

Involved

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unaware of the abduction plan and Ameer misguided and exploited them.

Ameer, a listed criminal active in Old Dhaka and Keraniganj, is still at large, law enforcers say.

Kala Chand said he had just been keeping an eye on Parag and the family for around a month till the incident as he was promised a reward of Tk 5 lakh in return.

Ameer's brother-in-law Abul Kashem and Rizvi Ahmed Onik and Alfaz Hossain were taken on remand as police were not satisfied with information the trio disclosed during an earlier interrogation.

After police produced the six before a Dhaka court yesterday, a magistrate recorded the confessional statements of the three and ordered sending them to jail while granted remand for others.

The Rapid Action Battalion handed them over to police Thursday night.

The day before, police arrested Ameer's relative Mamun Miah from Munshiganj. He was placed on a seven-day remand on Thursday.

Son of Bimal Mondal, Parag was abducted on November 11 and he was found three days later at Aitabazar, two kilometres off his residence.

Sources say different interest groups targeting Bimal's properties got involved in the crime.

"We are also hearing of the involvement of some local influentials. But until and unless Ameer is arrested, we cannot say anything for sure," the OC said.

Lt Col Ziaul Ahsan, director of Rab's Intelligence Wing, said, "We are not sure whether anybody pulled strings from behind."

Sanwar Hossain, a senior assistant commissioner of DB, quoted Mamun as saying, "They [Ameer and Mamun] had been planning to run a sewing machine business and they had planned the abduction to raise capital."

"Both Ameer and Mamun had visited China in June on business purpose", Sanwar said. "Ameer was arrested soon after their return in July. He was freed on bail around one and a half months ago."

War trial

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attacked police, hampered the study of students and destroyed the time of working people, aiming to make the country unstable.

"We must resist Jamaat and those who patronise it at any cost," he said.

Urging all to perform their responsibilities properly, the home minister said the country cannot move forward without the contribution of mass people.

The Awami League government, led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, was trying heart and soul to accelerate the country's progress, Alamgir told his audience.

"Major bridges in the country had been constructed during the regime of Awami League government. The Padma Bridge will also be built by the present government," he said.

Highlighting his government's success in the education sector, the minister said the government was working sincerely to ensure higher education for all students by introducing diploma courses at technical institutions at the district level.

Environment and Forests Minister Hasan Mahmud, State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Mojibur Rahman Fakir, among others, spoke at the function organised by Bangladesh Family Welfare Visitors Association.

Putin, Merkel seek to boost ties

AFP, Moscow

German Chancellor Angela Merkel was to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday with the two sides seeking to soothe tensions over Berlin's recent criticism of Moscow's rights record.

Star enters

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"If this region is going to depend on the West and ape them, what kind of values we would have?" he questioned.

The civilisation of the West is over and now it is the turn of this region, he observed. "When I am talking about South Asia, we take pride of being in South Asia."

The Daily Star Books started its journey with publishing Nayar's memoirs -- Beyond the Lines.

He called upon the South Asians not to think of what is black or white, or of this or that country; rather to think of the progress and spirit of accommodation. "As a South Asian, I think our destination is together."

He spoke about his belief that men should never be judged by their riches or influence, but by their values.

Nayar considered partition of the subcontinent a mistake, saying if there had been no partition, religious fundamentalism would not have risen in Pakistan, India and even in Bangladesh, where it is also beginning to grow.

About his memoirs, he said it is more about India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, than it is about him.

"I have captured certain parts of the history, but I have not been able to capture the moments when I left home and my family was saying goodbye, tears in my eyes, tears in theirs as we would not know whether we would meet again or not."

"Similarly, when I came to Bangladesh for the first time, there was a small airport, lots of luggage strewn all around and still I found the people saying 'Joy Bangla', 'Joy Bangla', " said Nayar.

Discussing the memoirs, eminent economist Rehman Sobhan said Nayar has presented a bird's eye view of the Indian history during the partition days.

"It is interesting because it gives us a perspective of a person who was not a bystander, but an active player in that particular process," he mentioned.

