

Parag describes kidnap to court

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Six-year-old Parag Mondol, a student of KG-I of Heed International School, yesterday told a magistrate how he was abducted by a gang in presence of his family members on November 11 last year.

But he could not remember how many abductors took him away from in front of this residence at Shuvadda Paschim Parag in Keraniganj that day while he was going to school.

In his statement, Parag told the court that one of the abductors hit him on the head and pulled him up on a motorcycle.

He said one, Al Amin, who has been arrested alongside 10 others, was driving the motorcycle and there was another man sitting behind, whose name he could not remember.

Parag also remembered the abductors shooting and injuring his mother, sister and the family car's driver before taking

him away.

However, he could not remember where he was kept before his release on the capital's outskirts, Atibazar, three days later.

Senior Judicial Magistrate Kazi Shahidul Islam recorded the over three-hour statement commencing from 9:30am.

Inspector Monir Hossain of Keraniganj Police Station, also the investigation officer of the abduction case, produced Parag before the court.

Earlier five of the eleven arrested accused, including Al Amin, confessed to their involvement in the abduction. They had got bail on different dates but were sent to jail again following an order of the High Court.

The arrestees include Jubo League leader Aminul Haque alias Jewel Mollah and Amirul Islam alias Legra Amir.

Sust Press Club's activities halted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) authorities on Tuesday halted all activities of Sust Press Club till the formation of its executive committee under the vice chancellor, proctor and student adviser.

The decision came following demonstrations, including a human chain, processions and a half-hour blockade on the Sylhet-Sunamganj highway, on February 23 by several hundred students demanding arrest of one Abu Taher Md Sattar.

Sattar, correspondent of a local daily "Shyamol Sylhet" and Sust correspondent of The Daily Jankantha, on December 3 last year had illegally declared himself the executive committee's convener, said the demonstrators.

Using that post he recently issued a statement in local newspapers expressing solidarity with a national daily newspaper report of February 11 against the liberation war-related sculptures and Projonmo Chattar at Sust, said the demonstrators.

Sattar, who gave his masters final exam from anthropology department two months ago and now introduces himself as Taher Tuton, is a member of the information and publication unit of Jamaat backed Islami Chhatra Shibir at Sust, they added.

2 Pakistani citizens held with heroin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two Pakistani citizens were held with 10.2kg heroin worth around Tk 10 crore at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the capital yesterday.

The arrestees were Harun, 55, and Alla Baksh, 45. Acting on a tip-off, members of Armed Police Battalion (APBn) challenged the people after they arrived at the airport around 1:30pm, and recovered six packets containing the illicit drug, said a press release.

Harun came to Bangladesh 17 times and Alla Baksh five times. Police confirmed it checking their passports. A case was filed with Airport Police Station in this connection.



Dirty water from drains flood the street at Kadamtali in Chittagong. Due to construction of Kadamtali-Dewanhat flyover, the drainage system in the area is in a very bad condition, causing sufferings to people in the area. The flyover is being constructed although it is not in the master plan of Chittagong Development Authority.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Govt urged to restrict formalin import

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday urged the government to enforce laws strictly to restrict the import of formalin to prevent its use in food products.

Around 70 percent of formalin use can be prevented if its import is controlled, they added.

The roundtable discussion titled "Child Nutrition and Food Safety" was organised by the Bangla daily Prothom Alo at its office in Karwan Bazar in the capital with support from the NGO Eminence.

Speakers also urged the government to establish laboratories at bor-

der and shipping points and airports of every district to ensure quality assurance of imported food products.

"Around Tk 10,000 crore was spent by the government last year on LC of fruits import. A segment of this money can be spent on pre-shipment assessment to check whether the fruits imported have formalin or any other harmful chemicals in them," said Tahmid Ahmed, director of Centre for Nutrition and Food Safety, ICDDR, B.

Speakers said the use of formalin in food products could be reduced if the

government ensured that only those who used the chemical for laboratory or medical use could purchase it.

"More quality assurance labs can easily be set up in airports if a one-percent tax is levied on imported fruits. The price of the fruits might increase from Tk7 to 8 but health risks would be reduced significantly," said Abu Alam Md Shahid Khan, secretary to Local Government Division of the Ministry of LGRD and Cooperatives.

Dr Md Shamim Hayder Talukder, CEO of Eminence, spoke among others.

FIRE AT BOI MELA Publishers to be compensated

DU CORRESPONDENT

Cultural Affairs Minister Abul Kalam Azad yesterday assured compensation to the 25 publishers of Amar Ekushey Boi Mela, who lost 37 stalls in Monday's fire at Bangla Academy.

On assurance, the publishers withdrew their decision to keep all stalls closed from 3:00pm-4:00pm yesterday.

