

# Reading novel

FROM PAGE 16

we found associated with physical sensation and movement systems suggest that reading a novel can transport you into the body of the protagonist,” said neuroscientist Prof Gregory Berns, lead author of the study.

Twenty-one students took part in the study, with all participants reading the same book -- Pompeii, a 2003 thriller by Robert Harris.

Over 19 days the students read a portion of the book in the evening then had fMRI scans the following morning. Once the book was finished, their brains were scanned for five days after.

The neurological changes were found to have continued for all the five days after finishing, proving that the impact was not just an immediate reaction but has a lasting influence.

# 91pc pass

FROM PAGE 16

students from 9,119 madrasas across the country sat the examinations this year. Some 2,85,796 of them have overcome the hurdle, according to the results published yesterday.

This year, the number of girls was higher than boys -- 1.66 lakh girls against 1.49 lakh boys -- but boys have done better in terms of pass rate and obtaining GPA-5. The success rate of boys is 91.47 percent, while the pass rate of girls is 90.79 percent. A total of 9,762 boys have gained GPA-5 against 9,449 girls.

Around 1.09 lakh or 34.84 percent students have scored between GPA-5 and GPA-4.

Like the previous year, Tanjimul Ummah Cadet Madrasa in the capital's Uttara is topping the list of 20 best performing institutions under Madrasa Education Board. Darunnazat Siddikia Kamil Madrasa in Dhaka is second and Tamirul Millat Kamil Madrasa in Tongi, Gazipur has gained the third position on the list.

The list of top 20 best performing institutions is prepared on the basis of five criteria set by the government, including the total number of examinees, successful examinees and GPA-5 achievers.

# 2 kids hurt

FROM PAGE 16

A Jamaat supporter and a brother of Samad.

Banna was telling reporters at the hospital that the bomb was one of quite a few kept in a bag when one of his relatives pressed his mouth shut. Musanna was not allowed to speak either.

Abdus Salam claimed that the bomb was thrown at the children when they were playing, evading the question about who could have done that.

In a similar incident on December 21, five-year-old Nahidul Islam Mahin had his left wrist blown off while playing with a crude bomb in front of an Awami League office in Upashahar New Market area.

# Railway guard

FROM PAGE 16

Police held the two with splinter injuries.

The arrestees are activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir of Shahjahanpur area, said Abdul Mazid of Dhaka Railway Police Station, adding they had been moving towards the platform to make an attack.

A murder case was filed with the police station.

Meanwhile, Railway Minister Mujibul Haque visited the spot.

He announced a compensation of Tk 1 lakh for the victim's family. The people, who arrested the culprits, will also be awarded, the minister said.

The deceased, father of two daughters and a son, joined the force in October, 2004. He had been discharging his duty at Kamalapur Railway Station since 2008.

# People the ultimate sufferers

FROM PAGE 1

Fakirerpool around 2:30pm only to learn that his flight had been cancelled.

He would be spending the night at his sister's in Jurain.

"I came home after several years to see my family. I never thought I would have to face what I did today," Akkas told The Daily Star last night.

As the government attempted to foil the opposition's "march for democracy", Dhaka city buses and coaches linking the capital stayed off the roads.

In the city, many, enduring harassment by law enforcers, had to walk to work yesterday morning as there were only a few vehicles on the streets. There were security checks waiting for them on the way. Police also picked up many people who failed to produce their ID cards.

Mehedi, who works for a company in Motijheel, was checked six times on his way to work from Sheorapara. He reached work two hours late.

At Ashulia, police were seen refusing to allow anyone, women, children or even elderly passengers, travelling on auto-rickshaws and motorbikes, to enter the city.

"How can people survive if the government

# Hasina then and now

FROM PAGE 1

and credible polls to elect a government of their choice.

She also declared that if voted to power her party would legitimise the activities of the caretaker government as "it has earned the confidence and appreciation of the people."

Late Abdul Jalil, AL general secretary at the time, on January 11 had termed the changeover "a delayed but necessary action."

Flanked by senior leaders of the 14-party alliance, Hasina also attended the swearing-in ceremony of Fakhruddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban on January 12. However, her archrival Khaleda Zia, who had strongly opposed the changeover, boycotted the programme. She had earlier attended the oath-taking of Iajuddin Ahmed as chief advisor, a programme boycotted by Sheikh Hasina.