Nayar did something which journalists are less inclined to do, he observed, adding that the book is written by a journalist who feels that journalism is not just a vocation to communicate news and information. "He [Nayar] is a firm believer in a secular, democratic and egalitarian society."

Famed jurist Dr Kamal Hossain said it is an extraordinary book by an extraordinary person.

"Autobiography is something which you look backwards and share what you have experienced. In this case, you get the sense that this is a work in progress, of which the second volume is awaited," he added.

There are so many things (in this book) that are still forward-looking and anticipatory; there are unanswered questions, making the read-

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Obama

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Obama on Thursday.

Obama is scheduled for a trip to Asia today that will include a historic stop in Myanmar.

Some human rights workers object to the trip, saying the president is rewarding the country too soon for its still fragile democratic reforms.

Obama aides said the trip to the country was meant to lock in reforms and encourage more, while serving as an example to countries such as North Korea that the United States would engage with former foes if they reform.

But ethnic violence remains a top US concern. Tom Donilon, Obama's national security adviser, said US diplomats had been working closely with the Myanmar government on how to ensure the safety of people in Rakhine state along Myanmar's western border.

"I expect the president will address this directly with the leadership of Burma [Myanmar] as well when he's there," he said.

Muslim Rohingyas have lived for generations in Rakhine state on the coastline of western Myanmar. But Buddhist Rakhines and other people of Myanmar view them as illegal immigrants from neighbouring Bangladesh who deserve neither rights nor sympathy.

Obama has developed a moral conscience because he was nurtured in warm and caring surroundings of his powerful grandmother in Sialkot of Pakistan, she mentioned.

Prof Mesbah Kamal of Dhaka University compared the book with an encyclopaedia.

Moderating the ceremony, Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam said if there are some people who are truly South Asian in their commitment and outlook, Kuldip Nayar is one of them.

"Nayar is a tireless worker for the cooperation among the South Asian countries as he believes that some day the South Asian countries will be like European Union," he added.

He hoped that the Daily Star Books, under licences of international publishers, would be able to bring the readers world class books on politics, history, and the highest standard of literary works at a reasonable price.

AL expels

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by-polls as an independent candidate.

Meanwhile, AL yesterday expelled rebel candidate Rana from the party for violating party decision.

AL presidium member Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim announced the decision at a rally organised in support of AL nominated candidate Shahidul Islam Lebu at Ghatail Gono Uchcho Bidyaloy premises in the one of them.

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Putin, Merkel seek to boost ties

AFP, Ulan Bator

Senior Japanese and North Korean diplomats ended rare talks yesterday, with reports saying they were eyeing a further meeting.

Experts at a programme in Paris on October 30 said the hammer that dealt blow to New York by super-storm Sandy should raise the alarm for coastal mega-cities in Asia.

The assessment provides a much more comprehensive analysis than earlier studies, focusing on

Attacks will only speed

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Contacted, noted jurist M Zahir said it would not be possible to try anyone under sharia [Islamic law] straight away. Those attacking the police could be tried under the traditional laws of the land.

"If the trials have to be done under sharia, the Islamic law has to be passed by parliament," Zahir told The Daily Star, adding that if any law was passed only to punish someone or some people, it would be considered a bad law.

The prime minister in her speech also mentioned qiyas. According to Wikipedia, qiyas is the process of deductive analogy in which the teachings of the Hadith are compared and contrasted with those of the Quran, in order to apply a known injunction to a new circumstance and create a new injunction. Here the ruling of the Sunnah and the Quran may be used as a means to solve or provide a response to a new problem that may arise.

"This time, I also want to say that these trials [war crimes trials] must also be held and none can prevent them," he said.

At the ALCWC meet, Hasina said, in an indirect reference to the opposition, "They have plotted various conspiracies in their last-ditch effort to hinder the war crimes trials, and

On the attack on minorities in Ramu of Cox's Bazar on September 29-30, the prime minister said it had been staged to destroy the country's communal harmony and people knew that very well.

