

# 8-yr-old boy killed after abduction

A CORRESPONDENT, Joypurhat

An eight year old boy was allegedly abducted and murdered for a ransom of Tk three lakh in Kalai Upazila in Joypurhat district.



Tauhid Shamim

The body of Tauhid Shamim Shuvo was recovered around 150 yards away from his residence in Munshipara village at around 6:00am yesterday, less than one day after his abduction.

The victim, only son of timber trader Abdul Gafur alias Tota, went missing at around 10:30 am on Friday after he left home to play with a top.

He was a second year student at the local Kakoli Shishu Niketon school.

The abductors might have killed Shuvo elsewhere and dumped the body near his house at night, officer-in-charge of Kalai Police Station Nuruzzaman Chowdhury said.

Police are trying to find the culprits, he added.

Gafur said he received a missed call from an unknown number at around 3:00 pm on Friday as the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1



A portion of the playground being prepared for people with special needs near the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban in the capital. The photo was taken a couple of days ago.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

# Playground

FROM PAGE 1

including some 35,000 in Dhaka, according to statistics of the Disability Detection Survey Programme of the social welfare ministry.

Welcoming the move, Arijit's mother Subarna said she would surely take him there. "I think many other parents would do so. It would be their own world where nobody will bother them."

Another mother of a 19-year-old autistic, Prof Sharmind Neelormi of Jahangirnagar University termed the playground a gift for children with special needs.

She said visitors there would have better acceptance towards challenged people. She urged the authorities to ensure tight security at the playground.

Thirteen-year-old Shaheen of Tejkunipara was elated to hear about the playground. He said he likes sports, but none of those who come to play in the school field near his residence wanted to play with him for a leg deformity he had since birth.

"I must go to the playground and play," he said.

Prof Azizur Rahman of Dhaka University's psychology department said specially-abled people also have demands and emotional cravings. They suffer mental pain as they cannot play at playgrounds like the other children.

"If they can play in fields, they would have much pleasure. As a result, they would have natural physical and mental growth," he added.

# Cattle thief stabs owner dead in Sylhet

Another dies as locals clash with police during handover of captured thief

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Two people were killed, one by cattle thieves and another in a clash with police over handover of a captured thief, in Mostafanagar village of Companyganj in Sylhet yesterday.

Around 100 others were injured in the clash, including 10 policemen, who took treatment at Sylhet Police Lines Hospital and Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

According to police and locals, a group of thieves broke into the house of Zilu Mia, 55, around 4:00am to steal his cattle. As he woke up and tried to stop them, a thief stabbed him leaving him dead on the spot.

Hearing Zilu's scream, his family members rushed to the spot and caught alleged thief Sonai Miah, while others escaped, said Altaf Hossain, officer-in-charge of Companyganj police.

Locals kept the thief confined until police arrived on the scene around 7:00am. But an altercation took place over turning the thief over to the police as cattle theft became a menace in the locality.

At one stage, the villagers locked in a clash and the police intervened to disperse the crowd. However, as the clash got intensified, the police opened fire to bring the situation under control.

But villager Mofiz Mia, 50, received a bullet and died of the injury, Nasrin Jahan Fatema, upazila vice-chairman, told this correspondent.

Fatema claimed the clash ensued as the villagers wanted to lynch the thief as 22 villages in the upazila had recently been plagued by cattle theft.

Police had to shoot hundreds of rubber bullets to ease the situation, said Ruhul Amin, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Companyganj police.

The police said they had already taken steps to stop cattle thieves.

No case was filed as of yesterday afternoon. Additional police force was deployed to ward off any untoward incidents.

# Touching lives in the glow of her dream

FROM PAGE 1

foundation was launched, Ruba Ahmed poured out her emotions and feelings for her only child Abinta. The Bangladesh-born US citizen was on summer holidays in Dhaka last July when the tragic incident befell her.

As Ruba spoke, everyone of the audience felt the sense of sadness from losing Abinta.

"My little angel is in heaven," she said and then took a pause, as it felt, to stop herself from breaking down.