But Hasina took a different stance on the caretaker government system once parliament scrapped the system in June 2011. Often she blasted the country's eminent citizens, labelling them to be the key players of the 1/11 change-over.

"These eminent citizens benefited the most during the tenures of the undemocratic and unconstitutional system in the past.... The key players of 1/11 have again become vocal these days," she said yesterday, a day after some emi-

# Lebanon mourns ex-minister killed in bombing

AFF, Beirut

Lebanese mourners gathered in Beirut yesterday to bury Mohamed Chatah, a prominent critic of the Syrian regime, killed in a car bombing that revived painful memories of political assassinations.

Chatah, 62, a Sunni Muslim former finance minister and close aide to ex-prime minister Saad Hariri, was killed on Friday along with six other people.

Dozens of others were wounded in the blast in the heart of Beirut, raising fears about the fragile situation in Lebanon, which has seen the war in neighbouring Syria regularly spill over.

behaves this way?" questioned Aminul Islam.

He had to forfeit his air ticket to India as he could not enter the city.

Labourer Jahangir, who had earned Tk 750 working three days in a paddy field in Noakhali, spent Tk 350 to reach Kanchpur.

He along with four others got on a bus at 8:00pm Saturday but police turned it around at Daudkandi Bridge around 3:00am yesterday and the bus went to Comilla.

"I spent the night at a bus terminal there," said Jahangir, adding that he and his companions got on a microbus yesterday morning to reach Chittagong Road in Kanchpur, paying Tk 150 each.

He lamented that more than half his hard-earned money had been spent and he was not even in Dhaka. He was worried there would be no money to take home to his family.

Yesterday, he walked to Sayedabad from Chittagong Road.

Patients were also in trouble. They were intercepted at different points and interrogated and frisked. The number of patients getting admitted to city hospitals fell by a third yesterday.

Abdus Salam, who had an accident, went to Suhrawardy Hospital from Narayanganj in an ambulance. He was stopped and his vehicle

was searched at least 10 times even before it reached Jatrabari.

Badshah Ali, a carpenter from Narsingdi, was yesterday seen sitting on the ground in front of Dhaka Medical College Hospital holding his bandaged head.

"I fell from the roof of a house while mending it on Wednesday. I came to the hospital that night. They [the hospital] have now released me but I do not know how to get back home. I feel dizzy and I can barely walk," he told The Daily Star.

Coach service providers had sold tickets for journeys for last night and today but had to cancel trips since the "march for democracy" would continue today. Hundreds of passengers were in trouble following the cancelled trips.

Restrictions on launches and trains also continued yesterday. No train was allowed to reach Kamalapur Railway Station. All trains were turned around at Joydevpur, Tongi and Tangail stations.

Several trains had started their journeys for Dhaka yesterday assuming the opposition's programme would end by the time they reached Dhaka. But many of them returned and would return without reaching Dhaka as the opposition leader extended the programme yesterday afternoon.

# BNP leader

FROM PAGE 1

picked up several individuals from the area during the period.

BNP chairperson's adviser Enam Ahmed Chowdhury was picked up from the capital's Dainik Bangla intersection around 12:15 pm. He was released in the evening, DB sources said.

Law enforcers also arrested a large number of people, including opposition leaders and activists, after conducting raids in Dhaka and elsewhere against the backdrop of the opposition's 'March for Democracy' programme yesterday.

A source at Police Headquarters said the number of arrestees could be around 2,100. Around 1,500 people usually get arrested everyday.

This correspondent noticed that police were picking up pedestrians in the capital's Kakrail intersection around 9:45 am, and herding them into a police van.

According to Ramna, Shahbagh, Paltan and Motijheel police, over 330 detainees were behind bars in these police stations till 12:45 am today.

Of the detainees, around 212 were behind bars at Ramna Police Station and over 160 people were picked up yesterday alone, sources at the police stations said.

Some 50 people were seen waiting in front of Shahbagh Police Station around 12:30 am today, to communicate with their relatives who were locked up in the police station.

Outside the capital, the law enforcers arrested scores in Chittagong, Comilla, Moulvibazar, Narsingdi, Kishoreganj, Chapainawabganj, Natore, Pabna, Bagerhat, Munshiganj, Bogra and Satkhira.

