to a Minor Irrigation Survey Report (2009-10). The survey was jointly conducted by Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC), Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) and Barind Multipurpose Development Authority (BMDA). Nearly 52.18 lakh hectares of land were brought under irrigation by using a total of 16,08,661 mechanised and non-mechanised equipment during the Rabi season last year. According to another survey report, a total of 51.27 lakh hectares were brought under irrigation during the Rabi season in 2008-09 of which 40,50,706 hectares were irrigated by groundwater and 10,76,145 hectares through surface water. Underground water level is going down gradually due to its overuse for irrigation, Hasan said, adding that farmers in many places during Rabi season suffered from inadequate irrigation water due to low water level. Chief Engineer (minor irrigation) of BADC Abul Quasem Mia said overuse of groundwater will have adverse impact on environment as water level in many areas is declining.

DHAKA TODAY

Meeting
Amra Bangladeshi will organise a meeting; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 11:00am.

Discussion
Center for ICT Policy Research will organise a discussion; Venue: Bangabandhu International Conference Centre; Time: 10:30am.

Seminar
International Kidney and Diabetic Foundation will hold a seminar; Venue: Dhaka Reporters Unity; Time: 4:00pm.

Meeting
Swadhinata Forum will hold a meeting; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 4:00pm.

Workshop
Participatory Research and Development Initiative will hold a workshop; Venue: IDB Bhaban; Time: 9:00am.

Memorial
Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal will organise a memorial; Venue: its central office; Time: 4:00pm.

Conference
International Business Forum of Bangladesh will hold a conference; Venue: Sheraton Hotel; Time:

WEATHER TODAY

Temperature may rise by 1-3 degree

UNB, Dhaka
Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over Dhaka, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Khulna and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Comilla and Noakhali in next 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry elsewhere over the country.
Day temperature may rise by 1-3 degree Celsius over the country, Met office said.
The sun sets in the capital yesterday at 6:07pm and rises today at 6:09am.
Country's highest temperature 34.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 17.5 degrees at Sayerdupur of Dinajpur.
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	31.2	20.8	67	51
Chittagong	32.8	20.5	66	63
Rajshahi	31.6	18.5	79	53
Rangpur	29.8	18.0	76	51
Khulna	32.2	20.0	62	48
Barisal	32.5	20.5	74	54



Green Belt Trust organises a candle lit ceremony at Aparajeya Bangla on the Dhaka University campus yesterday praying for those who died in Friday's tsunami and earthquake in Japan. PHOTO: STAR