"This incident was unexpected...it was done in a planned way to create anarchy in the country. But fortunately, we managed to prevent it."

She criticised the opposition leader for visiting China and India before visiting Ramu, where she "only presented the victims with a speech of allegations against the government and nothing else".

The meeting yesterday also fixed December 29 for holding the party's national council in Dhaka.

At the meeting yester-

Ex-directors

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fund embezzlement and blamed the bank's officials for the scam. Sonali Bank suspended its 31 officials and made two deputy managing directors officers on special duty.

The board directors, who were appointed under political consideration, have been denying their involvement in the scam since it came to light. Rather, the board put the blame on the bank's management saying officials did not inform it about the Hall-Markloans.

But Sonali Bank documents show that the board at its meeting on April 20 last year approved Tk 65.41 crore loan to Hall-Mark Spinning Mills. The board gave the approval under some conditions that include raising Hall-Mark Spinning Mill's paid-up capital to Tk 5 crore from Tk 50 lakh and conducting a credit rating within six months of the approval.

"There was no controversy about Hall-Mark when we approved the loan. We gave conditional approval for the loan," Quasem Humayun, a former director of Sonali Bank, told The Daily Star.

He said it was the management's duty to see whether Hall-Mark fulfilled the conditions or not.

"The board was not there to look after the bank's everyday work."

He said the loan proposal of Hall-Mark Spinning Mills was assessed by the bank's Ruposhi Bangla Hotel branch, a deputy general manager, a general manager, managing director and the bank's credit committee before the board gave its final consent.

Requesting anonymity, a senior Sonali Bank official said the management provided the board with Hall-Mark's credit report at the end of last year.

No to formalin

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DCC-North kitchen market traders association in cooperation with Gulshan Society will monitor the initiative at the kitchen market.

The apex trade body trained two staffs of the Gulshan Society to operate the Tk 1.35 lakh formalin detector donated by Exim Bank Ltd.

Abul Kashem, president of the market committee, said "We will no longer allow traders to sell fish, fruits and vegetables in the market without checking them with the machine."

The move comes at a time when rampant food adulteration is raising concerns about its deadly impact on health.

Unscrupulous traders spray fish, fruits and vegetables with formalin and other chemicals that are normally used for preservation of tissues and also in textile and leather industries.

Speaking on the occasion, FBCCI President AK Azad called upon the traders to refrain from selling adulterated fish and vegetables only for short-term gain.

Hal Uddin, a director of the apex trade body, said FBCCI had a plan to declare Dhaka a formalin-free city within the next couple of months.

"We have around 30 big kitchen markets in the city. We will supply similar machines to those markets with the help of banks and other private organisations," said Hal Uddin, the key initiator of the formalin-free ideal market project.

The commerce minister said the government has recently imposed a restriction on wholesale import of formalin to prevent misuse of toxic chemicals in foodstuff and fish.

Quader said the country has necessary rules, regulations and laws to ensure punishment of formalin suppliers for using formalin in foodstuff and fish.

He stressed the need for building awareness against the misuse of formalin.

The minister said the government would soon launch special drives at the four kitchen markets that had been declared formalin free to check the misuse of toxic chemicals.

Subhash passes

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yesterday.

The noted filmmaker breathed his last around 7:10am at his Ramkrishna Mission Road house. He was 82. He is survived by two sons, two daughters and many grandchildren. His wife passed away in 2001. Around noon today, his body will be kept at the Central Shaheed Minar and later will be taken to Bangladesh Film Development Corporation to enable his well-wishers and fans pay their last respects to him. He will be cremated at the Postogola Cremation Ground in the evening.

President Zillur Rahman, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Textiles and Jute Minister Abdul Latif Siddique expressed deep shock and sorrow at the death of Subhash Dutta.

In separate messages, they said his demise is an irreparable loss to the country's film industry as well as to the cultural arena.

He was one of the few great filmmakers who dedicated themselves in establishing

the art of Bangla cinema.

He was one of