

## BONDHU GARAGE CARNIVAL

## UNLIMITED FUN ON A COLD FRIDAY



NAHIN MAHMUD

On December 26, the Bondhu Garage Carnival by Grameenphone was held at Banani Bidya Niketan field in Dhaka. Hundreds of people attended to see AvoidRafa, Shunno, Sandhi-Sovvota and Nemesis in action. Visitors were also offered discounts at various outlets like Cyclife, Eminence and Fujifilm. Some communities such as BDCyclists and Through The Lens were found sharing experiences with the attendees. The gadget stores were crowded with people

drawn to the amazing discounts and offers. Many were seen thronging Olin's Tattoo Studio as it offered cool temporary tattoos. Some food outlets satisfied the appetite of the visitors, courtesy of Foodpanda. Let's Meat Up, Fajitas, Munchies Republic, Live Kitchen and bunch of other food outlets brought food carts and people were seen bustling around them. I myself had trouble picking one particular cart to eat from. Finally I ended up having nachos and a BBQ beef burger from Let's Meat Up. It felt good as the food hit the spot while

watching the electrifying performance of AvoidRafa. As the day progressed, the food stalls got busier.

The main attraction was definitely the concert, which started at around 6pm. First off, the audience witnessed some mesmerising fire spinning skills performed by Naur. Then Sandhi-Sovvota took the stage with a cover of "Pyro" by Kings of Leon. They were followed by AvoidRafa. The highlight of their performance was "Kadbe Bishoy". Shunno took the stage afterwards, and finally it was Nemesis' turn. The audience

jumped, screamed and kept singing along with every single performance of every band. Some of the audiences were even seen crowd surfing. Performers like Rafa and Trio were seen hanging out with some of the fans after their performances. The concert went on until 9 pm and marked the end of the carnival.

The environment was lively and entertaining altogether, without any undesirable incident. It was a good place to spend the cold windy Friday with friends, good food and great music.

## CHILD PARLIAMENT 2014

## Highlighting the consequences of child marriage

MUSTAHSIN LABIB

The morning was enlivened with young voices. A group of children and teenagers had gathered at LGED Auditorium, Agargaon in Dhaka. National Children Task Force (NCTF) organised "Child Parliament 2014" on December 21 to deliberate on how child marriage is a bane to education and rights, and how this social ailment can be resolved. The event was well-organised, even if a little astray from the itinerary it initially proposed.

The program started at 11 am with the chief guest Fazle Rabbi Miah, Deputy Speaker of the National Parliament, giving a welcome speech, lauding the children who assumed the role of MPs on their participation to learn tolerance and ethics, to be the voices of the voiceless. Among others, high-ups of Bangladesh Shishu Academy, Save the Children, Plan and World Vision Bangladesh were present.

The theme of the event was, "Child marriage hampers education and protection." The purpose of Child Parliament is to educate children about their rights, especially the National Child Policy and inspire them to become advocates for peace. This year, 84 child MPs from 64 districts, including marginalised areas, attended the session. The opening ceremony included the national anthem and silence in honour of the school students killed recently in Pakistan. The parliamentary session started with a formal



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED



approach. Child Parliament Speaker, Sheikh Lomat Sohiba, started the session with a welcome speech, where she mentioned some notable achievements including ensuring free textbooks at secondary level, notification on corporal punishment, ethical and technology education at schools, ban of notebooks and coaching centres etc. The child MPs interacted well and a lot of everyday concerns



were brought to light, in order to portray how a child's social development can be repressed by the burden of early marriage.

"I could stop my marriage but could not stop my engagement; though I want to go for higher studies, my parents would not let me. I had certain goals, and the failure to achieve them is not my fault," said Jebunnessa, a child MP from Narshingdi. In response to this, the

Deputy Speaker of National Parliament said, "I will communicate with the local administration of Narshingdi district to motivate the parents of Jebunnessa – to stop this early marriage from happening."

The issue of negligence of monitoring signified that fake birth and marriage certificates are a big issue. In response to the matter of negligence in monitoring, the Deputy Speaker said, "Ministry of Law can play a major role in this. They should engage more manpower in their programs to ensure strict monitoring of marriage registration." He added, "I will try to share these with the lawmakers at the Parliament and will also communicate with the local administration regarding these issues. Public and private media should step up to raise awareness on early marriage at rural level and people from all walks of life should shoulder them to fight this curse."

From the intense pressure and sheer weight of responsibility of representing their districts at a national event, the 12th session of the Child Parliament also brought out the best in the delegation of children from all around the country. All the child MPs vowed to make the country better through children's rights movement and pledged to realise their goals.

After lunch, the annual election of the Child Parliament was held.

Child Parliament 2014 was organised in association with Bangladesh Shishu Academy; Save the Children, Plan and World Vision Bangladesh provided technical support.