"You [Abinta] are my light, my moon. I count the days to meet you.

"You are so wonderful to think of, but so hard to be without," said Ruba, recalling her 19 years of motherhood with Abinta who was so full of love and life throughout her short life.

She was very happy in 2007 when she

returned home from the US after completing her fourth grade, said her mother.

She went back to study at Emory University in Atlanta after graduating from American International School Dhaka.

Ruba said she had tried to instill in her daughter the values of humanity, patriotism and discipline and how she had taken all those in with a higher aptitude.

The young talented woman dreamt of a Bangladesh free of poverty.

In one of her academic write-ups in 2015, Abinta said, "I believe that I do have responsibility for the greater community as a whole because I am part of a community where more than half of the people are suffering from poverty and hunger."

On the fateful night of July 1 last year, she went to Holey Artisan Bakery along with friends -- Faraz Ayaaz Hossain of

Emory and Indian national Tarishi Jain, a student of the University of California, Berkeley -- and met the tragic death.

Her family now wants her dreams to be fulfilled.

Apart from founding the charity, it launched a book titled "An intimate portrait of Abinta Kabir" and a website- www.abintafoundation.org to give readers and visitors a deep insight into the world of Abinta.

Her grandmother Nilu Murshed, family friends and relatives Mokammel Haque, Kazi Aminul Islam and Nazma Chowdhury, Abinta's school friend Gabriella Nordlund, aunt Lubna Ahmed and cousin Jason Christopher also spoke.

US Ambassador to Bangladesh Marcia Stephens Bloom Bernicat said, "Abinta could have gone on to do anything with

her life that she chose to do. She had a drive to make the world and Bangladesh in particular a better place."

However, even in her absence, Abinta is making the world a better place, she said, adding, "Please let us join together to make the world a better place Abinta dreamed it can be."

Abinta's grandfather Manzur Murshed said, "She will be in our heart. We have a beacon to follow."

In his memory of Abinta, her maternal uncle Tanveer Ahmed said, "We used to call each other Billu. One night I returned home and saw her reading, as usual, until late night."

"I asked her 'Billu, are you going to be a scientist in the United States?' In response, she said, 'No Billu, I want to come back home and do something for the country.'"

# 'Ghosts' driving 10 lakh vehicles

FROM PAGE 1

of the vehicles had been phased out.

The mismatch of vehicle-driver ratio gets even wider if one considers that commercially-operated buses and trucks require more than one driver for each vehicle.

It is no wonder that people with little skill behind the wheels and with fake or no license at all are at the driving seats and it does not take a rocket scientist to figure out why roads of Bangladesh are so often smeared with blood.

Some 64 people die a day on the roads of the country, as found in a recent government-conducted survey.

On the other hand, the transport owners and workers said the actual number of vehicles on the roads is more than the BRTA data as Nosimon, Korimon, Easybikes and other improvised illegal vehicles are not registered with the BRTA.

All stakeholders agree that many vehicles are being driven by people who do not have any driving licence or have ones that are fake.

BRTA Director (enforcement) Nazmul Ahsan Mazumder said, "We do not know how many drivers have fake licences or how many don't have

any. But we are strictly monitoring the issue though it is not possible to monitor the whole city only by four mobile courts.

"Yet, in the last month [February] alone our mobile courts jailed 60 drivers who did not have driving licences."

Mazumder preferred putting the onus on vehicle owners who, according to him, care little about giving their vehicles to people with fake licenses or no licence at all.

"Owners sometimes prefer inexpensive drivers and compromise on the quality of drivers," he said.

He said it was the responsibility of the owners of the vehicles to ensure that their vehicles were being driven by people with valid licences and the drivers are skilled and experienced.

Experts, however, noted road safety cannot be ensured until there was a proper licensing system in place.

Bus driver Jamir Hossain, involved in the 2011 crash that killed Tareque Masud and Ashfaq Munier Mishuk, had no driving licence.