The minister met the representatives of Bangla Academy and the publishers at his ministry.

Farid Ahmed, executive director of Gyan and Srijonshil Prokashoni, said the minister wanted to compensate them after arrival of the report of the probe committee formed to value the losses.

Meanwhile, none of the two probe bodies formed on February 25 submitted their reports by the deadline yesterday.

Bangla Academy Director General Shamsuzzaman Khan said the probe body to assess the losses might submit its report today but the technical committee which was tasked to find the cause of the fire may take some more days.

Meanwhile, hundreds of visitors observed one minute's silence in the fair yesterday in memory of the author Humayun Azad, who died in 2004 after an attack by Islamists. Writers, publishers and readers formed a human chain on the fair ground to demand trial of the attackers.



A giant turtle fitted with a GPS tracking device on its shell was released in the Bay of Bengal from Sonadia Island yesterday. The device will give insights into the endangered animal's migration pattern through recording and storing its location data.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Another turtle fitted with transmitter

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts have installed a transmitter in a turtle's body and released it in the Bay of Bengal from Sonadia Island to observe its migration routes and offshore habits for better conservation.

On Friday, the experts of Marinelife Alliance installed the device in the body of the turtle named "Basanti", an endangered species of "Olive Ridley turtle".

Earlier in 2011, they tracked another turtle, named "Urnee", of the same species. They found that it traveled around 12,000 km up to the Sri Lanka coast after releasing eggs in the coast area of Sonadia Island in Cox's Bazar of Bangladesh.

Zahirul Islam, executive director of Marinelife Alliance, said, "We are trying to know their migration routes and investigate their critical offshore biological information needed to apply the conservation measures to save them."

The "Basanti" has been named after the Bangla season "Basanta", and it was caught from Sonadia offshore area. It

released 115 eggs this season, he said.

The device is equipped with a Platform Terminal Transmitter (PTT) and it has been installed in its carapace, he added.

A number of turtle scientists from USA, Australia and UK have provided technical support to install the device.

Now, "Basanti" is staying near Inani beach area and it would make nest in the area for laying eggs again for the second time in this season, Zahirul said.

Information about the migration routes of "Basanti" can be found at: www.seaturtle.org/tracking/?project_id=487, he said.

"We lost tracks of Urnee after 357 days, though the longevity of its transmitter's battery was around 800 days," he said.

"Urnee" might have been caught by fishing net as the whole south shallow areas are full of fishing trawlers," he added.

Many endangered species like Olive Ridely and Green turtles make their nests at the long sandy beaches of Cox's Bazar, St Martin's Island and Sonadia Island during the winter season.

Death anniversary

METRO DESK

Today is the fifth death anniversary of Imran Rahman, former managing director and CEO of BRAC Bank Ltd.

Imran was an alumnus of Shaheen School, Mirzapur Cadet College and IBA of Dhaka University. He died in Toronto of Canada at the age of 45.

On this occasion, a memorial service will be held and food will be distributed among destitute in the capital.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Bangladesh, Austria identify common fields of cooperation

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and Austria yesterday identified power and energy, health, education, tourism, human resource development and waste management as common fields of cooperation, and where Austria had enough expertise.

The recognition came at a bilateral meeting Foreign Minister Dipu Moni was holding with her Austrian counterpart Michael Spindelegger in Vienna. Dipu Moni is attending a two-day 5th Global Forum on the UN Alliance of Civilization beginning yesterday.

In response to Dipu Moni's request for Austrian investment in Bangladesh, Spindelegger informed that the trade figure between the two countries, € 350 million in 2012, could get higher.

Spindelegger, also Austria's vice chancellor and federal minister for European and International Affairs, sought Bangladesh's cooperation in the disarmament issue.

Dipu Moni briefed the Austrian minister about Bangladesh's socio-economic development during the past few years and growing relations with neighbouring countries. She requested for training Bangladesh

diplomats in Austria and providing Bangladeshi students scholarships for higher education in Austrian universities.

Bangladesh is going to open a new resident mission in Vienna soon which will help strengthen existing bilateral relations, she said.

Earlier, Dipu Moni met the president of the Federal Economic Chamber of Austria and members of the Foreign Policy Committee of the Austrian Parliament.

The president highly appreciated Bangladesh's constant economic growth for over a decade.

The committee members were very keen to know about Bangladesh and Dipu Moni briefed them about the country's socio-economic and political issues.

She also informed them about various positive steps the government took for the safety and security of workers in ready-made garment sector.

She requested them to share the information with their colleagues in the European parliament to build a positive image of Bangladesh.

In the evening, Dipu Moni attended a reception hosted by the local Bangladesh community.



Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid gives a medal to a graduating student of East West University at the university's 12th convocation held on its campus in the capital's Aftabnagar yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY