

Involved

FROM PAGE 1 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 Tk5lakh 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 Bimol Mondol, Parag was abducted on November 11 and he was found three days later at Atibazar, two kilometres off his residence.

Sources say different interest groups targeting Bimol'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 OCSaid.

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

FROM PAGE 1 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-

ers to think about it, mentioned Kamal.

The lawyer said although Nayar is formally willing to say he is a journalist, he is so much more than that. "He is a person with an extraordinary sense of mission that life has a purpose."

Matiur Rahman, editor and publisher of the Prothom Alo, presented a brief on Nayar's life and career.

"What he [Nayar] witnessed, especially during the partition of the subcontinent and the emergence of Bangladesh, he should have written all these incidents in about 5,000 pages. But he has done it in 420 pages," he said.

The book is a must read for the students of political science and journalism, and important for knowing Bangladesh's history as well, added Matiur.

Prof Rebecca Haque of English department at Dhaka University said the book portrays the images of frontline, battle line, border line, behind the lines and, of course, between the lines.

Nayar 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, Kuldeep 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

FROM PAGE 1 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 evening.

Jatiya Party (JP-Ershad) backed candidate Syed Abu Yusuf Abdullah Tuhin, an industrialist, is another candidate in the by-election.

The parliamentary seat fell vacant due to the death of ruling Awami League lawmaker Matiur Rahman on September 14.

Superstorm alert

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Fifteen of the cities are in Asia, with the first eight places going to Kolkata, Mumbai, Dhaka, Guangzhou, Ho Chi Minh City, Shanghai, Bangkok and Yangon.

The other seven cities are Haiphong (10th), Tianjin (12th), Khulna (13th), Ningbo in China (14th), Chittagong (18th), Tokyo (19th), and Jakarta (20th). The remaining five cities are Miami (9th), Alexandria in Egypt (11th), Lagos (15th), Abidjan in Ivory Coast (16th), and New York (17th), said the study titled "The Exposure of Port Cities to Flooding: A Comparative Global Analysis".

This global screening study of the Paris-based organisation makes a first estimate of the exposure of the world's large port cities to coastal flooding because of storm surge and damage due to high winds.

It also investigates how climate change is likely to impact each port city's exposure to coastal flooding by the 2070s, alongside subsidence and population growth and urbanisation.

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

the 136 port cities around the world that have more than one million inhabitants.

"These cities are undergoing very rapid expansion and they are not only exposed to sea-level rise, they are also exposed to tropical cyclones," Bob Ward, director of policy at the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment in London, was quoted in the executive summary of the report as saying.

"It's clear there isn't any urban planning going on, and they have a lot of poor people living in very low-quality housing who are going to be especially vulnerable and exposed," he said.

Awareness of the risks and good governance is the key to diminishing the threat, said Ashvin Dayal, head of the Rockefeller Foundation in Asia, which supports strengthening of the region's climate defences.

Experts at a programme in Paris on October 30 said the hammer that dealt blow to New York by superstorm Sandy should raise the alarm for coastal megacities in Asia.

Obama

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officials 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. Last month, a week of sectarian violence claimed 89 lives, according to the official count.

White House officials noted the Rohingya had suffered from the ethnic violence.

"The president will be addressing the broad context of ethnic reconciliation and national reconciliation within Burma. Specifically, I think what we'd like to see is continued work to stabilise the situation, but also to bring down the temperature and reduce the tensions," Deputy National Security Adviser Ben Rhodes told reporters at a conference call.

Samantha Power, a top human rights adviser to Obama, said the text of the president's speech at a university in Myanmar on Monday was still being completed, but added the president would discuss the Rohingya in some form during his visit.

"Ultimately, the legal status of the Rohingya of course in this country as well as in the region needs to be resolved," she said.

Gaza blitzed

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Misharawi had arrived at Gaza's Shifa Hospital after Omar suffered severe burns in an airstrike that sent shrapnel tearing into his home killing a woman and leaving his brother and uncle critically injured.

Dozens of casualties from the Israeli barrage were being treated at the hospital as a distraught Masharawi said, "The Israelis say they are targeting militants but my son was an innocent."

Pictures of Misharawi holding Omar were splashed across front pages like the Washington Post's on Thursday, writes Huffington Post.

In a statement, the BBC said, "Our thoughts are with Jihad and the rest of the team in Gaza. This is a particularly difficult moment for the whole bureau in Gaza. We're fortunate to have such a committed and courageous team there. It's a sobering reminder of the challenges facing many of our colleagues."