Road-safety activist Ilyas Kanchan said the driving licence obtaining system was in total chaos. Many drivers do not have a driving licence and many

| REGISTERED VEHICLES    |           |
|------------------------|-----------|
| Buses/Minibuses        | 68,072    |
| Trucks/Lorries/Tankers | 181,211   |
| Pickup Trucks          | 89,966    |
| Taxis                  | 45,186    |
| Human Hauliers         | 14,436    |
| Microbuses             | 92,291    |
| Cars/SUVs              | 3,60,875  |
| Motorbikes             | 17,78,044 |

SOURCE: BRTA, FEBRUARY 2017

obtained theirs without following proper procedure.

"If anyone tries to get a driving licence, the person has to go through written, viva and road tests. But most of the professional drivers are unwilling to sit the written and viva tests as many of them are illiterate. They obtain their licences through illegal means," he said.

He said a vehicle in the hand of an unskilled driver or a driver without licence means all the passengers of that

vehicle are at risk. "Even the driver is not safe."

Regarding the BRTA claim that up to 30 percent of the registered vehicles might have been phased out, the actor-turned-road-safety campaigner said, "In Bangladesh, cars never die or expire."

Khandaker Enayetullah, secretary general of Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samity, said new vehicles were hitting the roads every day but not as many drivers were being trained.

"This actually creates an opportunity for fake driving licence or driving vehicles without any driving licence."

He said the process of obtaining a professional heavy vehicle driving licence was difficult.

"Everyone should focus on getting trained and licensed drivers," he said, adding that not many are seen getting trained for professional driving licences.

"If you go to the driving training schools, you will find people are mostly getting trained for light vehicles, especially cars."

He observed that usually the long-route vehicle drivers have genuine professional driving licences while many vehicles running in city routes are manned by people who do not possess driving licences.

# World's nuclear

FROM PAGE 14

According to a report from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), if all nuclear warheads are counted, these nine countries together possessed a total of approximately 15,395 nuclear weapons compared with 15,850 in early 2015.

The US was the first country in the world to develop nuclear bomb in 1945, with Russia following a close second in 1949. North Korea was the last country on the list to develop nuclear weapons in 2006. Five European countries host US nuclear weapons on their soil as part of a NATO nuclear-sharing arrangement.

However, under the international deal, Iran agreed to curb its sensitive nuclear activities in return for the lifting of economic sanctions. Last year Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso stated that Japan possesses the knowledge and ability to produce nuclear weapons, but has no plans to do so.

The SIPRI annual nuclear forces data shows that while the overall number of nuclear weapons in the world continues to decline, none of the nuclear weapon-possessing states are prepared to give up their nuclear arsenals for the foreseeable future.

# President for competent, honest leaders

FROM PAGE 1

On the present trend of student politics, Hamid categorically said now it seems individual or group interest is getting priority.

"In some cases, non-students control student politics. Thus, trust, support and respect of people, even of general students, to student politics are decreasing gradually. This is not a good sign for the nation and the country," the president told the convocation held at the university playground.

Describing student politics of his time, Hamid said they used to lead and control politics in the past when there had been no space for dependence, and the common people showed respect to them.

Saying that he started politics during his student life, the president added, "But there is a huge difference between today's student politics and that of ours. The country's welfare and establishing our rights by liberating people from dependency were the aims and objectives for us -- those who were involved in student politics in the 60s.

"There was no room for personal or group interests at that time. Students used to control and lead the student politics. General people held students

in honour."

Hamid called upon the student community to bring back student politics on the right track and regain its lost glory.

Urging the students to get united to start ideology-based and welfare-oriented politics, Hamid said, "The student community has to play a leading role in this regard."

Describing the sorry state of the present student politics, he said regular students should lead the student organisations now.

The president came up with the comment when student politics earned a bad name for last several years due to student leaders' involvement in tender business and other money-making ventures rather than paying heed to students' as well as the country's welfare.

Gunfight between students groups, especially internal conflicts of the ruling party's student wing, is a common scenario in many public universities centring tender businesses.

In his speech, Hamid also put emphasis on holding the Dhaka University Central Students' Union election for developing new leadership to strengthen the foundation of the country's democracy.

The DUCSU election is a must to flourish regular student leadership, he said. The president, also the chancellor of the university, added if capable and honest student leadership is not created, future leadership would be at stake.

Since 1990 no election was held in DUCSU. Elections to the central students' unions of other public universities are also not being held on a regular basis.

At one point of his speech, Hamid in a light mood said, "What a game of the Almighty that I am the chancellor of the university where I could not get admitted! Even I was not given the admission form."

At the convocation, DU conferred Doctor of Science degree on Amit Chakma, the Bangladesh-origin academic and vice-chancellor (VC) of the University of Western Ontario in Canada.

While reading out the citation for the award which was passed by the academic council and syndicate, DU

VC Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique said, "For Prof Amit Chakma's profound commitment and service to the academic and research community and for his leadership acumen, the University of Dhaka is proud to confer upon Prof Amit the degree of Doctor of Science [Honoris Causa] today [yesterday]."

While delivering the convocation speech, Prof Amit asserted the motto of DU as the best metaphor which says education is light.

He advised the students to earn 3Cs -- competency, commitment and character -- to become successful in their career.

"You have to be conscious about your character which is very important. The windows of your minds will have to open through knowledge," he observed.

He also advised the students, "Never tolerate corruption and never violate human rights when you will hold any responsible post."

He also urged the graduates to dream big and scale up their lives in a meaningful way.

The DU VC in his speech said, "Students who are determined to exploring the truth through removing lies from their minds are the real students."

# 2 more held over journalist Shimul killing

UZ body for dropping suspect Miru from FF list

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Police have arrested two more people over the killing of journalist Abdul Hakim Shimul in Sirajganj's Shahzadpur upazila.

Meanwhile, a committee headed by the upazila nirbahi officer has recommended dropping the names of Shahzadpur Municipality Mayor Halimul Haque Miru and his brother Hamidul Haque Hiru from the list of

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

# Patients suffer

FROM PAGE 14

suffered, reports our Bogra correspondent.

The protesters also formed a human chain on the campus demanding cancellation of the penalty.

Contacted, Nirmolendu Chowdhury, deputy director of the hospital, said they were trying to resolve the matter through discussions.

Declaring solidarity with the Bogra protesters, interns at four hospitals in Sylhet began an indefinite strike yesterday, reports our correspondent there.

The hospitals are Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, Jalalabad Ragib-Rabeya Medical College and Hospital, North East Medical College Hospital and Sylhet Women's Medical College Hospital.

In Barisal, interns of Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital went on a 72-hour strike yesterday morning.

A group of interns allegedly beat up twice Rouf Sarkar, 35, son of a patient admitted at the Bogra hospital, over a trifling matter on February 19. A video of the incident went viral on social media.

Later, Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council launched an investigation and suspended the internships of four interns for six months based on the probe findings.

# Two Malaysian

FROM PAGE 14

"The prosecution had succeeded in establishing the case, which carries the mandatory death sentence [upon conviction], and all evidence by the defence was merely a denial," the judge said.

On October 1, 2015, the Kangar High Court had acquitted the two officials of the charge without calling for their defence, and following an appeal by the prosecution, the Court of Appeal ordered the two men to enter their defence on the charge.

According to the facts of the case, Bangladeshi migrant Abu Bakar Siddique complained of gastric and requested for medicine. He was then brought out of the lockup by the duo and taken to the pantry, where, as CCTV footage shows, the two immigration officers were holding long wooden sticks.

After returning to the lockup cell, the detainee told his cellmate that he was beaten by the immigration officers and showed the bruises. There was no sign of injury on the victim's body when he went to the pantry.

When his condition worsened, he was taken to a hospital where he died on November 4, 2014.

A postmortem found that he died because of "multiple blunt force trauma due to soft tissue injuries".

Malaysia is one of the popular destinations for Bangladeshis looking for jobs abroad.

Around four lakh Bangladeshis are working in different sectors legally in that country while around two lakh others are without proper documents, according to Bangladesh officials.