

# The Daily Star

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Your Right to Know

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PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Although it's illegal, many children steer such vehicles across the country amid a dearth of licensed professional drivers. BRTA data show the number of registered vehicles is over 29 lakh but only 19 lakh people have driving licence.

## 'Ghosts' driving 10 lakh vehicles

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Mohammad Billal, in his late 20s, has been professionally driving minibuses and pick-up trucks for the last seven years in the capital and only recently he applied for a driving licence.

Billal is set to get a professional driving licence from Bangladesh Road Transport Authority on March 30.

He said over the years he had been fined at least 20 times for driving without a licence. He had never been jailed.

Billal's employment as a driver in the city's pathetic fleet of rundown public transport is a testament to the dearth of

Over **29** lakh registered vehicles

Some **19** lakh licensed drivers

About **10** lakh professional licensed drivers

Unknown number of illegal vehicles

licensed professional drivers.

There exists a huge gap between the number of registered vehicles and the number of licensed drivers for those.

For driving over 29 lakh registered vehicles, there are only 19 lakh people with driving licences, say BRTA statistics as of February 2017.

On top of this, there are only 10 lakh drivers with professional licences and a little over nine lakh are non-

professional drivers.

The BRTA does not keep track of vehicles being taken off the roads but sources there claimed that about 30 per cent

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## Special children to have playground of their own

RAFIUL ISLAM

Arijit Chakma Prithu has a disliking for claw hair clips. One afternoon six years ago this autistic young man was out walking in the city's Chandrima Udyan. He saw a girl with such a clip and grabbed it.

It took a lot of effort from his mother Subarna Chakma to explain Arijit's condition and dissuade three youths accompanying the girl from assaulting her son.

Arijit's family has since hardly taken the now 26-year-old to public places.

Like Arijit's, many other families refrain from taking their loved ones with special needs to playgrounds and parks to avoid facing such situations.

Consequently, this impedes mental and physical growth of challenged people.

Taking this into consideration, the government has started constructing presumably the country's first playground dedicated to people with special needs.

A 4.16-acre land at the corner of Manik Mia Avenue and Mirpur Road, near the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, was handed over to National Foundation for Development of the Disabled Persons by Public Works Department on December 18 last year for the construction.

The playground will have some benches and a toilet while other components required would be decided

upon later.

"We have already started the construction work. We will open it soon. We will do everything without obstructing people's view of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban," said AKM Maksudul Arefin, deputy director of the Foundation.

The playground will be a blessing for people with disabilities, helping their physical and physiological development, he added.

Apart from being a place for recreation, it would be a space where caregivers would gather and share experiences on better treatment of people with special needs.

There are around 15 lakh people with special needs in the country, PHOTO ON PAGE 2 SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

## President for competent, honest leaders in politics

DU CORRESPONDENT

President Abdul Hamid yesterday urged graduates to create honest and competent leadership to make the foundation of democracy stronger at the 50th Convocation of Dhaka University (DU).

He also said there is no alternative to political leadership in the country's development and this leadership would be created through student leadership.

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## Touching lives in the glow of her dream

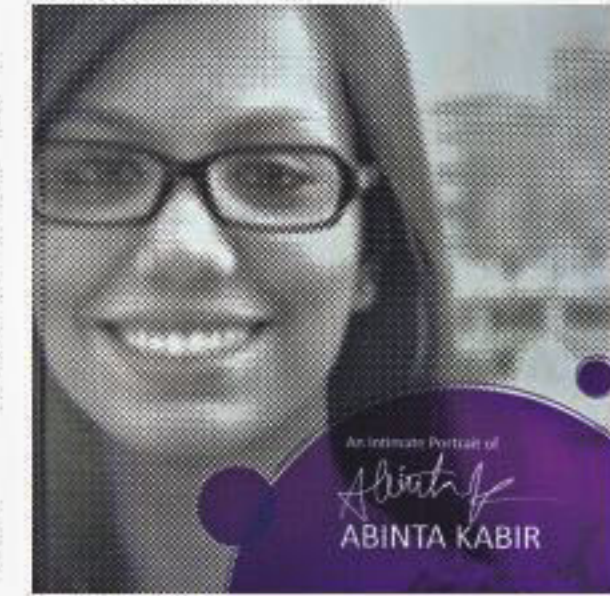
Family of Abinta Kabir launches foundation to help poor children

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nothing will bring back the child who is now in the great beyond, but what could be a better way the mother could remember her beloved daughter than making her dream her own and fulfill it!

That is what the mother and the family of Abinta Kabir, who was killed along with 19 other hostages in last year's Gulshan café attack, strove to do as they launched Abinta Kabir Foundation yesterday to help under-privileged children get education.

At a memorial programme at a city hotel where the



ABINTA KABIR

**TOP!**  
QUOTE  
"I don't get this will of God; I've come here as the chancellor of a university where I couldn't even get admitted."  
PRESIDENT ABDUL HAMID AT THE 50TH DU CONVOCATION



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