Omar was later buried.

Western leaders have appealed for both sides to stop the escalation in violence.

Japan, North Korea agree to continue dialogue

AFP, Ulan Bator

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

Japanese negotiator Shinsuke Sugiyama said the two sides agreed to continue their dialogue for "further consideration" about the issue of the North's past abduction of Japanese nationals, according to Jiji Press.

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.

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

attacks on police across the country were parts of that plan.

"So I call upon all, also the opposition leader, to refrain from trying to hinder the trials."

The prime minister observed the war crimes trial was the demand of the nation, especially the youths, and it must be held.

Referring to the international crimes tribunals, she claimed that the tribunals were functioning transparently and there was hardly any instance in the world where so many opportunities had been given to the accused.

She said the main opposition BNP enforced hartal on the day the verdict of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman killing case was announced. The verdict was delivered during the last Awami League-led government's tenure, 1996-2001.

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

She said the nation was of warriors and they would never bow down to the defeated forces (Jamaat-Shibir).

At the meeting yester-

Day of ideas

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felt when I was a child," said Eurig.

Outside the halls, renowned Bangladeshi poets like Nirmalendu Goon and Asad Chowdhury and Kolkata poets Gautam Chaudhury and Probal Kumar Boshu hung around the lawn and chatted with fans. The event was also an opportunity for journalists, photographers, and editors to meet each other.

Youngsters flocked around their favourite authors at the food corners and seemed keen on getting to know the authors representing different cultures.

Pakistani writer Mohammed Hanif and Bangladeshi writer Anis Ahmed discussed in a session the controversial topic of conspiracies in a witty and engaging dialogue with Sameer Rahim of the Telegraph UK.

The writers highlighted the South Asian obsession with conspiracy theories, stating that our curiosities coupled with the inadequacy of information drive us to indulge in them.

A discussion titled "Tales of Liberation" featured three prominent novelists, Anisul Hoque, Philip Hensher and Kamila Shamsie -- all of whom have produced some fine works on the Liberation War of Bangladesh. The writers talked about their stories of the war and the issues involving historic

novels with novelist Tahmima Anam as moderator.

It is the prerogative of the historian to write history, but a writer should have the creative freedom to explore the issue in his own way, said Hensher. He, however, argued that there were limits to free speech. "You can approach a novel with fiction but not with dishonesty."

Shamsie argued that factual inaccuracies in historical novels can and often do detract from the seriousness of the novel as readers start to question the authenticity of the work. "You don't want the reader to start doubting the novel," she added.

In an afternoon session titled "Narir Lekha, Narir Dekha", contemporary female writers Selina Hossain, Umme Muslima, Masuda Bhatti and Anwara Syed Haq critically analysed what it means for women to write, what constitutes women's literature and why more women are not taking up pens to write.

A woman's experiences are different from that of a man; as such, her way of conceptualising the world and writing about it are also different, argued Haq, in answer to the criticism that women's literature often sounds "womanly".

Selina Hossain highlighted that not as many women writers are coming to the forefront as expected. Large numbers

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 Postagola 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

films as an eloquent medium of art in Bangladesh. And in this enterprise, he made a good number of films that immensely contributed to the making of a golden era of Bangla cinema.

Born on February 9, 1930, in Dinajpur, he started his career in the Dhaka film industry at a time when Urdu and Hindi movies were reigning in local movie theatres.

A versatile talent, Subhash started his professional career as a poster designer for the first ever Bangla film Mukh O Mukhosh. He was the art director of the film "Matir Pahar."

In the early days of his career, he played comic roles in mainstream movies and became popular.

He appeared in Ei Desh Tomar Amar, Rajdhanir Bukey, Harano Din, Talash, Sutarang and many other films.

He intended to produce Bangla films that would emulate real life of the masses.

Subhash, spurred by this ambition, made his first film Abirbhab.

The movie not only won the hearts of the local audi-

ence, but also fetched him a prestigious award at the Frankfurt Film Festival.

His film Sutarang was awarded at the Asian Film Festival in Frankfurt in 1964.

Apart from being awarded the Ekushey Padak in 1999, he received many other awards including the National Film Award for his contributions to the film industry.

The five -- a man and a woman in their 30s and three boys aged five, seven and 10 -- are believed to have died of carbon monoxide poisoning after burning charcoal pieces inside the vehicle -- a not uncommon method of taking one's own life in Japan.

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-Mark loans.

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," Quashem 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.

Helal 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 Helal, 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.