The joint forces arrested 57 Jamaat-Shibir activists in Satkania, Sitakunda and Lohagara upazilas of Chittagong.

During the drives, the forces also recovered 400gm gunpowder and three sharp weapons in Satkania, said Khaled Hossain, OC of Satkania Police Station.

In Comilla, the law enforcers arrested 20 BNP activists and 23 Jamaat-Shibir men from different parts of the district during a five-hour drive, SP Tutul Chakrabarty said.

All the arrestees were accused in cases filed in connection with the arson attacks and vandalism during recent hartals and blockades, he added.

In Moulvibazar, at least 15 Jamaat-Shibir men, including Jamaat leader Emdadul Islam, were arrested at Baralekha upazila headquarters around 9:00 am, said Abul Hasan, OC of Baralekha Police Station.

In Narsingdi, police arrested 40 BNP leaders and activists at Sadar upazila, as the arrestees were heading towards the capital for carrying out subversive activities, said Mohammad Asaduzzaman, OC of Narsingdi Model Police Station.

In Bogra, police conducted several raids in 10 upazilas early yesterday, and arrested 36 opposition men in connection with their involvement in recent anarchy and vandalism, said Gaziur Rahman, assistant superintendent of police.

Meanwhile, DB police arrested 11 Jamaat-Shibir men in separate drives in Satkhira from Saturday midnight to yesterday afternoon.

Of the arrestees, a mobile court awarded two-year imprisonment to Sayed Anwar Hossain on charge of sabotage.

The joint forces also arrested 18 BNP-Jamaat men in Munshiganj, 20 persons at Belkuchi upazila in Sirajganj, 20 BNP leaders in Kishoreganj, seven in Natore and 10 in Chapainawabganj.

Bagerhat police arrested Jamaat leader Matiur Rahman, who was an accused in a case filed in connection with a recent arson attack on vehicles in the district.

## আমরা শোকাহত ও মর্মান্বিত

এম আই সিমেন্ট ফ্যাক্টরী লিমিটেড (ক্রাউন সিমেন্ট) এর ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক আলহাজ্ব মো: খবির উদ্দিন মোল্লা সাহেবের সহধর্মিণী, অভিরিক্ত ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক মোল্লা মোহাম্মদ মজনু ও মিজানুর রহমান মোল্লা সাহেবের মাতা আলহাজ্ব রোকেয়া বেগমের ইন্তেকালে আমরা গভীরভাবে শোকাহত ও মর্মান্বিত।

আলহাজ্ব রোকেয়া বেগম গত ২৮ ডিসেম্বর ২০১৩ ইং তারিখে ঢাকার এ্যাপোলো হাসপাতালে ইন্তেকাল করেছেন (ইন্নালিল্লাহি ওয়া ইন্না ইলাইহি রাজিউন)। মৃত্যুকালে তাঁর বয়স হয়েছিল ৬৪ বছর।

আলহাজ্ব মো: খবির উদ্দিন মোল্লা সাহেবের পরিবারের এ অপূরণীয় ক্ষতি ও বিয়োগ ব্যথায় সহমর্মী হয়ে শোকসন্তপ্ত পরিবারের প্রতি আন্তরিক সমবেদনা জ্ঞাপন করছি।

আমরা মহান রাব্বুল আলামিনের দরবারে তাঁর রুহের মাগফেরাত কামনা করছি এবং প্রার্থনা করছি আল্লাহতায়াল্লা তাঁকে যেন জান্নাতবাসী করেন।

জিপিএইচ গ্রুপের পরিচালনা পর্ষদ ও কর্মকর্তা- কর্মচারীবৃন্দ।

# Khaleda hits the roof

FROM PAGE 1

... Shut up, you girls!" she said in a shrill voice in the presence of reporters on the lawn of her house.

To a female officer, the BNP chief said, "Where is your home town? Gopali [Gopalganj]? The name of Gopalganj district will be changed ... Gopalganj will cease to exist."

Venting her anger at the law enforcers, she said, "Stop pushing and shoving ... we are not here to push anyone. You are here to do your job, so do that. You are supposed to be on the streets. Why are you inside my house?"

"Don't side with the government ... don't be its sycophants ... It will be of no use ... be neutral ... Think about people ... side with them."

"Is this country a property of their [Awami League] fathers that they are trying to foil our programme with thugs and police force?"

Carrying the national flag, Khaleda, also chief of the BNP-led 18-party alliance, boarded a car in her house compound at 2:50pm to join the opposition's programme. But the vehicle couldn't come out because of the police barricades in front of the house.

She then got down from the car at 3:35pm and said, "I tried to go out again and again. But I have not been allowed to do so. I'm confined. Let me come out, if you have courage."

"You are not allowing me today to come out of my residence. You have no right [to keep me confined]," she said.

"Where is your officer? I want to talk to him ... Why have I been barred from going out? Why doesn't he [the officer] come in front of me? You said a lot of things earlier. Why are you keeping quiet now?"

"Tell the officer to meet me. I want to talk to him. Can't you understand? I am speaking in Bangla! Do I need to tell you that in a different language? Do you understand?"

"We are not against you [the law enforcers] ... you are performing your duty. But I think you should do it in a respectful manner so that we can do our job and you can do yours."

To Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, she said, "If you have the courage, come up with a counter-programme. You don't have that courage ... not

even 10 people will show up in your programme. You hire people ... You gather people using DCs and SPs.

"You [Hasina] neither want to save democracy nor the country. Do you want to be a slave? Will you be a lackey? This slavery will not save you. Read the story of Lhendup Dorjee [the first chief minister of Sikkim after it became part of the Indian Union]. He didn't survive long. He too had to go despite being a lackey.

"Your plan to sell the country won't work. The country will be saved, Inshallah.

"Stop being a sycophant ... being Hasina's sycophant won't work. Be with the people of Bangladesh."

Warning Hasina of dire consequences, she said, "The boat of the Awami League will not reach ashore through a sea of blood of innocent people.

"You all will face tragic and dangerous consequences for what you are [Hasina] doing now. Get ready for the consequences."

Blaming Hasina for the Palkhna carnage and "recent killings and disappearances", Khaleda said the tears of the family members of the slain BDR personnel and other innocent people wouldn't go in vain.

"Those who are oppressing people now will one day be shedding tears like them."

"Allah's wrath will befall you. How many 'alem' and orphans did you kill? How many BDR officers did you kill? Where was Hasina that day? 57 BDR officers were killed. Where was Hasina's force that day? Why didn't she send the force? Actually, she was involved in the killings. That's why she didn't send a force there on that day."

Terming the present government illegal and undemocratic, Khaleda asked the government to step down immediately to avoid dire consequences.

"If this government has any dignity, it should quit."

On the opposition's march to Dhaka, she said, "It will continue today ... even tomorrow ... let's see what you [the government] can do."

Slamming the government for restricting her movements, Khaleda said, "Is it democracy? I want to come down to the streets. If you [Hasina] have enough courage, come up with counter

programmes. We will see then."

The BNP chief claimed people from all walks of life would have flooded into the capital if there had been no obstructions.

Earlier, reporters had to climb walls and trees to get inside Khaleda's residence as law enforcers restricted entry through the main gate.

## Transport collapse

FROM PAGE 16

bustling shopping hub, and it was the same scenario at the heart of the city, Gulistan.

"Police asked us to close stores on Saturday evening for security reasons, so we have not opened since. Only those hawkers who are in hardship have dared to," said Masud Alam, a clothes hawker at Gulistan.

"It appears that the government itself has enforced a blockade," said Abdur Razzak, president of Merchants Association at Moulvibazar, a wholesale depot for essential commodities in the city.

Around 90 percent of the shops at the depot failed to open yesterday due to transport problem, he added.

Turnout at banks, too, was also sparse, and industries catering for the export and domestic markets suffered alike due to the disruption in transport of goods.

No goods-laden trucks moved from factories in Dhaka and its adjacent areas to the Chittagong port due to the programme, said Shahidullah Azim, vice-president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association. "We did not want to take any risks."

Failing to hold the 'March for Democracy', BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has extended the programme till today, meaning the same episode would repeat.

"I can hardly narrate the current political situation as no solution is coming out from the political leaders," Kazi Akram Uddin Ahmed, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said.

"The future of the 'potential Bangladesh' is now in trouble as the business activities are on the verge of collapse from months of general strikes and blockades."