

Robbers loot house in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A gang of masked robbers looted gold ornaments and money worth around Tk 12 lakh from an expatriate's house in Rangunia of Chittagong early yesterday.

Around 12 robbers entered into the house of Md Kamal Uddin at Saroffbhata in the upazila, by breaking open the door, said Jamal Uddin, sub-inspector of Rangunia Police Station.

Later, they robbed the ornaments and money at a gun point, the police said.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Mohsena Begum, former editor of Kallol literary periodical, passed away yesterday morning due to old age complications. She was 78.

She left behind her husband, a son, a daughter, and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn her death.

She served as the editor of the Kallol from 1957 to 1958.

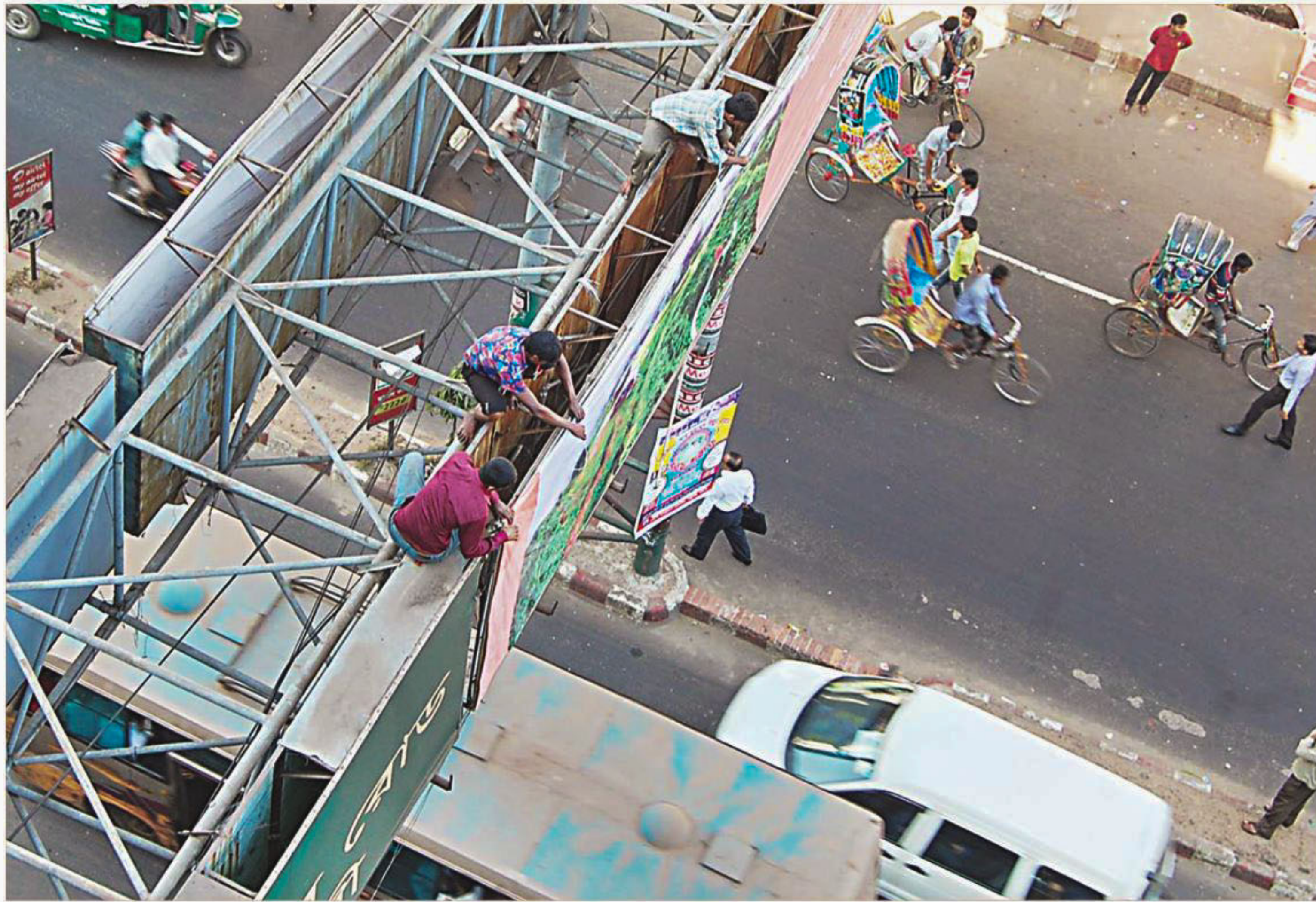
She was buried at Kadam Mobarak graveyard after her namaz-e-janaza on Kadam Mobarak Muslim Orphanage Mosque premises in Chittagong.

Iftekhar Ahmed Sayeed
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Iftekhar Ahmed Sayeed, a businessman and social worker, died of cardiac arrest at his residence on College Road in Mymensingh town early yesterday. He was 64.

He left behind his wife, a son and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

Sayeed was buried at Gulkibari graveyard in the town after a namaz-e-janaza on Government Ananda Mohan College premises after Asr prayers.



With no guard railing or safety harness, these workers risk their lives while trying to hang a billboard right over a major thoroughfare in Dewan Haat area of Chittagong city yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

No democracy in political parties

BBC Bangladesh Sanglap told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two panellists yesterday told BBC Bangladesh Sanglap that lack of democracy in the political parties is the main barrier to the development of democracy in the county while the two other panel members, who were politicians, sought more time for its development.

According to Maj Gen (retd) ANM Muniruzzaman, president of Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies, and filmmaker Sara Afreen, democracy has not been established in any of the country's political parties.

Maniruzzaman said, "How we can expect democracy from the political parties who don't practice democracy inside them. Democracy won't be strengthened in the country unless the political parties establish

democracy inside them."

Information Minister Hasanul Haque Inu said the country was marching towards democracy and that democracy was thriving amid many problems. Senior BNP leader Brig Gen (retd) ASM Hannan Shah viewed that the scenario would change within 20-25 years.

During the dialogue in the capital's BIAM auditorium, an audience member put a question to the four-member panel about the ruling Awami League's December 29 national council. She asked, "Should democratic practices inside political parties be like this?"

The AL council has empowered re-elected AL President Sheikh Hasina to choose other members to its central committee and bring changes, if necessary, in the AL constitution and

declaration, which violates party charter and the Representation of People Order.

A female participant asked the panel, "Why Bangladeshi women are repressed despite our prime minister and the opposition leader being women?" Sara Afreen replied that such incidents occurred due to lack of good governance and law enforcement.

In another response, all four panellists criticised the recent killing of some unarmed Bangladeshis by India's Border Security Force (BSF) and sought government action.

Hannan Shah said if voted to power, the BNP would try to stop border killings through diplomacy with India. If it still continues, they will not remain "subservient" as the present government, he added.

Agreement among parties must for fair polls

Says US ambassador

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

US Ambassador in Dhaka Dan W Mozena yesterday reiterated that Bangladesh must hold free, fair and credible elections and there should be an agreement on how to hold such elections.

"And that is what drives my total confidence in fact that there will be constructive dialogue among the parties. Democracy must remain in Bangladesh as other forms of governments tried in the past have not worked well," he said.

Mozena was talking to journalists after addressing a seminar organised by Washington-based US Bangladesh Advisory Council in the capital's American Club.

The council is engaged in promoting US-Bangladesh relations and understanding and advising US trade, development and foreign policy towards Bangladesh.

He said Bangladesh by its nature must be a democracy because its democratic culture was very rich, deep and strong.

The US ambassador expressed his optimism that dialogues were taking place right now informally among the political players to find a common ground

on a way to hold elections in a free, fair and credible manner.

Mozena was asked if he still expected dialogues after BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia rejected a recent dialogue offer from Awami League.

"I believe very strongly that the way ahead for democracy in Bangladesh is for all of major players to engage in dialogue to come up with agreement on way for political process to move ahead.

"And I am very hopeful that this dialogue in fact will take place because I don't know of any alternative.

"And I am sure that everybody loves Bangladesh and everybody knows that there needs to be an agreement on how to move forward with the political process and the only way to reach an agreement is in fact to have constructive dialogue," he said.

Replying to a question regarding today's hartal and the prospect of many more hartals in the future, Mozena said he hated hartals because it had negative effects on many people who, at the end of the day, found it difficult to have the means to buy food.

He encouraged all political players to find other mechanisms, which did not harm people, to express their views.



Bank Asia Ltd Chairman A Rouf Chowdhury poses for photograph after handing over Bank Asia Higher Study Scholarship-2012 to insolvent meritorious students of Malkhanagor, Sirajdikhan and Baligaon of Munshiganj district and Rohitpur of Keraniganj, Dhaka yesterday. Bank Asia Board Audit Committee Chairman Rume A Hossain, Director Shah Md Nurul Alam, Deputy Managing Director Aminul Islam, Senior Executive Vice President Md Arfan Ali and Sirajdikhan Upazila Chairman Md Mohiuddin Ahmed are also seen in the picture.

PHOTO: COURTESY

'Nobody helped us'

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unconscious with a metal bar by her attackers before the pair were thrown off the bus.

They lay in the street for 45 minutes before a police van arrived, and officers then spent a long time arguing about where to take them, the man said.

"We kept shouting at the police, 'please give us some clothes' but they were busy deciding which police station our case should be registered at," the man said in Hindi.

"The cruelty I saw should not be seen ever," the man, who cannot be

named for legal reasons, told AFP of the savagery of the assault which started after the couple were lured onto the bus after watching a film together.

He said it took 90 minutes for the injured pair to reach hospital because passers-by ignored their pleas for help, and police were late to arrive and then needlessly delayed.

"They could have taken us to hospital, given us clothes in that crucial one-and-a-half hours. For a dying person every minute is important," he told the channel.

"From where we

boarded the bus, they (the attackers) moved around for nearly two and a half hours. We were shouting, trying to make people hear us. But they switched off the lights of the bus," he said, according to a transcript of the interview.

When they were thrown out, they pleaded with passers-by for help, he added in the studio interview, a blue metal crutch leaning on his chair.

"There were a few people who had gathered round but nobody helped. Before the police came I screamed for help but the auto rickshaws, cars and

others passing by did not stop," the man added.

Facing angry criticism on the streets, where protests have raged over the last three weeks against the lack of safety in the Indian capital, the police issued a hasty rebuttal.

Delhi police spokesman Rajan Bhagat told Reuters GPS records show the first police van reached the scene four minutes after the police were called, and took the man and the woman to hospital within 24 minutes.

Separately, the police filed a case against Zee News because the interview, which showed the

boyfriend's face unobscured, had illegally disclosed the identity of a rape victim.

Five men were charged with her gang rape and murder on Thursday. They must appear before a New Delhi court on Monday to hear the charges against them, the court said yesterday.

35 hurt

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"Although proper fire training was provided to the workers, they are frightened of any small incident or when they hear a rumour," he added.

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